

The History of Pendennis, his Fortunes and Misfortunes, his Friends and his greatest Enemy

William



THE UNIVERSITY
of ADELAIDE

CONTENTS

Dedication

Preface

Chapter:

1. Shows how First Love may interrupt Breakfast
2. A Pedigree and other Family Matters
3. In which Pendennis appears as a very young Man indeed
4. Mrs. Haller
5. Mrs. Haller at Home
6. Contains both Love and War
7. In which the Major makes his Appearance
8. In which Pen is kept waiting at the Door, while the Reader is informed who little Laura was.
9. In which the Major opens the Campaign
10. Facing the Enemy
11. Negotiation
12. In which a Shooting Match is proposed
13. A Crisis
14. In which Miss Fotheringay makes a new Engagement
15. The happy Village
16. More Storms in the Puddle
17. Which concludes the first Part of this History
18. Alma Mater
19. Pendennis of Boniface
20. Rake's Progress
21. Flight after Defeat
22. Prodigal's Return
23. New Faces
24. A Little Innocent
25. Contains both Love and Jealousy
26. A House full of Visitors
27. Contains some Ball-practising
28. Which is both Quarrelsome and Sentimental
29. Babylon
30. The Knights of the Temple
31. Old and new Acquaintances
32. In which the Printer's Devil comes to the Door
33. Which is passed in the Neighbourhood of Ludgate Hill
34. In which the History still hovers about Fleet Street
35. Dinner in the Row
36. The Pall Mall Gazette

37. Where Pen appears in Town and Country
38. In which the Sylph reappears
39. Colonel Altamont appears and disappears
40. Relates to Mr. Harry Foker's Affairs
41. Carries the Reader both to Richmond and Greenwich
42. Contains a novel Incident
43. Alsatia
44. In which the Colonel narrates some of his Adventures
45. A Chapter of Conversations
46. Miss Amory's Partners
47. Monseigneur s'amuse
48. A Visit of Politeness
49. In Shepherd's Inn
50. Or near the Temple Garden
51. The happy Village again
52. Which had very nearly been the last of the Story
53. A critical Chapter
54. Convalescence
55. Fanny's Occupation's gone
56. In which Fanny engages a new Medical Man
57. Foreign Ground
58. "Fairoaks to let"
59. Old Friends
60. Explanations
61. Conversations
62. The Way of the World
63. Which accounts perhaps for Chapter LXI
64. Phyllis and Corydon
65. Temptation
66. In which Pen begins his Canvass
67. In which Pen begins to doubt about his Election
68. In which the Major is bidden to Stand and Deliver
69. In which the Major neither yields his Money nor his Life
70. In which Pendennis counts his Eggs
71. Fiat Justitia
72. In which the Decks begin to clear
73. Mr. and Mrs. Sam Huxter
74. Shows how Arthur had better have taken a Return-ticket
75. A Chapter of Match-making
76. Exeunt Omnes



1. The Overture — After which the Curtain rises upon a Drinking Chorus
2. Colonel Newcome's Wild Oats
3. Colonel Newcome's Letter-box
4. In which the Author and the Hero resume their Acquaintance
5. Clive's Uncles
6. Newcome Brothers
7. In which Mr. Clive's School-days are over
8. Mrs. Newcome at Home (a Small Early Party)
9. Miss Honeyman's
10. Ethel and her Relations
11. At Mrs. Ridley's
12. In which everybody is asked to Dinner
13. In which Thomas Newcome sings his Last Song
14. Park Lane
15. The Old Ladies
16. In which Mr. Sherrick lets his House in Fitzroy Square
17. A School of Art
18. New Companions
19. The Colonel at Home
20. Contains more Particulars of the Colonel and his Brethren
21. Is Sentimental, but Short
22. Describes a Visit to Paris; with Accidents and Incidents in London
23. In which we hear a Soprano and a Contralto
24. In which the Newcome Brothers once more meet together in Unity
25. Is passed in a Public-house
26. In which Colonel Newcome's Horses are sold
27. Youth and Sunshine
28. In which Clive begins to see the World
29. In which Barnes comes a-wooing
30. A Retreat
31. Madame la Duchesse
32. Barnes's Courtship
33. Lady Kew at the Congress
34. The End of the Congress of Baden
35. Across the Alps
36. In which M. de Florac is promoted
37. Return to Lord Kew
38. In which Lady Kew leaves his Lordship quite convalescent
39. Amongst the Painters
40. Returns from Rome to Pall Mall
41. An Old Story

42. Injured Innocence
43. Returns to some Old Friends
44. In which Mr. Charles Honeyman appears in an Amiable Light
45. A Stag of Ten
46. The Hotel de Florac
47. Contains two or three Acts of a Little Comedy
48. In which Benedick is a Married Man
49. Contains at least six more Courses and two Desserts
50. Clive in New Quarters
51. An Old Friend
52. Family Secrets
53. In which Kinsmen fall out
54. Has a Tragical Ending
55. Barnes's Skeleton Closet
56. Rosa quo locorum sera moratur
57. Rosebury and Newcome
58. "One more Unfortunate"
59. In which Achilles loses Briseis
60. In which we write to the Colonel
61. In which we are introduced to a New Newcome
62. Mr. and Mrs. Clive Newcome
63. Mrs. Clive at Home
64. Absit Omen
65. In which Mrs. Clive comes into her Fortune
66. In which the Colonel and the Newcome Athenaeum are both lectured
67. Newcome and Liberty
68. A Letter and a Reconciliation
69. The Election
70. Chiltern Hundreds
71. In which Mrs. Clive Newcome's Carriage is ordered
72. Belisarius
73. In which Belisarius returns from Exile
74. In which Clive begins the World
75. Founder's Day at the Grey Friars
76. Christmas at Rosebury
77. The Shortest and Happiest in the Whole History
78. In which the Author goes on a Pleasant Errand
79. In which Old Friends come together
80. In which the Colonel says "Adsum" when his Name is called



Part I.

1. Doctor Fell.
2. At School and at Home.
3. A Consultation.
4. A Genteel Family.
5. The Noble Kinsman.
6. Brandon's.
7. Impletur Veteris Bacchi.
8. Will Be Pronounced to Be Cynical by the Benevolent.
9. Contains One Riddle which is Solved, and Perhaps Some More.
10. In which We Visit the "Admiral Byng."
11. In which Philip is Very ILL-Tempered.
12. Damocles.
13. Love Me Love My Dog.
14. Contains Two of Philip's Mishaps.
15. Contains Two of Philip's Mishaps.
16. Samaritans.
17. In which Philip Shows His Mettle.

Part II.

1. Brevis Esse Laboro.
2. Drum Ist's So Wohl Mir in Der Welt.
3. Qu'on Est Bien a Vingt Ans.
4. Course of True Love.
5. Treats of Dancing, Dining, Dying.
6. Pulvis Et Umbra Sumus.
7. In which We Still Hover About the Elysian Fields.
8. Nec Dulces Amores Sperne, Puer, Neque Tu Choreas.
9. Infandi Dolores.
10. Contains a Tug of War.
11. I Charge You, Drop Your Daggers!
12. In which Mrs. Macwhirter has a New Bonnet.
13. In the Departments of Seine, Loire, and Styx (InfÉRieur).

Part III.

1. Returns to Old Friends.
2. Narrates that Famous Joke About Miss Grigsby.
3. Ways and Means.
4. Describes a Situation Interesting but Not Unexpected.
5. In which I Own that Philip Tells an Untruth.

6. Res Angusta Domi.
7. In which the Drawing Rooms are Not Furnished After All.
8. Nec Plena Cruoris Hirudo.
9. The Bearer of the Bowstring.
10. In which Several People have Their Trials.
11. In which the Luck Goes Very Much Against Us.
12. In which We Reach the Last Stage but One of this Journey.
13. The Realms of Bliss.



TO DR. JOHN ELLIOTSON

My Dear Doctor,

Thirteen months ago, when it seemed likely that this story had come to a close, a kind friend brought you to my bedside, whence, in all probability, I never should have risen but for your constant watchfulness and skill. I like to recall your great goodness and kindness (as well as many acts of others, showing quite a surprising friendship and sympathy) at that time, when kindness and friendship were most needed and welcome.

And as you would take no other fee but thanks, let me record them here in behalf of me and mine, and subscribe myself,

Yours most sincerely and gratefully,

W. M. THACKERAY.

https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/t/thackeray/william_makepeace/pendennis/dedication.html

Last updated Sunday, March 27, 2016 at 12:00

NOTE

When the republication of these Miscellanies was announced, it was my intention to complete the little story, of which only the first part is here written. Perhaps novel-readers will understand, even from the above chapters, what was to ensue. Caroline was to be disowned and deserted by her wicked husband: that abandoned man was to marry somebody else: hence, bitter trials and grief, patience and virtue, for poor little Caroline, and a melancholy ending as how should it have been gay? The tale was interrupted at a sad period of the writer's own life. The colours are long since dry; the artist's hand is changed. It is best to leave the sketch, as it was when first designed seventeen years ago. The memory of the past is renewed as he looks at it die Bilder froher Tage, Und manche liebe Schatten steigen auf.

W. M. T.

London, April 10th, 1857.

PREFACE

If this kind of composition, of which the two years' product is now laid before the public, fail in art, as it constantly does and must, it at least has the advantage of a certain truth and honesty, which a work more elaborate might lose. In his constant communication with the reader, the writer is forced into frankness of expression, and to speak out his own mind and feelings as they urge him. Many a slip of the pen and the printer, many a word spoken in haste, he sees and would recall as he looks over his volume. It is a sort of confidential talk between writer and reader, which must often be dull, must often flag. In the course of his volubility, the perpetual speaker must of necessity lay bare his own weaknesses, vanities, peculiarities. And as we judge of a man's character, after long frequenting his society, not by one speech, or by one mood or opinion, or by one day's talk, but by the tenor of his general bearing and conversation; so of a writer, who delivers himself up to you perforce unreservedly, you say, Is he honest? Does he tell the truth in the main? Does he seem actuated by a desire to find out and speak it? Is he a quack, who shams sentiment, or mouths for effect? Does he seek popularity by claptraps or other arts? I can no more ignore good fortune than any other chance which has befallen me. I have found many thousands more readers than I ever looked for. I have no right to say to these, You shall not find fault with my art, or fall asleep over my pages; but I ask you to believe that this person writing strives to tell the truth. If there is not that, there is nothing.

Perhaps the lovers of 'excitement' may care to know, that this book began with a very precise plan, which was entirely put aside. Ladies and gentlemen, you were to have been treated, and the writer's and the publisher's pocket benefited, by the recital of the most active horrors. What more exciting than a ruffian (with many admirable virtues) in St. Giles's, visited constantly by a young lady from Belgravia? What more stirring than the contrasts of society? the mixture of slang and fashionable language? the escapes, the battles, the murders? Nay, up to nine o'clock this very morning, my poor friend, Colonel Altamont, was doomed to execution, and the author only relented when his victim was actually at the window.

The 'exciting' plan was laid aside (with a very honourable forbearance on the part of the publishers), because, on attempting it, I found that I failed from want of experience of my subject; and never having been intimate with any convict in my life, and the manners of ruffians and gaol-birds being quite unfamiliar to me, the idea of entering into competition with M. Eugene Sue was abandoned. To describe a real rascal, you must make him so horrible that he would be too hideous to show; and unless the painter paints him fairly, I hold he has no right to show him at all.

Even the gentlemen of our age — this is an attempt to describe one of them, no better nor worse than most educated men — even these we cannot show as they are, with the notorious foibles and selfishness of their lives and their education. Since the author of Tom Jones was buried, no writer of fiction among us has been permitted to depict to his utmost power a MAN. We must drape him, and give him a certain conventional simper. Society will not tolerate the Natural in our Art. Many ladies have remonstrated and subscribers left me, because, in the course of the story, I described a young man resisting and affected by temptation.

My object was to say, that he had the passions to feel, and the manliness and generosity to overcome them. You will not hear — it is best to know it — what moves in the real world, what passes in society, in the clubs, colleges, mess-rooms — what is the life and talk of your sons. A little more frankness than is customary has been attempted in this story; with no bad desire on the writer's part, it is hoped, and with no ill consequence to any reader. If truth is not always pleasant, at any rate truth is best, from whatever chair — from those whence graver writers or thinkers argue, as from that at which the story-teller sits as he concludes his labour, and bids his kind reader farewell.

Kensington, Nov. 26th, 1850.



CHAPTER I

SHOWS HOW FIRST LOVE MAY INTERRUPT BREAKFAST

One fine morning in the full London season, Major Arthur Pendennis came over from his lodgings, according to his custom, to breakfast at a certain Club in Pall Mall, of which he was a chief ornament. As he was one of the finest judges of wine in England, and a man of active, dominating, and inquiring spirit, he had been very properly chosen to be a member of the Committee of this Club, and indeed was almost the manager of the institution; and the stewards and waiters bowed before him as reverentially as to a Duke or a Field-Marshal.

At a quarter past ten the Major invariably made his appearance in the best blacked boots in all London, with a checked morning cravat that never was rumpled until dinner time, a buff waistcoat which bore the crown of his sovereign on the buttons, and linen so spotless that Mr. Brummel himself asked the name of his laundress, and would probably have employed her had not misfortunes compelled that great man to fly the country. Pendennis's coat, his white gloves, his whiskers, his very cane, were perfect of their kind as specimens of the costume of a military man en retraite. At a distance, or seeing his back merely, you would have taken him to be not more than thirty years old: it was only by a nearer inspection that you saw the factitious nature of his rich brown hair, and that there were a few crow's-feet round about the somewhat faded eyes of his handsome mottled face. His nose was of the Wellington pattern. His hands and wristbands were beautifully long and white. On the latter he wore handsome gold buttons given to him by his Royal Highness the Duke of York, and on the others more than one elegant ring, the chief and largest of them being emblazoned with the famous arms of Pendennis.

He always took possession of the same table in the same corner of the room, from which nobody ever now thought of ousting him. One or two mad wags and wild fellows had in former days, and in freak or bravado, endeavoured twice or thrice to deprive him of this place; but there was a quiet dignity in the Major's manner as he took his seat at the next table, and surveyed the interlopers, which rendered it impossible for any man to sit and breakfast under his eye; and that table — by the fire, and yet near the window — became his own. His letters were laid out there in expectation of his arrival, and many was the young fellow about town who looked with wonder at the number of those notes, and at the seals and franks which they bore. If there was any question about etiquette, society, who was married to whom, of what age such and such a duke was, Pendennis was the man to whom every one appealed. Marchionesses used to drive up to the Club, and leave notes for him, or fetch him out. He was perfectly affable. The young men liked to walk with him in the Park or down Pall Mall; for he touched his hat to everybody, and every other man he met was a lord.

The Major sate down at his accustomed table then, and while the waiters went to bring him his toast and his hot newspaper, he surveyed his letters through his gold double eye-glass. He carried it so gaily, you would hardly have known it was spectacles in disguise, and examined one pretty note after another, and laid them by in order. There were large solemn dinner cards, suggestive of three courses and heavy conversation; there were neat little confidential notes, conveying female entreaties; there was a note on thick official paper from the Marquis of Steyne, telling him to come to Richmond to a little party at the Star and Garter, and speak French, which language the Major possessed very perfectly; and another from the Bishop of Ealing and Mrs. Trail, requesting the honour of Major Pendennis's company at Ealing House, all of which letters Pendennis read gracefully, and with the more satisfaction, because Glowry, the Scotch surgeon, breakfasting opposite to him, was looking on, and hating him for having so many invitations, which nobody ever sent to Glowry.

These perused, the Major took out his pocket-book to see on what days he was disengaged, and which of these many hospitable calls he could afford to accept or decline.

He threw over Cutler, the East India Director, in Baker Street, in order to dine with Lord Steyne and the little French party at the Star and Garter — the Bishop he accepted, because, though the dinner was slow, he liked to dine with bishops — and so went through his list and disposed of them according to his fancy or interest. Then he took his breakfast and looked over the paper, the gazette, the births and deaths, and the fashionable intelligence, to see that his name was down among the guests at my Lord So-and-so's fete, and in the intervals of these occupations carried on cheerful conversation with his acquaintances about the room.

Among the letters which formed Major Pendennis's budget for that morning there was only one unread, and which lay solitary and apart from all the fashionable London letters, with a country postmark and a homely seal. The superscription was in a pretty delicate female hand, and though marked 'Immediate' by the fair writer, with a strong dash of anxiety under the word, yet the Major had, for reasons of his own, neglected up to the present moment his humble rural petitioner, who to be sure could hardly hope to get a hearing among so many grand folks who attended his levee. The fact was, this was a letter from a female relative of Pendennis, and while the grantees of her brother's acquaintance were received and got their interview, and drove off, as it were, the patient country letter remained for a long time waiting for an audience in the ante-chamber under the slop-bason.

At last it came to be this letter's turn, and the Major broke a seal with 'Fairoaks' engraved upon it, and 'Clavering St. Mary's' for a postmark. It was a double letter, and the Major commenced perusing the envelope before he attacked the inner epistle.

"Is it a letter from another Jook," growled Mr. Glowry, inwardly, "Pendennis would not be leaving that to the last, I'm thinking."

"My dear Major Pendennis," the letter ran, "I beg and implore you to come to me immediately — very likely, thought Pendennis, and Steyne's dinner today — "I am in the very greatest grief and perplexity. My dearest boy, who has been hitherto everything the fondest mother could wish, is grieving me dreadfully. He has formed — I can hardly write it — a passion, an infatuation," — the Major grinned — "for an actress who has been performing here. She is at least twelve years older than Arthur — who will not be eighteen till next February — and the wretched boy insists upon marrying her."

"Hay! What's making Pendennis swear now?" — Mr. Glowry asked of himself, for rage and wonder were concentrated in the Major's open mouth, as he read this astounding announcement.

"Do, my dear friend," the grief-stricken lady went on, "come to me instantly on the receipt of this; and, as Arthur's guardian, entreat, command, the wretched child to give up this most deplorable resolution." And, after more entreaties to the above effect, the writer concluded by signing herself the Major's 'unhappy affectionate sister, Helen Pendennis.'

"Fairoaks, Tuesday" — the Major concluded, reading the last words of the letter — "A d — d pretty business at Fairoaks, Tuesday; now let us see what the boy has to say;" and he took the other letter, which was written in a great floundering boy's hand, and sealed with the large signet of the Pendennises, even larger than the Major's own, and with supplementary wax sputtered all round the seal, in token of the writer's tremulousness and agitation.

The epistle ran thus:

"Fairoaks, Monday, Midnight.

"My Dear Uncle — In informing you of my engagement with Miss Costigan, daughter of J. Chesterfield Costigan, Esq., of Costiganstown, but, perhaps, better known to you under her professional name of Miss Fotheringay, of the Theatres Royal Drury Lane and Crow Street, and of the Norwich and Welsh Circuit, I am aware that I make an announcement which cannot, according to the present prejudices of society at least, be welcome to my family. My dearest mother, on whom, God knows, I would wish to inflict no needless pain, is deeply moved and grieved, I am sorry to say, by the intelligence which I have this night conveyed to her. I beseech you, my dear Sir, to come down and reason with her and console her. Although obliged by poverty to earn an honourable maintenance by the exercise of her splendid talents, Miss Costigan's family is as ancient and noble as our own. When our ancestor, Ralph Pendennis, landed with Richard II. in Ireland, my Emily's forefathers were kings of that country. I have the information from Mr. Costigan, who, like yourself, is a military man.

"It is in vain I have attempted to argue with my dear mother, and prove to her that a young lady of irreproachable character and lineage, endowed with the most splendid gifts of beauty and genius, who devotes herself to the exercise of one of the noblest professions, for the sacred purpose of maintaining her family, is a being whom we should all love and reverence, rather than avoid; — my poor mother has prejudices which it is impossible for my logic to overcome, and refuses to welcome to her arms one who is disposed to be her most affectionate daughter through life.

"Although Miss Costigan is some years older than myself, that circumstance does not operate as a barrier to my affection, and I am sure will not influence its duration. A love like mine, Sir, I feel, is contracted once and for ever. As I never had dreamed of love until I saw her — I feel now that I shall die without ever knowing another passion. It is the fate of my life. It was Miss C.'s own delicacy which suggested that the difference of age, which I never felt, might operate as a bar to our union. But having loved once, I should despise myself, and be unworthy of my name as a gentleman, if I

hesitated to abide by my passion: if I did not give all where I felt all, and endow the woman who loves me fondly with my whole heart and my whole fortune.

“I press for a speedy marriage with my Emily — for why, in truth, should it be delayed? A delay implies a doubt, which I cast from me as unworthy. It is impossible that my sentiments can change towards Emily — that at any age she can be anything but the sole object of my love. Why, then, wait? I entreat you, my dear Uncle, to come down and reconcile my dear mother to our union, and I address you as a man of the world, *qui mores hominum multorum vidit et urbes*, who will not feel any of the weak scruples and fears which agitate a lady who has scarcely ever left her village.

“Pray, come down to us immediately. I am quite confident that — apart from considerations of fortune — you will admire and approve of my Emily. — Your affectionate Nephew, Arthur Pendennis, Jr.”

When the Major had concluded the perusal of this letter, his countenance assumed an expression of such rage and horror that Glowry, the surgeon-official, felt in his pocket for his lancet, which he always carried in his card-case, and thought his respected friend was going into a fit. The intelligence was indeed sufficient to agitate Pendennis. The head of the Pendennises going to marry an actress ten years his senior — a headstrong boy going to plunge into matrimony. “The mother has spoiled the young rascal,” groaned the Major inwardly, “with her cursed sentimentality and romantic rubbish. My nephew marry a tragedy queen! Gracious mercy, people will laugh at me so that I shall not dare show my head!” And he thought with an inexpressible pang that he must give up Lord Steyne’s dinner at Richmond, and must lose his rest and pass the night in an abominable tight mail-coach, instead of taking pleasure, as he had promised himself, in some of the most agreeable and select society in England.

And he must not only give up this but all other engagements for some time to come. Who knows how long the business might detain him. He quitted his breakfast table for the adjoining writing-room, and there ruefully wrote off refusals to the Marquis, the Earl, the Bishop, and all his entertainers; and he ordered his servant to take places in the mail-coach for that evening, of course charging the sum which he disbursed for the seats to the account of the widow and the young scapegrace of whom he was guardian.



CHAPTER II

A PEDIGREE AND OTHER FAMILY MATTERS

Early in the Regency of George the Magnificent, there lived in a small town in the west of England, called Clavering, a gentleman whose name was Pendennis. There were those alive who remembered having seen his name painted on a board, which was surmounted by a gilt pestle and mortar over the door of a very humble little shop in the city of Bath, where Mr. Pendennis exercised the profession of apothecary and surgeon; and where he not only attended gentlemen in their sick-rooms, and ladies at the most interesting periods of their lives, but would condescend to sell a brown-paper plaster to a farmer's wife across the counter — or to vend tooth-brushes, hair-powder, and London perfumery. For these facts a few folks at Clavering could vouch, where people's memories were more tenacious, perhaps, than they are in a great bustling metropolis.

And yet that little apothecary who sold a stray customer a pennyworth of salts, or a more fragrant cake of Windsor soap, was a gentleman of good education, and of as old a family as any in the whole county of Somerset. He had a Cornish pedigree which carried the Pendennises up to the time of the Druids, and who knows how much farther back? They had intermarried with the Normans at a very late period of their family existence, and they were related to all the great families of Wales and Brittany. Pendennis had had a piece of University education too, and might have pursued that career with great honour, but that in his second year at Cambridge his father died insolvent, and poor Pen was obliged to betake himself to the pestle and apron. He always detested the trade, and it was only necessity, and the offer of his mother's brother, a London apothecary of low family, into which Pendennis's father had demeaned himself by marrying, that forced John Pendennis into so odious a calling.

He quickly after his apprenticeship parted from the coarse-minded practitioner his relative, and set up for himself at Bath with his modest medical ensign. He had for some time a hard struggle with poverty; and it was all he could do to keep the shop and its gilt ornaments in decent repair, and his bed-ridden mother in comfort: but Lady Ribstone happening to be passing to the Rooms with an intoxicated Irish chairman who bumped her ladyship up against Pen's very door-post, and drove his chair-pole through the handsomest pink bottle in the surgeon's window, alighted screaming from her vehicle, and was accommodated with a chair in Mr. Pendennis's shop, where she was brought round with cinnamon and sal-volatile.

Mr. Pendennis's manners were so uncommonly gentlemanlike and soothing, that her ladyship, the wife of Sir Pepin Ribstone, of Codlingbury, in the county of Somerset, Bart., appointed her preserver, as she called him, apothecary to her person and family, which was very large. Master Ribstone coming home for the Christmas holidays from Eton, over-ate himself and had a fever, in which Mr. Pendennis treated him with the greatest skill and tenderness. In a word, he got the good graces of the Codlingbury family, and from that day began to prosper. The good company of Bath patronised him, and amongst the ladies especially he was beloved and admired. First his humble little shop became a smart one: then he discarded the selling of tooth-brushes and perfumery, as unworthy of a gentleman of an ancient lineage: then he shut up the shop altogether, and only had a little surgery attended by a genteel young man: then he had a gig with a man to drive him; and, before her exit from this world, his poor old mother had the happiness of seeing from her bedroom window to which her chair was rolled, her beloved John step into a close carriage of his own, a one-horse carriage it is true, but with the arms of the family of Pendennis handsomely emblazoned on the panels. "What would Arthur say now?" she asked, speaking of a younger son of hers — "who never so much as once came to see my dearest Johnny through all the time of his poverty and struggles!"

"Captain Pendennis is with his regiment in India, mother," Mr. Pendennis remarked, "and, if you please, I wish you would not call me Johnny before the young man — before Mr. Parkins."

Presently the day came when she ceased to call her son by the name of Johnny, or by any other title of endearment or affection; and his house was very lonely without that kind though querulous voice. He had his night-bell altered and placed in the room in which the good old lady had grumbled for many a long year, and he slept in the great large bed there. He was upwards of forty years old when these events befell; before the war was over; before George the Magnificent came to the throne; before this history indeed: but what is a gentleman without his pedigree? Pendennis, by this time, had his

handsomely framed and glazed, and hanging up in his drawing-room between the pictures of Codlingbury House in Somersetshire, and St. Boniface's College, Cambridge, where he had passed the brief and happy days of his early manhood. As for the pedigree he had taken it out of a trunk, as Sterne's officer called for his sword, now that he was a gentleman and could show it.

About the time of Mrs. Pendennis's demise, another of her son's patients likewise died at Bath; that virtuous woman, old Lady Pontypool, daughter of Reginald twelfth Earl of Bareacres, and by consequence great-grand-aunt to the present Earl, and widow of John second Lord Pontypool, and likewise of the Reverend Jonas Wales, of the Armageddon Chapel, Clifton. For the last five years of her life her ladyship had been attended by Miss Helen Thistlewood, a very distant relative of the noble house of Bareacres, before mentioned, and daughter of Lieutenant R. Thistlewood, R.N., killed at the battle of Copenhagen. Under Lady Pontypool's roof Miss Thistlewood found a comfortable shelter, as far as boarding and lodging went, but suffered under such an infernal tyranny as only women can inflict on, or bear from, one another: the Doctor, who paid his visits to my Lady Pontypool at least twice a day, could not but remark the angelical sweetness and kindness with which the young lady bore her elderly relative's insults; and it was, as they were going in the fourth mourning coach to attend her ladyship's venerated remains to Bath Abbey, where they now repose, that he looked at her sweet pale face and resolved upon putting a certain question to her, the very nature of which made his pulse beat ninety, at least.

He was older than she by more than twenty years, and at no time the most ardent of men. Perhaps he had had a love affair in early life which he had to strangle — perhaps all early love affairs ought to be strangled or drowned, like so many blind kittens: well, at three-and-forty he was a collected quiet little gentleman in black stockings with a bald head, and a few days after the ceremony he called to see her, and, as he felt her pulse, he kept hold of her hand in his, and asked her where she was going to live now that the Pontypool family had come down upon the property, which was being nailed into boxes, and packed into hampers, and swaddled up with haybands, and buried in straw, and locked under three keys in green baize plate-chests, and carted away under the eyes of poor Miss Helen — he asked her where she was going to live finally.

Her eyes filled with tears, and she said she did not know. She had a little money. The old lady had left her a thousand pounds, indeed; and she would go into a boarding-house or into a school: in fine, she did not know where.

Then Pendennis, looking into her pale face, and keeping hold of her cold little hand, asked her if she would come and live with him? He was old compared to — to so blooming a young lady as Miss Thistlewood (Pendennis was of the grave old complimentary school of gentlemen and apothecaries), but he was of good birth, and, he flattered himself, of good principles and temper. His prospects were good, and daily mending. He was alone in the world, and had need of a kind and constant companion, whom it would be the study of his life to make happy; in a word, he recited to her a little speech, which he had composed that morning in bed, and rehearsed and perfected in his carriage, as he was coming to wait upon the young lady.

Perhaps if he had had an early love-passage, she too had one day hoped for a different lot than to be wedded to a little gentleman who rapped his teeth and smiled artificially, who was laboriously polite to the butler as he slid upstairs into the drawing-room, and profusely civil to the lady's-maid, who waited at the bed-room door; for whom her old patroness used to ring as for a servant, and who came with even more eagerness; who got up stories, as he sent in draughts, for his patient's amusement and his own profit: perhaps she would have chosen a different man — but she knew, on the other hand, how worthy Pendennis was, how prudent, how honourable; how good he had been to his mother, and constant in his care of her; and the upshot of this interview was, that she, blushing very much, made Pendennis an extremely low curtsy, and asked leave to — to consider his very kind proposal.

They were married in the dull Bath season, which was the height of the season in London. And Pendennis having previously, through a professional friend, M.R.C.S., secured lodgings in Holles Street, Cavendish Square, took his wife thither in a chaise and pair; conducted her to the theatres, the Parks, and the Chapel Royal; showed her the folks going to a drawing-room, and, in a word, gave her all the pleasures of the town. He likewise left cards upon Lord Pontypool, upon the Right Honourable the Earl of Bareacres, and upon Sir Pepin and Lady Ribstone, his earliest and kindest patrons. Bareacres took no notice of the cards. Pontypool called, admired Mrs. Pendennis, and said Lady Pontypool would come and see her, which her ladyship did, per proxy of John her footman, who brought her card, and an invitation to a concert five weeks off. Pendennis was back in his little one-horse carriage, dispensing draughts and pills at that time: but the Ribstones asked him and Mrs. Pendennis to an entertainment, of which Mr. Pendennis bragged to the last day of his life.

The secret ambition of Mr. Pendennis had always been to be a gentleman. It takes much time and careful saving for a provincial doctor, whose gains are not very large, to lay by enough money wherewith to purchase a house and land: but besides our friend's own frugality and prudence, fortune aided him considerably in his endeavour, and brought him to the point which he so panted to attain. He laid out some money very advantageously in the purchase of a house and small estate close upon the village of Clavering before mentioned. Words cannot describe, nor did he himself ever care to confess to any one, his pride when he found himself a real landed proprietor, and could walk over acres of which he was the master. A lucky purchase which he had made of shares in a copper-mine added very considerably to his wealth, and he realised with great prudence while this mine was still at its full vogue. Finally, he sold his business at Bath, to Mr. Parkins, for a handsome sum of ready money, and for an annuity to be paid to him during a certain number of years after he had for ever retired from the handling of the mortar and pestle.

Arthur Pendennis, his son, was eight years old at the time of this event, so that it is no wonder that the latter, who left Bath and the surgery so young, should forget the existence of such a place almost entirely, and that his father's hands had ever been dirtied by the compounding of odious pills, or the preparation of filthy plasters. The old man never spoke about the shop himself, never alluded to it; called in the medical practitioner of Clavering to attend his family when occasion arrived; sunk the black breeches and stockings altogether; attended market and sessions, and wore a bottle-green coat and brass buttons with drab gaiters, just as if he had been an English gentleman all his life. He used to stand at his lodge-gate, and see the coaches come in, and bow gravely to the guards and coachmen as they touched their hats and drove by. It was he who founded the Clavering Book Club: and set up the Samaritan Soup and Blanket Society. It was he who brought the mail, which used to run through Cacklefield before, away from that village and through Clavering. At church he was equally active as a vestryman and a worshipper. At market every Thursday, he went from pen to stall, looked at samples of oats, and munched corn, felt beasts, punched geese in the breast, and weighed them with a knowing air, and did business with the farmers at the Clavering Arms, as well as the oldest frequenter of that house of call. It was now his shame, as it formerly was his pride, to be called Doctor, and those who wished to please him always gave him the title of Squire.

Heaven knows where they came from, but a whole range of Pendennis portraits presently hung round the Doctor's oak dining-room; Lelys and Vandykes he vowed all the portraits to be, and when questioned as to the history of the originals, would vaguely say they were 'ancestors of his.' You could see by his wife's looks that she disbelieved in these genealogical legends, for she generally endeavoured to turn the conversation when he commenced them. But his little boy believed them to their fullest extent, and Roger Pendennis of Agincourt, Arthur Pendennis of Crecy, General Pendennis of Blenheim and Oudenarde, were as real and actual beings for this young gentleman as — whom shall we say? — as Robinson Crusoe, or Peter Wilkins, or the Seven Champions of Christendom, whose histories were in his library.

Pendennis's fortune, which, at the best, was not above eight hundred pounds a year, did not, with the best economy and management, permit of his living with the great folks of the county; but he had a decent comfortable society of the second-best sort. If they were not the roses, they lived near the roses, as it were, and had a good deal of the odour of genteel life. They had out their plate, and dined each other round in the moonlight nights twice a year, coming a dozen miles to these festivals; and besides the county, the Pendennises had the society of the town of Clavering, as much as, nay, more than they liked: for Mrs. Pybus was always poking about Helen's conservatories, and intercepting the operation of her soup-tickets and coal-clubs Captain Glanders (H. P., 50th Dragoon Guards) was for ever swaggering about the Squire's stables and gardens, and endeavouring to enlist him in his quarrels with the Vicar, with the Postmaster, with the Reverend F. Wapshot of Clavering Grammar School, for overflogging his son, Anglesea Glanders — with all the village in fine. And Pendennis and his wife often blessed themselves, that their house of Fair Oaks was nearly a mile out of Clavering, or their premises would never have been free from the prying eyes and prattle of one or other of the male and female inhabitants there.

Fairoaks lawn comes down to the little river Brawl, and on the other side were the plantations and woods (as much as were left of them) of Clavering Park, Sir Francis Clavering, Bart. The park was let out in pasture and fed down by sheep and cattle, when the Pendennises came first to live at Fair Oaks. Shutters were up in the house; a splendid freestone palace, with great stairs, statues, and porticos, whereof you may see a picture in the 'Beauties of England and Wales.' Sir Richard Clavering, Sir Francis's-grandfather, had commenced the ruin of the family by the building of this palace: his successor had achieved the ruin by living in it. The present Sir Francis was abroad somewhere; nor could anybody be found rich enough to rent that enormous mansion, through the deserted rooms, mouldy clanking halls, and dismal galleries of which, Arthur

Pendennis many a time walked trembling when he was a boy. At sunset, from the lawn of Fair Oaks, there was a pretty sight: it and the opposite park of Clavering were in the habit of putting on a rich golden tinge, which became them both wonderfully. The upper windows of the great house flamed so as to make your eyes wink; the little river ran off noisily westward, and was lost in a sombre wood, behind which the towers of the old abbey church of Clavering (whereby that town is called Clavering St. Mary's to the present day) rose up in purple splendour. Little Arthur's figure and his mother's, cast long blue shadows over the grass; and he would repeat in a low voice (for a scene of great natural beauty always moved the boy, who inherited this sensibility from his mother) certain lines beginning, "These are thy glorious works, Parent of Good; Almighty! thine this universal frame," greatly to Mrs. Pendennis's delight. Such walks and conversation generally ended in a profusion of filial and maternal embraces; for to love and to pray were the main occupations of this dear woman's life; and I have often heard Pendennis say in his wild way, that he felt that he was sure of going to heaven, for his mother never could be happy there without him.

As for John Pendennis, as the father of the family, and that sort of thing, everybody had the greatest respect for him: and his orders were obeyed like those of the Medes and Persians. His hat was as well brushed, perhaps, as that of any man in this empire. His meals were served at the same minute every day, and woe to those who came late, as little Pen, a disorderly little rascal, sometimes did. Prayers were recited, his letters were read, his business dispatched, his stables and garden inspected, his hen-houses and kennel, his barn and pigstye visited, always at regular hours. After dinner he always had a nap with the Globe newspaper on his knee, and his yellow bandanna handkerchief on his face (Major Pendennis sent the yellow handkerchiefs from India, and his brother had helped in the purchase of his majority, so that they were good friends now). And so, as his dinner took place at six o'clock to a minute, and the sunset business alluded to may be supposed to have occurred at about half-past seven, it is probable that he did not much care for the view in front of his lawn windows or take any share in the poetry and caresses which were taking place there.

They seldom occurred in his presence. However frisky they were before, mother and child were hushed and quiet when Mr. Pendennis walked into the drawing-room, his newspaper under his arm. And here, while little Pen, buried in a great chair, read all the books of which he could lay hold, the Squire perused his own articles in the 'Gardener's Gazette,' or took a solemn hand at picquet with Mrs. Pendennis, or an occasional friend from the village.

Pendennis usually took care that at least one of his grand dinners should take place when his brother, the Major, who, on the return of his regiment from India and New South Wales, had sold out and gone upon half-pay, came to pay his biennial visit to Fair Oaks. "My brother, Major Pendennis," was a constant theme of the retired Doctor's conversation. All the family delighted in my brother the Major. He was the link which bound them to the great world of London, and the fashion. He always brought down the last news of the nobility, and was in the constant habit of dining with lords and great folks. He spoke of such with soldierlike respect and decorum. He would say, "My Lord Bareacres has been good enough to invite me to Bareacres for the pheasant shooting," or, "My Lord Steyne is so kind as to wish for my presence at Stillbrook for the Easter holidays;" and you may be sure the whereabouts of my brother the Major was carefully made known by worthy Mr. Pendennis to his friends at the Clavering Reading room, at Justice-meetings, or at the County-town. Their carriages would come from ten miles round to call upon Major Pendennis in his visits to Fair Oaks; the fame of his fashion as a man about town was established throughout the county. There was a talk of his marrying Miss Hunkle, of Lilybank, old Hunkle the Attorney's daughter, with at least fifteen hundred a-year to her fortune: but my brother the Major refused this negotiation, advantageous as it might seem to most persons. "As a bachelor," he said, "nobody cares how poor I am. I have the happiness to live with people who are so highly placed in the world, that a few hundreds or thousands a year more or less can make no difference in the estimation in which they are pleased to hold me. Miss Hunkle, though a most respectable lady, is not in possession of either the birth or the manners, which would entitle her to be received into the sphere in which I have the honour to move. I shall live and die an old bachelor, John: and your worthy friend, Miss Hunkle, I have no doubt, will find some more worthy object of her affection, than a worn-out old soldier on half-pay." Time showed the correctness of the surmise of the old man of the world; Miss Hunkle married a young French nobleman, and is now at this moment living at Lilybank, under the title of Baroness de Carambole, having been separated from her wild young scapegrace of a Baron very shortly after their union.

The Major was a great favourite with almost all the little establishment of Fair Oaks. He was as good-natured as he was well bred, and had a sincere liking and regard for his sister-in-law, whom he pronounced, and with perfect truth, to be as fine a lady as any in England, and an honour to the family. Indeed, Mrs. Pendennis's tranquil beauty, her natural

sweetness and kindness, and that simplicity and dignity which a perfect purity and innocence are sure to bestow upon a handsome woman, rendered her quite worthy of her brother's praises. I think it is not national prejudice which makes me believe that a high-bred English lady is the most complete of all Heaven's subjects in this world. In whom else do you see so much grace, and so much virtue; so much faith, and so much tenderness; with such a perfect refinement and chastity? And by high-bred ladies I don't mean duchesses and countesses. Be they ever so high in station, they can be but ladies, and no more. But almost every man who lives in the world has the happiness, let us hope, of counting a few such persons amongst his circle of acquaintance — women, in whose angelical natures, there is something awful, as well as beautiful, to contemplate; at whose feet the wildest and fiercest of us must fall down and humble ourselves; — in admiration of that adorable purity which never seems to do or to think wrong.

Arthur Pendennis had the good fortune to have a mother endowed with these happy qualities. During his childhood and youth, the boy thought of her as little less than an angel — as a supernatural being, all wisdom, love, and beauty. When her husband drove her into the county town, or to the assize balls or concerts there, he would step into the assembly with his wife on his arm, and look the great folks in the face, as much as to say, "Look at that, my lord; can any of you show me a woman like that?" She enraged some country ladies with three times her money, by a sort of desperate perfection which they found in her. Miss Pybus said she was cold and haughty; Miss Pierce, that she was too proud for her station; Mrs. Wapshot, as a doctor of divinity's lady, would have the pas of her, who was only the wife of a medical practitioner. In the meanwhile, this lady moved through the world quite regardless of all the comments that were made in her praise or disfavour. She did not seem to know that she was admired or hated for being so perfect: but carried on calmly through life, saying her prayers, loving her family, helping her neighbours, and doing her duty.

That even a woman should be faultless, however, is an arrangement not permitted by nature, which assigns to us mental defects, as it awards to us headaches, illnesses, or death; without which the scheme of the world could not be carried on — nay, some of the best qualities of mankind could not be brought into exercise. As pain produces or elicits fortitude and endurance; difficulty, perseverance; poverty, industry and ingenuity; danger, courage and what not; so the very virtues, on the other hand, will generate some vices: and, in fine, Mrs. Pendennis had that vice which Miss Pybus and Miss Pierce discovered in her, namely, that of pride; which did not vest itself so much in her own person, as in that of her family. She spoke about Mr. Pendennis (a worthy little gentleman enough, but there are others as good as he) with an awful reverence, as if he had been the Pope of Rome on his throne, and she a cardinal kneeling at his feet, and giving him incense. The Major she held to be a sort of Bayard among Majors: and as for her son Arthur she worshipped that youth with an ardour which the young scapegrace accepted almost as coolly as the statue of the Saint in Saint Peter's receives the rapturous osculations which the faithful deliver on his toe.

This unfortunate superstition and idol-worship of this good woman was the cause of a great deal of the misfortune which befell the young gentleman who is the hero of this history, and deserves therefore to be mentioned at the outset of his story.

Arthur Pendennis's schoolfellows at the Greyfriars School state that, as a boy, he was in no ways remarkable either as a dunce or as a scholar. He did, in fact, just as much as was required of him, and no more. If he was distinguished for anything it was for verse-writing: but was his enthusiasm ever so great, it stopped when he had composed the number of lines demanded by the regulations (unlike young Swettenham, for instance, who, with no more of poetry in his composition than Mr. Wakley, yet would bring up a hundred dreary hexameters to the master after a half-holiday; or young Fluxmore, who not only did his own verses, but all the fifth form's besides). He never read to improve himself out of school-hours, but, on the contrary, devoured all the novels, plays, and poetry, on which he could lay his hands. He never was flogged, but it was a wonder how he escaped the whipping-post. When he had money he spent it royally in tarts for himself and his friends; he has been known to disburse nine and sixpence out of ten shillings awarded to him in a single day. When he had no funds he went on tick. When he could get no credit he went without, and was almost as happy. He has been known to take a thrashing for a crony without saying a word; but a blow, ever so slight from a friend, would make him roar. To fighting he was averse from his earliest youth, as indeed to physic, the Greek Grammar, or any other exertion, and would engage in none of them, except at the last extremity. He seldom if ever told lies, and never bullied little boys. Those masters or seniors who were kind to him, he loved with boyish ardour. And though the Doctor, when he did not know his Horace, or could not construe his Greek play, said that that boy Pendennis was a disgrace to the school, a candidate for ruin in this world, and perdition in the next; a profligate who would most likely bring his venerable father to

ruin and his mother to a dishonoured grave, and the like — yet as the Doctor made use of these compliments to most of the boys in the place (which has not turned out an unusual number of felons and pickpockets), little Pen, at first uneasy and terrified by these charges, became gradually accustomed to hear them; and he has not, in fact, either murdered his parents, or committed any act worthy of transportation or hanging up to the present day.

There were many of the upper boys, among the Cistercians with whom Pendennis was educated, who assumed all the privileges of men long before they quitted that seminary. Many of them, for example, smoked cigars — and some had already begun the practice of inebriation. One had fought a duel with an Ensign in a marching, in consequence of a row at the theatre — another actually kept a buggy and horse at a livery stable in Covent Garden, and might be seen driving any Sunday in Hyde Park with a groom with squared arms and armorial buttons by his side. Many of the seniors were in love, and showed each other in confidence poems addressed to, or letters and locks of hair received from, young ladies — but Pen, a modest and timid youth, rather envied these than imitated them as yet. He had not got beyond the theory as yet — the practice of life was all to come. And by the way, ye tender mothers and sober fathers of Christian families, a prodigious thing that theory of life is as orally learned at a great public school. Why, if you could hear those boys of fourteen who blush before mothers and sneak off in silence in the presence of their daughters, talking among each other — it would be the women's turn to blush then. Before he was twelve years old and if while his mother fancied him an angel of candour, little Pen had heard talk enough to make him quite awfully wise upon certain points — and so, Madam, has your pretty little rosy-cheeked son, who is coming home from school for the ensuing Christmas holidays. I don't say that the boy is lost, or that the innocence has left him which he had from 'Heaven, which is our home,' but that the shades of the prison-house are closing very fast over him, and that we are helping as much as possible to corrupt him.

Well — Pen had just made his public appearance in a coat with a tail, or *cauda virilis*, and was looking most anxiously in his little study-glass to see if his whiskers were growing, like those of more fortunate youths his companions; and, instead of the treble voice with which he used to speak and sing (for his singing voice was a very sweet one, and he used when little to be made to perform 'Home, sweet Home,' 'My pretty Page,' and a French song or two which his mother had taught him, and other ballads for the delectation of the senior boys), had suddenly plunged into a deep bass diversified by a squeak, which when he was called upon to construe in school set the master and scholars laughing he was about sixteen years old, in a word, when he was suddenly called away from his academic studies.

It was at the close of the forenoon school, and Pen had been unnoticed all the previous part of the morning till now, when the Doctor put him on to construe in a Greek play. He did not know a word of it, though little Timmins, his form-fellow, was prompting him with all his might. Pen had made a sad blunder or two when the awful Chief broke out upon him.

"Pendennis, sir," he said, "your idleness is incorrigible and your stupidity beyond example. You are a disgrace to your school, and to your family, and I have no doubt will prove so in after-life to your country. If that vice, sir, which is described to us as the root of all evil, be really what moralists have represented (and I have no doubt of the correctness of their opinion), for what a prodigious quantity of future crime and wickedness are you, unhappy boy, laying the seed! Miserable trifler! A boy who construes *de* and, instead of *de* but, at sixteen years of age is guilty not merely of folly, and ignorance, and dulness inconceivable, but of crime, of deadly crime, of filial ingratitude, which I tremble to contemplate. A boy, sir, who does not learn his Greek play cheats the parent who spends money for his education. A boy who cheats his parent is not very far from robbing or forging upon his neighbour. A man who forges on his neighbour pays the penalty of his crime at the gallows. And it is not such a one that I pity (for he will be deservedly cut off), but his maddened and heart-broken parents, who are driven to a premature grave by his crimes, or, if they live, drag on a wretched and dishonoured old age. Go on, sir, and I warn you that the very next mistake that you make shall subject you to the punishment of the rod. Who's that laughing? What ill-conditioned boy is there that dares to laugh?" shouted the Doctor.

Indeed, while the master was making this oration, there was a general titter behind him in the schoolroom. The orator had his back to the door of this ancient apartment, which was open, and a gentleman who was quite familiar with the place, for both Major Arthur and Mr. John Pendennis had been at the school, was asking the fifth-form boy who sat by the door for Pendennis. The lad grinning pointed to the culprit against whom the Doctor was pouring out the thunders of his just wrath — Major Pendennis could not help laughing. He remembered having stood under that very pillar where Pen the younger now stood, and having been assaulted by the Doctor's predecessor years and years ago. The intelligence was 'passed round' that it was Pendennis's uncle in an instant, and a hundred young faces wondering and giggling, between

terror and laughter, turned now to the new-comer and then to the awful Doctor.

The Major asked the fifth-form boy to carry his card up to the Doctor, which the lad did with an arch look. Major Pendennis had written on the card, "I must take A. P. home; his father is very ill."

As the Doctor received the card, and stopped his harangue with rather a seared look, the laughter of the boys, half constrained until then, burst out in a general shout. "Silence!" roared out the Doctor stamping with his foot. Pen looked up and saw who was his deliverer; the Major beckoned to him gravely with one of his white gloves, and tumbling down his books, Pen went across.

The Doctor took out his watch. It was two minutes to one. "We will take the Juvenal at afternoon school," he said, nodding to the Captain, and all the boys understanding the signal gathered up their books and poured out of the hall.

Young Pen saw by his uncle's face that something had happened at home. "Is there anything the matter with my mother?" he said. He could hardly speak, though, for emotion, and the tears which were ready to start.

"No," said the Major, "but your father's very ill. Go and pack your trunk directly; I have got a postchaise at the gate."

Pen went off quickly to his boarding-house to do as his uncle bade him; and the Doctor, now left alone in the schoolroom, came out to shake hands with his old schoolfellow. You would not have thought it was the same man. As Cinderella at a particular hour became, from a blazing and magnificent Princess, quite an ordinary little maid in a grey petticoat, so, as the clock struck one, all the thundering majesty and awful wrath of the schoolmaster disappeared.

"There is nothing serious, I hope," said the Doctor. "It is a pity to take the boy away unless there is. He is a very good boy, rather idle and unenergetic, but he is a very honest gentlemanlike little fellow, though I can't get him to construe as I wish. Won't you come in and have some luncheon? My wife will be very happy to see you."

But Major Pendennis declined the luncheon. He said his brother was very ill, had had a fit the day before, and it was a great question if they should see him alive.

"There's no other son, is there?" said the Doctor. The Major answered "No."

"And there's a good eh — a good eh — property I believe?" asked the other in an off-hand way.

"H'm — so so," said the Major. Whereupon this colloquy came to an end. And Arthur Pendennis got into the postchaise with his uncle never to come back to school any more.

As the chaise drove through Clavering, the hostler standing whistling under the archway of the Clavering Arms, winked the postilion ominously, as much as to say all was over. The gardener's wife came and opened the lodge-gates, and let the travellers through with a silent shake of the head. All the blinds were down at Fair Oaks — the face of the old footman was as blank when he let them in. Arthur's face was white too, with terror more than with grief. Whatever of warmth and love the deceased man might have had, and he adored his wife and loved and admired his son with all his heart, he had shut them up within himself; nor had the boy been ever able to penetrate that frigid outward barrier. But Arthur had been his father's pride and glory through life, and his name the last which John Pendennis had tried to articulate whilst he lay with his wife's hand clasping his own cold and clammy palm, as the flickering spirit went out into the darkness of death, and life and the world passed away from him.

The little girl, whose face had peered for a moment under the blinds as the chaise came up, opened the door from the stairs into the hall, and taking Arthur's hand silently as he stooped down to kiss her, led him upstairs to his mother. Old John opened the dining-room door for the Major. The room was darkened with the blinds down, and surrounded by all the gloomy pictures of the Pendennises. He drank a glass of wine. The bottle had been opened for the Squire four days before. His hat was brushed, and laid on the hall table: his newspapers, and his letter-bag, with John Pendennis, Esquire, Fair Oaks, engraved upon the brass plate, were there in waiting. The doctor and the lawyer from Clavering, who had seen the chaise pass through, came up in a gig half an hour after the Major's arrival, and entered by the back door. The former gave a detailed account of the seizure and demise of Mr. Pendennis, enlarged on his virtues and the estimation in which the neighbourhood held him; on what a loss he would be to the magistrates' bench, the County Hospital, etc. Mrs. Pendennis bore up wonderfully, he said, especially since Master Arthur's arrival. The lawyer stayed and dined with Major Pendennis, and they talked business all the evening. The Major was his brother's executor, and joint guardian to the boy with Mrs. Pendennis. Everything was left unreservedly to her, except in case of a second marriage — an occasion which might offer itself in the case of so young and handsome a woman, Mr. Tatham gallantly said, when different provisions were enacted by the deceased. The Major would of course take entire superintendence of everything under this most impressive and

melancholy occasion. Aware of this authority, old John the footman, when he brought Major Pendennis the candle to go to bed, followed afterwards with the plate-basket; and the next morning brought him the key of the hall clock — the Squire always used to wind it up of a Thursday, John said. Mrs. Pendennis's maid brought him messages from her mistress. She confirmed the doctor's report, of the comfort which Master Arthur's arrival had caused to his mother.

What passed between that lady and the boy is not of import. A veil should be thrown over those sacred emotions of love and grief. The maternal passion is a sacred mystery to me. What one sees symbolised in the Roman churches in the image of the Virgin Mother with a bosom bleeding with love, I think one may witness (and admire the Almighty bounty for) every day. I saw a Jewish lady, only yesterday, with a child at her knee, and from whose face towards the child there shone a sweetness so angelical, that it seemed to form a sort of glory round both. I protest I could have knelt before her too, and adored in her the Divine beneficence in endowing us with the maternal storge, which began with our race and sanctifies the history of mankind.

So it was with this, in a word, that Mrs. Pendennis comforted herself on the death of her husband, whom, however, she always revered as the best, the most upright, wise, high-minded, accomplished, and awful of men. If the women did not make idols of us, and if they saw us as we see each other, would life be bearable, or could society go on? Let a man pray that none of his womankind should form a just estimation of him. If your wife knew you as you are, neighbour, she would not grieve much about being your widow, and would let your grave-lamp go out very soon, or perhaps not even take the trouble to light it. Whereas Helen Pendennis put up the handsomest of memorials to her husband, and constantly renewed it with the most precious oil.

As for Arthur Pendennis, after that awful shock which the sight of his dead father must have produced on him, and the pity and feeling which such an event no doubt occasioned, I am not sure that in the very moment of the grief, and as he embraced his mother and tenderly consoled her, and promised to love her for ever, there was not springing up in his breast a feeling of secret triumph and exultation. He was the chief now and lord. He was Pendennis; and all round about him were his servants and handmaids. "You'll never send me away," little Laura said, tripping by him, and holding his hand. "You won't send me to school, will you, Arthur?"

Arthur kissed her and patted her head. No, she shouldn't go to school. As for going himself, that was quite out of the question. He had determined that that part of his life should not be renewed. In the midst of the general grief, and the corpse still lying above, he had leisure to conclude that he would have it all holidays for the future, that he wouldn't get up till he liked, or stand the bullying of the Doctor any more, and had made a hundred of such day-dreams and resolves for the future. How one's thoughts will travel! and how quickly our wishes beget them! When he with Laura in his hand went into the kitchen on his way to the dog-kennel, the fowl-houses, and other his favourite haunts, all the servants there assembled in great silence with their friends, and the labouring men and their wives, and Sally Potter who went with the post-bag to Clavering, and the baker's man from Clavering — all there assembled and drinking beer on the melancholy occasion — rose up on his entrance and bowed or curtsied to him. They never used to do so last holidays, he felt at once and with indescribable pleasure. The cook cried out, "O Lord," and whispered, "How Master Arthur do grow!" Thomas, the groom, in the act of drinking, put down the jug alarmed before his master. Thomas's master felt the honour keenly. He went through and looked at the pointers. As Flora put her nose up to his waistcoat, and Ponto, yelling with pleasure, hurtled at his chain, Pen patronised the dogs, and said, "Poo Ponto, poo Flora," in his most condescending manner. And then he went and looked at Laura's hens, and at the pigs, and at the orchard, and at the dairy; perhaps he blushed to think that it was only last holidays he had in a manner robbed the great apple-tree, and been scolded by the dairymaid for taking cream.

They buried John Pendennis, Esquire, "formerly an eminent medical practitioner at Bath, and subsequently an able magistrate, a benevolent landlord, and a benefactor to many charities and public institutions in this neighbourhood and county," with one of the most handsome funerals that had been seen since Sir Roger Clavering was buried here, the clerk said, in the abbey church of Clavering St. Mary's. A fair marble slab, from which the above inscription is copied, was erected over the Fair Oaks' pew in the church. On it you may see the Pendennis coat of arms, and crest, an eagle looking towards the sun, with the motto 'nec tenui penna,' to the present day. Doctor Portman alluded to the deceased most handsomely and affectingly, as "our dear departed friend," in his sermon next Sunday; and Arthur Pendennis reigned in his stead.

CHAPTER III

IN WHICH PENDENNIS APPEARS AS A VERY YOUNG MAN INDEED

Arthur was about sixteen years old, we have said, when he began to reign; in person (for I see that the artist who is to illustrate this book, and who makes sad work of the likeness, will never be able to take my friend off) he had what his friends would call a dumpy, but his mamma styled a neat little figure. His hair was of a healthy brown colour, which looks like gold in the sunshine, his face was round, rosy, freckled, and good-humoured, his whiskers (when those facial ornaments for which he sighed so ardently were awarded to him by nature) were decidedly of a reddish hue; in fact, without being a beauty, he had such a frank, good-natured kind face, and laughed so merrily at you out of his honest blue eyes, that no wonder Mrs. Pendennis thought him the pride of the whole county. Between the ages of sixteen and eighteen he rose from five feet six to five feet eight inches in height, at which altitude he paused. But his mother wondered at it. He was three inches taller than his father. Was it possible that any man could grow to be three inches taller than Mr. Pendennis?

You may be certain he never went back to school; the discipline of the establishment did not suit him, and he liked being at home much better. The question of his return was debated, and his uncle was for his going back. The Doctor wrote his opinion that it was most important for Arthur's success in after-life that he should know a Greek play thoroughly, but Pen adroitly managed to hint to his mother what a dangerous place Greyfriars was, and what sad wild fellows some of the chaps there were, and the timid soul, taking alarm at once, acceded to his desire to stay at home.

Then Pen's uncle offered to use his influence with His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief, who was pleased to be very kind to him, and proposed to get Pen a commission in the Foot Guards. Pen's heart leaped at this: he had been to hear the band at St. James's play on a Sunday, when he went out to his uncle. He had seen Tom Ricketts, of the fourth form, who used to wear a jacket and trousers so ludicrously tight, that the elder boys could not forbear using him in the quality of a butt or 'cockshy'— he had seen this very Ricketts arrayed in crimson and gold, with an immense bear-skin cap on his head, staggering under the colours of the regiment. Tom had recognised him and gave him a patronising nod. Tom, a little wretch whom he had cut over the back with a hockey-stick last quarter — and there he was in the centre of the square, rallying round the flag of his country, surrounded by bayonets, crossbelts, and scarlet, the band blowing trumpets and banging cymbals — talking familiarly to immense warriors with tufts to their chins and Waterloo medals. What would not Pen have given to wear such epaulettes and enter such a service?

But Helen Pendennis, when this point was proposed to her by her son, put on a face full of terror and alarm. She said she "did not quarrel with others who thought differently, but that in her opinion a Christian had no right to make the army a profession. Mr. Pendennis never, never would have permitted his son to be a soldier. Finally, she should be very unhappy if he thought of it." Now Pen would have as soon cut off his nose and ears as deliberately, and of aforethought malice, made his mother unhappy; and, as he was of such a generous disposition that he would give away anything to any one, he instantly made a present of his visionary red coat and epaulettes and his ardour for military glory to his mother.

She thought him the noblest creature in the world. But Major Pendennis, when the offer of the commission was acknowledged and refused, wrote back a curt and somewhat angry letter to the widow, and thought his nephew was rather a spooney.

He was contented, however, when he saw the boy's performances out hunting at Christmas, when the Major came down as usual to Fairoaks. Pen had a very good mare, and rode her with uncommon pluck and grace. He took his fences with great coolness, and yet with judgment, and without bravado. He wrote to the chaps at school about his top-boots, and his feats across country. He began to think seriously of a scarlet coat: and his mother must own that she thought it would become him remarkably well; though, of course, she passed hours of anguish during his absence, and daily expected to see him brought home on a shutter.

With these amusements, in rather too great plenty, it must not be assumed that Pen neglected his studies altogether. He had a natural taste for reading every possible kind of book which did not fall into his school-course. It was only when they forced his head into the waters of knowledge, that he refused to drink. He devoured all the books at home from

Inchbald's Theatre to White's Farriery; he ransacked the neighbouring book-cases. He found at Clavering an old cargo of French novels, which he read with all his might; and he would sit for hours perched upon the topmost bar of Doctor Portman's library steps with a folio on his knees, whether it were Hakluyt's Travels, Hobbes's Leviathan, Augustini Opera, or Chaucer's Poems. He and the Vicar were very good friends, and from his Reverence, Pen learned that honest taste for port wine which distinguished him through life. And as for that dear good woman, Mrs. Portman, who was not in the least jealous, though her Doctor avowed himself in love with Mrs. Pendennis, whom he pronounced to be by far the finest lady in the county — all her grief was, as she looked up fondly at Pen perched on the book-ladder, that her daughter, Minny, was too old for him — as indeed she was — Miss Myra Portman being at that period only two years younger than Pen's mother, and weighing as much as Pen and Mrs. Pendennis together.

Are these details insipid? Look back, good friend, at your own youth, and ask how was that? I like to think of a well-nurtured boy, brave and gentle, warm-hearted and loving, and looking the world in the face with kind honest eyes. What bright colours it wore then, and how you enjoyed it! A man has not many years of such time. He does not know them whilst they are with him. It is only when they are passed long away that he remembers how dear and happy they were.

In order to keep Mr. Pen from indulging in that idleness of which his friend the Doctor of the Cistercians had prophesied such awful consequences, Mr. Smirke, Dr. Portman's curate, was engaged at a liberal salary, to walk or ride over from Clavering and pass several hours daily with the young gentleman. Smirke was a man perfectly faultless at a tea-table, wore a curl on his fair forehead, and tied his neck-cloth with a melancholy grace. He was a decent scholar and mathematician, and taught Pen as much as the lad was ever disposed to learn, which was not much. For Pen had soon taken the measure of his tutor, who, when he came riding into the court-yard at Fair Oaks on his pony, turned out his toes so absurdly, and left such a gap between his knees and the saddle, that it was impossible for any lad endowed with a sense of humour to respect such an equestrian. He nearly killed Smirke with terror by putting him on his mare, and taking him a ride over a common, where the county fox-hounds (then bunted by that staunch old sportsman, Mr. Hardhead, of Dumplingbears) happened to meet. Mr. Smirke, on Pen's mare, Rebecca (she was named after Pen's favourite heroine, the daughter of Isaac of York), astounded the hounds as much as he disgusted the huntsman, laming one of the former by persisting in riding amongst the pack, and receiving a speech from the latter, more remarkable for energy of language, than any oration he had ever heard since he left the bargemen on the banks of Isis.

Smirke confided to his pupil his poems both Latin and English; and presented to Mrs. Pendennis a volume of the latter, printed at Clapham, his native place. The two read the ancient poets together, and rattled through them at a pleasant rate, very different from that steady grubbing pace with which the Cistercians used to go over the classic ground, scenting out each word as they went, and digging up every root in the way. Pen never liked to halt, but made his tutor construe when he was at fault, and thus galloped through the Iliad and the Odyssey, the tragic playwrights, writers, and the charming wicked Aristophanes (whom he vowed to be the greatest poet of all). But he went at such a pace that, though he certainly galloped through a considerable extent of the ancient country, he clean forgot it in after-life, and had only such a vague remembrance of his early classic course as a man has in the House of Commons, let us say, who still keeps up two or three quotations; or a reviewer who, just for decency's sake, hints at a little Greek. Our people are the most prosaic in the world, but the most faithful; and with curious reverence we keep up and transmit, from generation to generation, the superstition of what we call the education of a gentleman.

Besides the ancient poets, you may be sure Pen read the English with great gusto. Smirke sighed and shook his head sadly both about Byron and Moore. But Pen was a sworn fire-worshipper and a Corsair; he had them by heart, and used to take little Laura into the window and say, "Zuleika, I am not thy brother," in tones so tragic that they caused the solemn little maid to open her great eyes still wider. She sat, until the proper hour for retirement, sewing at Mrs. Pendennis's knee, and listening to Pen reading out to her of nights without comprehending one word of what he read.

He read Shakspeare to his mother (which she said she liked, but didn't), and Byron, and Pope, and his favourite Lalla Rookh, which pleased her indifferently. But as for Bishop Heber, and Mrs. Hemans above all, this lady used to melt right away, and be absorbed into her pocket-handkerchief, when Pen read those authors to her in his kind boyish voice. The 'Christian Year' was a book which appeared about that time. The son and the mother whispered it to each other with awe — faint, very faint, and seldom in after-life Pendennis heard that solemn church-music: but he always loved the remembrance of it, and of the times when it struck on his heart, and he walked over the fields full of hope and void of doubt, as the church-bells rang on Sunday morning.

It was at this period of his existence, that Pen broke out in the Poets' Corner of the County Chronicle, with some verses with which he was perfectly well satisfied. His are the verses signed 'NEP.,' addressed 'To a Tear;' 'On the Anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo;' 'To Madame Caradori singing at the Assize Meetings;' 'On Saint Bartholomew's Day' (a tremendous denunciation of Popery, and a solemn warning to the people of England to rally against emancipating the Roman Catholics), etc., etc. — all which masterpieces, Mrs. Pendennis no doubt keeps to this day, along with his first socks, the first cutting of his hair, his bottle, and other interesting relics of his infancy. He used to gallop Rebecca over the neighbouring Dumpling Downs, or into the county town, which, if you please, we shall call Chatteris, spouting his own poems, and filled with quite a Byronic afflatus as he thought.

His genius at this time was of a decidedly gloomy cast. He brought his mother a tragedy, in which, though he killed sixteen people before the second act, it made her laugh so, that he thrust the masterpiece into the fire in a pet. He projected an epic poem in blank verse, 'Cortez, or the Conqueror of Mexico, and the Inca's Daughter.' He wrote part of 'Seneca, or the Fatal Bath,' and 'Ariadne in Naxos;' classical pieces, with choruses and strophes and antistrophes, which sadly puzzled poor Mrs. Pendennis; and began a 'History of the Jesuits,' in which he lashed that Order with tremendous severity, and warned his Protestant fellow-countrymen of their machinations. His loyalty did his mother's heart good to witness. He was a staunch, unflinching Church-and-King man in those days; and at the election, when Sir Giles Beanfield stood on the Blue interest, against Lord Trehawk, Lord Eyrie's son, a Whig and a friend of Popery, Arthur Pendennis, with an immense bow for himself, which his mother made, and with a blue ribbon for Rebecca, rode alongside of the Reverend Doctor Portman, on his grey mare Dowdy, and at the head of the Clavering voters, whom the Doctor brought up to plump for the Protestant Champion.

On that day Pen made his first speech at the Blue Hotel: and also, it appears, for the first time in his life — took a little more wine than was good for him. Mercy! what a scene it was at Fair Oaks, when he rode back at ever so much o'clock at night. What moving about of lanterns in the court-yard and stables, though the moon was shining out; what a gathering of servants, as Pen came home, clattering over the bridge and up the stableyard, with half a score of the Clavering voters yelling after him the Blue song of the election.

He wanted them all to come in and have some wine — some very good Madeira — some capital Madeira — John, go and get some Madeira — and there is no knowing what the farmers would have done, had not Madam Pendennis made her appearance in a white wrapper, with a candle — and scared those zealous Blues so by the sight of her pale handsome face, that they touched their hats and rode off.

Besides these amusements and occupations in which Mr. Pen indulged, there was one which forms the main business and pleasure of youth, if the poets tell us aright, whom Pen was always studying; and this young fellow's heart was so ardent, and his imagination so eager, that it is not to be expected he should long escape the passion to which we allude, and which, ladies, you have rightly guessed to be that of Love. Pen sighed for it first in secret, and, like the love-sick swain in Ovid, opened his breast and said, "Aura, veni." What generous youth is there that has not courted some such windy mistress in his time?

Yes, Pen began to feel the necessity of a first love — of a consuming passion — of an object on which he could concentrate all those vague floating fancies under which he sweetly suffered — of a young lady to whom he could really make verses, and whom he could set up and adore, in place of those unsubstantial Ianthes and Zuleikas to whom he addressed the outpourings of his gushing muse. He read his favourite poems over and over again, he called upon Alma Venus the delight of gods and men, he translated Anacreon's odes, and picked out passages suitable to his complaint from Waller, Dryden, Prior, and the like. Smirke and he were never weary, in their interviews, of discoursing about love. The faithless tutor entertained him with sentimental conversations in place of lectures on algebra and Greek; for Smirke was in love too. Who could help it, being in daily intercourse with such a woman? Smirke was madly in love (as far as such a mild flame as Mr. Smirke's may be called madness) with Mrs. Pendennis. That honest lady, sitting down below stairs teaching little Laura to play the piano, or devising flannel petticoats for the poor round about her, or otherwise busied with the calm routine of her modest and spotless Christian life, was little aware what storms were brewing in two bosoms upstairs in the study — in Pen's, as he sate in his shooting jacket, with his elbows on the green study-table, and his hands clutching his curly brown hair, Homer under his nose — and in worthy Mr. Smirke's, with whom he was reading. Here they would talk about Helen and Andromache. "Andromache's like my mother," Pen used to avouch; "but I say, Smirke, by Jove I'd cut off my nose to see Helen;" and he would spout certain favourite lines which the reader will find in their proper place in the

third book. He drew portraits of her — they are extant still — with straight noses and enormous eyes, and ‘Arthur Pendennis delineavit et pinxit’ gallantly written underneath.

As for Mr. Smirke he naturally preferred Andromache. And in consequence he was uncommonly kind to Pen. He gave him his Elzevir Horace, of which the boy was fond, and his little Greek Testament which his own mamma at Clapham had purchased and presented to him. He bought him a silver pencil-case; and in the matter of learning let him do just as much or as little as ever he pleased. He always seemed to be on the point of unbosoming himself to Pen: nay, he confessed to the latter that he had a — an attachment, an ardently cherished attachment, about which Pendennis longed to hear, and said, “Tell us, old chap, is she handsome? has she got blue eyes or black?” But Doctor Portman’s curate, heaving a gentle sigh, cast up his eyes to the ceiling, and begged Pen faintly to change the conversation. Poor Smirke! He invited Pen to dine at his lodgings over Madame Fribsby’s, the milliner’s, in Clavering; and once when it was raining, and Mrs. Pendennis, who had driven in her pony-chaise into Clavering with respect to some arrangements, about leaving off mourning probably, was prevailed upon to enter the curate’s apartments, he sent out for pound-cakes instantly. The sofa on which she sate became sacred to him from that day: and he kept flowers in the glass which she drank from ever after.

As Mrs. Pendennis was never tired of hearing the praises of her son, we may be certain that this rogue of a tutor neglected no opportunity of conversing with her upon that subject. It might be a little tedious to him to hear the stories about Pen’s generosity, about his bravery in fighting the big naughty boy, about his fun and jokes, about his prodigious skill in Latin, music, riding, etc., but what price would he not pay to be in her company? and the widow, after these conversations, thought Mr. Smirke a very pleasing and well-informed man. As for her son, she had not settled in her mind whether he was to be Senior Wrangler and Archbishop of Canterbury, or Double First Class at Oxford, and Lord Chancellor. That all England did not possess his peer, was a fact about which there was, in her mind, no manner of question.

A simple person, of inexpensive habits, she began forthwith to save, and, perhaps, to be a little parsimonious, in favour of her boy. There were no entertainments, of course, at Fair Oaks, during the year of her weeds. Nor, indeed, did the Doctor’s silver dish-covers, of which he was so proud, and which were flourished all over with the arms of the Pendennises, and surmounted with their crest, come out of the plate-chests again for long, long years. The household was diminished, and its expenses curtailed. There was a very blank anchorite repast when Pen dined from home: and he himself headed the remonstrance from the kitchen regarding the deteriorated quality of the Fair Oaks beer. She was becoming miserly for Pen. Indeed, who ever accused women of being just? They are always sacrificing themselves or somebody for somebody else’s sake.

There happened to be no young woman in the small circle of friends who were in the widow’s intimacy whom Pendennis could by any possibility gratify by endowing her with the inestimable treasure of a heart which he was longing to give away. Some young fellows in this predicament bestow their young affections upon Dolly, the dairymaid, or cast the eyes of tenderness upon Molly, the blacksmith’s daughter. Pen thought a Pendennis much too grand a personage to stoop so low. He was too high-minded for a vulgar intrigue, and, at the idea of an intrigue or a seduction, had he ever entertained it, his heart would have revolted as from the notion of any act of baseness or dishonour. Miss Minny Portman was too old, too large, and too fond of reading ‘Rollin’s Ancient History.’ The Miss Boardbacks, Admiral Boardback’s daughters (of St. Vincent’s, or Fourth of June House, as it was called), disgusted Pen with the London airs which they brought into the country, from Gloucester Place, where they passed the season, and looked down upon Pen as a chit. Captain Glanders’s (H.P., 50th Dragoon Guards) three girls were in brown-holland pinafores as yet, with the ends of their hair-plaits tied up in dirty pink ribbon. Not having acquired the art of dancing, the youth avoided such chances as he might have had of meeting with the fair sex at the Chatteris’ Assemblies; in fine, he was not in love, because there was nobody at hand to fall in love with. And the young monkey used to ride out, day after day in quest, of Dulcinea; and peep into the pony-chaises and gentlefolks’ carriages, as they drove along the broad turnpike roads, with a heart beating within him, and a secret tremor and hope that she might be in that yellow postchaise coming swinging up the hill, or one of those three girls in beaver bonnets in the back seat of the double gig, which the fat old gentleman in black was driving, at four miles an hour. The postchaise contained a snuffy old dowager of seventy, with a maid, her contemporary. The three girls in the beaver bonnets were no handsomer than the turnips that skirted the roadside. Do as he might, and ride where he would, the fairy princess that he was to rescue and win, had not yet appeared to honest Pen.

Upon these points he did not discourse to his mother. He had a world of his own. What generous, ardent, imaginative

soul has not a secret pleasure-place in which it disports? Let no clumsy prying or dull meddling of ours try to disturb it in our children. Actaeon was a brute for wanting to push in where Diana was bathing. Leave him occasionally alone, my good madam, if you have a poet for a child. Even your admirable advice may be a bore sometimes. You are faultless; but it does not follow that everybody in your family is to think exactly like yourself. Yonder little child may have thoughts too deep even for your great mind, and fancies so coy and timid that they will not bare themselves when your ladyship sits by.

Helen Pendennis by the force of sheer love divined a great number of her son's secrets. But she kept these things in her heart (if we may so speak), and did not speak of them. Besides, she had made up her mind that he was to marry little Laura, who would be eighteen when Pen was six-and-twenty: and had finished his college career, and had made his grand tour, and was settled either in London, astonishing all the metropolis by his learning and eloquence at the bar, or better still in a sweet country parsonage surrounded with hollyhocks and roses, close to a delightful romantic ivy-covered church, from the pulpit of which Pen would utter the most beautiful sermons ever preached.

While these natural sentiments were waging war and trouble in honest Pen's bosom, it chanced one day that he rode into Chatteris, for the purpose of carrying to the County Chronicle a tremendous and thrilling poem for the next week's paper; and putting up his horse according to custom, at the stables of the George Hotel there, he fell in with an old acquaintance. A grand black tandem, with scarlet wheels, came rattling into the inn yard, as Pen stood there in converse with the hostler about Rebecca; and the voice of the driver called out, "Hallo, Pendennis, is that you?" in a loud patronising manner. Pen had some difficulty in recognising under the broad-brimmed hat and the vast great-coats and neckcloths, with which the new-comer was habited, the person and figure of his quondam schoolfellow, Mr. Foker.

A year's absence had made no small difference in that gentleman. A youth who had been deservedly whipped a few months previously, and who spent his pocket-money on tarts and hardbake, now appeared before Pen in one of those costumes to which the public consent, that I take to be quite as influential in this respect as 'Johnson's Dictionary,' has awarded the title of "Swell." He had a bull-dog between his legs, and in his scarlet shawl neckcloth was a pin representing another bull-dog in gold: he wore a fur waistcoat laced over with gold chains; a green cutaway coat with basket-buttons, and a white upper-coat ornamented with cheese-plate buttons, on each of which was engraved some stirring incident of the road or the chase; all which ornaments set off this young fellow's figure to such advantage, that you would hesitate to say which character in life he most resembled, and whether he was a boxer en goguette, or a coachman in his gala suit.

"Left that place for good, Pendennis?" Mr. Foker said, descending from his landau and giving Pendennis a finger.

"Yes, this year — or more," Pen said.

"Beastly old hole," Mr. Foker remarked. "Hate it. Hate the Doctor: hate Towzer, the second master; hate everybody there. Not a fit place for a gentleman."

"Not at all," said Pen, with an air of the utmost consequence.

"By gad, sir, I sometimes dream, now, that the Doctor's walking into me," Foker continued (and Pen smiled as he thought that he himself had likewise fearful dreams of this nature). "When I think of the diet there, by gad, sir, I wonder how I stood it. Mangy mutton, brutal beef; pudding on Thursdays and Sundays, and that fit to poison you. Just look at my leader — did you ever see a prettier animal? Drove over from Baymouth. Came the nine mile in two-and-forty minutes. Not bad going, sir."

"Are you stopping at Baymouth, Foker?" Pendennis asked.

"I'm coaching there," said the other, with a nod.

"What?" asked Pen, and in a tone of such wonder, that Foker burst out laughing, and said, "He was blowed if he didn't think Pen was such a flat as not to know what coaching meant."

"I'm come down with a coach from Oxford. A tutor, don't you see, old boy? He's coaching me, and some other men, for the little go. Me and Spavin have the drag between us. And I thought I'd just tool over and go to the play. Did you ever see Rowkins do the hornpipe?" and Mr. Foker began to perform some steps of that popular dance in the inn yard, looking round for the sympathy of his groom and the stable-men.

Pen thought he would like to go to the play too: and could ride home afterwards, as there was a moonlight. So he accepted Foker's invitation to dinner, and the young men entered the inn together, where Mr. Foker stopped at the bar, and called upon Miss Rincer, the landlady's fair daughter, who presided there, to give him a glass of 'his mixture.'

Pen and his family had been known at the George ever since they came into the country; and Mr. Pendennis's

carriages and horses always put up there when he paid a visit to the county town. The landlady dropped the heir of Fair Oaks a very respectful curtsy, and complimented him upon his growth and manly appearance, and asked news of the family at Fair Oaks, and of Doctor Portman and the Clavering people, to all of which questions the young gentleman answered with much affability. But he spoke to Mr. and Mrs. Rincer with that sort of good nature with which a young Prince addresses his father's subjects; never dreaming that those *bonnes gens* were his equals in life.

Mr. Foker's behaviour was quite different. He inquired for Rincer and the cold in his nose, told Mrs. Rincer a riddle, asked Miss Rincer when she would be ready to marry him, and paid his compliments to Miss Brett, the other young lady in the bar, all in a minute of time, and with a liveliness and facetiousness which set all these ladies in a giggle; and he gave a cluck, expressive of great satisfaction, as he tossed off his mixture which Miss Rincer prepared and handed to him.

"Have a drop," said he to Pen, "it's recommended to me by the faculty as a what-do-you-call-'em — a stomatic, old boy. Give the young one a glass, R., and score it up to yours truly."

Poor Pen took a glass, and everybody laughed at the face which he made as he put it down — gin, bitters, and some other cordial was the compound with which Mr. Foker was so delighted as to call it by the name of Foker's own. As Pen choked, sputtered, and made faces, the other took occasion to remark to Mr. Rincer that the young fellow was green, very green, but that he would soon form him; and then they proceeded to order dinner — which Mr. Foker determined should consist of turtle and venison; cautioning the landlady to be very particular about icing the wine.

Then Messrs. Foker and Pen strolled down the High Street together — the former having a cigar in his mouth, which he had drawn out of a case almost as big as a portmanteau. He went in to replenish it at Mr. Lewis's, and talked to that gentleman for a while, sitting down on the counter: he then looked in at the fruiterer's, to see the pretty girl there, to whom he paid compliments similar to those before addressed to the bar at the George; then they passed the County Chronicle office, for which Pen had his packet ready, in the shape of 'Lines to Thyrza,' but poor Pen did not like to put the letter into the editor's box while walking in company with such a fine gentleman as Mr. Foker. They met heavy dragoons of the regiment always quartered at Chatteris; and stopped and talked about the Baymouth balls, and what a pretty girl was Miss Brown, and what a dem fine woman Mrs. Jones was. It was in vain that Pen recalled to his own mind what a stupid ass Foker used to be at school — how he could scarcely read, how he was not cleanly in his person, and notorious for his blunders and dulness. Mr. Foker was no more like a gentleman now than in his school days: and yet Pen felt a secret pride in strutting down High Street with a young fellow who owned tandems, talked to officers, and ordered turtle and champagne for dinner. He listened, and with respect too, to Mr. Foker's accounts of what the men did at the University of which Mr. F. was an ornament, and encountered a long series of stories about boat-racing, bumping, College grass-plats, and milk-punch — and began to wish to go up himself to College to a place where there were such manly pleasures and enjoyments. Farmer Gurnett, who lives close by Fair Oaks, riding by at this minute and touching his hat to Pen, the latter stopped him, and sent a message to his mother to say that he had met with an old schoolfellow, and should dine in Chatteris.

The two young gentlemen continued their walk, and were passing round the Cathedral Yard, where they could hear the music of the afternoon service (a music which always exceedingly impressed and affected Pen), but whither Mr. Foker came for the purpose of inspecting the nursery-maids who frequent the Elms Walk there, and who are uncommonly pretty at Chatteris, and here they strolled until with a final burst of music the small congregation was played out.

Old Doctor Portman was one of the few who came from the venerable gate. Spying Pen, he came and shook him by the hand, and eyed with wonder Pen's friend, from whose mouth and cigar clouds of fragrance issued, which curled round the Doctor's honest face and shovel hat.

"An old schoolfellow of mine, Mr. Foker," said Pen. The Doctor said "H'm": and scowled at the cigar. He did not mind a pipe in his study, but the cigar was an abomination to the worthy gentleman.

"I came up on Bishop's business," the Doctor said. "We'll ride home, Arthur, if you like?"

"I — I'm engaged to my friend here," Pen answered.

"You had better come home with me," said the Doctor.

"His mother knows he's out, sir," Mr. Foker remarked; "don't she, Pendennis?"

"But that does not prove that he had not better come home with me," the Doctor growled, and he walked off with great dignity.

“Old boy don’t like the weed, I suppose,” Foker said. “Ha! who’s here? — here’s the General, and Bingley, the manager. How do, Cos? How do, Bingley?”

“How does my worthy and gallant young Foker?” said the gentleman addressed as the General; and who wore a shabby military cape with a mangy collar, and a hat cocked very much over one eye.

“Trust you are very well, my very dear sir,” said the other gentleman, “and that the Theatre Royal will have the honour of your patronage to-night. We perform ‘The Stranger,’ in which your humble servant will —”

“Can’t stand you in tights and Hessians, Bingley,” young Mr. Foker said. On which the General, with the Irish accent, said, “But I think ye’ll like Miss Fotheringay, in Mrs. Haller, or me name’s not Jack Costigan.”

Pen looked at these individuals with the greatest interest. He had never seen an actor before; and he saw Dr. Portman’s red face looking over the Doctor’s shoulder, as he retreated from the Cathedral Yard, evidently quite dissatisfied with the acquaintances into whose hands Pen had fallen.

Perhaps it would have been much better for him had he taken the parson’s advice and company home. But which of us knows his fate?



CHAPTER IV

MRS. HALLER

Having returned to the George, Mr. Foker and his guest sate down to a handsome repast in the coffee-room; where Mr. Rincer brought in the first dish, and bowed as gravely as if he was waiting upon the Lord-Lieutenant of the county. Mr. Foker attacked the turtle and venison with as much gusto as he had shown the year before, when he used to make feasts off ginger-beer and smuggled polonies. Pen could not but respect his connoisseurship as he pronounced the champagne to be condemned gooseberry, and winked at the port with one eye. The latter he declared to be of the right sort; and told the waiters there was no way of humbugging him. All these attendants he knew by their Christian names, and showed a great interest in their families; and as the London coaches drove up, which in those early days used to set off from the George, Mr. Foker flung the coffee-room window open, and called the guards and coachmen by their Christian names, too, asking about their respective families, and imitating with great liveliness and accuracy the tooting of the horns as Jem the ostler whipped the horses' cloths off, and the carriages drove gaily away.

"A bottle of sherry, a bottle of sham, a bottle of port and a shass caffy, it ain't so bad, hay, Pen?" Foker said, and pronounced, after all these delicacies and a quantity of nuts and fruit had been dispatched, that it was time to "toddle." Pen sprang up with very bright eyes, and a flushed face; and they moved off towards the theatre, where they paid their money to the wheezy old lady slumbering in the money-taker's box. "Mrs. Dropsicum, Bingley's mother-inlaw, great in Lady Macbeth," Foker said to his companion. Foker knew her, too.

They had almost their choice of places in the boxes of the theatre, which was no better filled than country theatres usually are in spite of the "universal burst of attraction and galvanic thrills of delight" advertised by Bingley in the play-bills. A score or so of people dotted the pit-benches, a few more kept a kicking and whistling in the galleries, and a dozen others, who came in with free admissions, were in the boxes where our young gentlemen sate. Lieutenants Rodgers and Podgers, and young Cornet Tidmus, of the Dragoons, occupied a private box. The performers acted to them, and these gentlemen seemed to hold conversations with the players when not engaged in the dialogue, and applauded them by name loudly.

Bingley the manager, who assumed all the chief tragic and comic parts except when he modestly retreated to make way for the London stars, who came down occasionally to Chatteris, was great in the character of the 'Stranger.' He was attired in the tight pantaloons and Hessian boots which the stage legend has given to that injured man, with a large cloak and beaver and a hearse feather in it drooping over his raddled old face, and only partially concealing his great buckled brown wig. He had the stage jewellery on too, of which he selected the largest and most shiny rings for himself, and allowed his little finger to quiver out of his cloak with a sham diamond ring covering the first joint of the finger and twiddling in the faces of the pit. Bingley made it a favour to the young men of his company to go on in light comedy parts with that ring. They flattered him by asking its history. The stage has its traditional jewels as the Crown and all great families have. This had belonged to George Frederick Cooke, who had had it from Mr. Quin, who may have bought it for a shilling. Bingley fancied the world was fascinated with its glitter.

He was reading out of the stage-book — that wonderful stage-book which is not bound like any other book in the world, but is rouged and tawdry like the hero or heroine who holds it; and who holds it as people never do hold books: and points with his finger to a passage, and wags his head ominously at the audience, and then lifts up eyes and finger to the ceiling professing to derive some intense consolation from the work between which and heaven there is a strong affinity. Anybody who has ever seen one of our great light comedians, X., in a chintz dressing-gown, such as nobody ever wore, and representing himself to the public as a young nobleman in his apartments, and whiling away the time with light literature until his friend Sir Harry shall arrive, or his father shall come down to breakfast — anybody, I say, who has seen the great X. over a sham book has indeed had a great pleasure and an abiding matter for thought.

Directly the Stranger saw the young men, he acted at them; eyeing them solemnly over his gilt volume as he lay on the stage-bank showing his hand, his ring, and his Hessians. He calculated the effect that every one of these ornaments would produce upon his victims: he was determined to fascinate them, for he knew they had paid their money; and he saw their families coming in from the country and filling the cane chairs in his boxes.

As he lay on the bank reading, his servant, Francis, made remarks upon his master.

"Again reading," said Francis, "thus it is, from morn to night. To him nature has no beauty — life no charm. For three years I have never seen him smile" (the gloom of Bingley's face was fearful to witness during these comments of the faithful domestic). "Nothing diverts him. O, if he would but attach himself to any living thing, were it an animal — for something man must love."

[Enter Tobias (Goll) from the hut.] He cries, "O, how refreshing, after seven long weeks, to feel these warm sunbeams once again. Thanks, bounteous heaven, for the joy I taste!" He presses his cap between his hands, looks up and prays. The Stranger eyes him attentively.

Francis to the Stranger. "This old man's share of earthly happiness can be but little. Yet mark how grateful he is for his portion of it."

Bingley. "Because though old, he is but a child in the leading-string of hope." (He looks steadily at Foker, who, however, continues to suck the top of his stick in an unconcerned manner.)

Francis. "Hope is the nurse of life."

Bingley. "And her cradle — is the grave."

The Stranger uttered this with the moan of a bassoon in agony, and fixed his eyes on Pendennis so steadily, that the poor lad was quite put out of countenance. He thought the whole house must be looking at him; and cast his eyes down. As soon as ever he raised them Bingley's were at him again. All through the scene the manager played at him. When he was about to do a good action, and sent off Francis with his book, so that that domestic should not witness the deed of benevolence which he meditated, Bingley marked the page carefully, so that he might continue the perusal of the volume off the stage if he liked. But all was done in the direct face of Pendennis, whom the manager was bent upon subjugating. How relieved the lad was when the scene ended, and Foker, tapping with his cane, cried out "Bravo, Bingley!"

"Give him a hand, Pendennis; you know every chap likes a hand," Mr. Foker said; and the good-natured young gentleman, and Pendennis laughing, and the dragoons in the opposite box, began clapping hands to the best of their power.

A chamber in Wintersen Castle closed over Tobias's hut and the Stranger and his boots; and servants appeared bustling about with chairs and tables — "That's Hicks and Miss Thackthwaite," whispered Foker. "Pretty girl, ain't she, Pendennis? But stop — hurray — bravo! here's the Fotheringay."

The pit thrilled and thumped its umbrellas; a volley of applause was fired from the gallery: the Dragoon officers and Foker clapped their hands furiously: you would have thought the house was full, so loud were their plaudits. The red face and ragged whiskers of Mr. Costigan were seen peering from the side-scene. Pen's eyes opened wide and bright as Mrs. Haller entered with a downcast look, then rallying at the sound of the applause, swept the house with a grateful glance, and, folding her hands across her breast, sank down in a magnificent curtsy. More applause, more umbrellas; Pen this time, flaming with wine and enthusiasm, clapped hands and sang "bravo" louder than all. Mrs. Haller saw him, and everybody else, and old Mr. Bows, the little first fiddler of the orchestra (which was this night increased by a detachment of the band of the Dragoons, by the kind permission of Colonel Swallowtail), looked up from the desk where he was perched, with his crutch beside him, and smiled at the enthusiasm of the lad.

Those who have only seen Miss Fotheringay in later days, since her marriage and introduction into London life, have little idea how beautiful a creature she was at the time when our friend Pen first set eyes on her: and I warn my reader, as beforehand, that the pencil which illustrates this work (and can draw an ugly face tolerably well, but is sadly put out when it tries to delineate a beauty) can give no sort of notion of her. She was of the tallest of women, and at her then age of six-and-twenty-for six-and-twenty she was, though she vows she was only nineteen — in the prime and fulness of her beauty. Her forehead was vast, and her black hair waved over it with a natural ripple (that beauties of late days have tried to imitate with the help of the crimping-irons), and was confined in shining and voluminous braids at the back of a neck such as you see on the shoulders of the Louvre Venus — that delight of gods and men. Her eyes, when she lifted them up to gaze on you, and ere she dropped their purple deep-fringed lids, shone with tenderness and mystery unfathomable. Love and Genius seemed to look out from them and then retire coyly, as if ashamed to have been seen at the lattice. Who could have had such a commanding brow but a woman of high intellect? She never laughed (indeed her teeth were not good), but a smile of endless tenderness and sweetness played round her beautiful lips, and in the dimples of her cheeks and her lovely

chin. Her nose defied description in those days. Her ears were like two little pearl shells, which the earrings she wore (though the handsomest properties in the theatre) only insulted. She was dressed in long flowing robes of black, which she managed and swept to and fro with wonderful grace, and out of the folds of which you only saw her sandals occasionally; they were of rather a large size; but Pen thought them as ravishing as the slippers of Cinderella. But it was her hand and arm that this magnificent creature most excelled in, and somehow you could never see her but through them. They surrounded her. When she folded them over her bosom in resignation; when she dropped them in mute agony, or raised them in superb command; when in sportive gaiety her hands fluttered and waved before her, like what shall we say? — like the snowy doves before the chariot of Venus — it was with these arms and hands that she beckoned, repelled, entreated, embraced, her admirers — no single one, for she was armed with her own virtue, and with her father's valour, whose sword would have leapt from its scabbard at any insult offered to his child — but the whole house; which rose to her, as the phrase was, as she curtsied and bowed, and charmed it.

Thus she stood for a minute — complete and beautiful — as Pen stared at her. “I say, Pen, isn't she a stunner?” asked Mr. Foker.

“Hush!” Pen said, “she's speaking.”

She began her business in a deep sweet voice. Those who know the play of the ‘Stranger,’ are aware that the remarks made by the various characters are not valuable in themselves, either for their sound sense, their novelty of observation, or their poetic fancy. In fact, if a man were to say it was a stupid play, he would not be far wrong. Nobody ever talked so. If we meet idiots in life, as will happen, it is a great mercy that they do not use such absurdly fine words. The Stranger's talk is sham, like the book he reads and the hair he wears, and the bank he sits on, and the diamond ring he makes play with — but, in the midst of the balderdash, there runs that reality of love, children, and forgiveness of wrong, which will be listened to wherever it is preached, and sets all the world sympathising.

With what smothered sorrow, with what gushing pathos, Mrs. Haller delivered her part! At first, when as Count Wintersen's housekeeper, and preparing for his Excellency's arrival, she has to give orders about the beds and furniture, and the dinner, etc., to be got ready, she did so with the calm agony of despair. But when she could get rid of the stupid servants and give vent to her feelings to the pit and the house, she overflowed to each individual as if he were her particular confidant, and she was crying out her griefs on his shoulder: the little fiddler in the orchestra (whom she did not seem to watch, though he followed her ceaselessly) twitched, twisted, nodded, pointed about, and when she came to the favourite passage, “I have a William too, if he be still alive — Ah, yes, if he be still alive. His little sisters, too! Why, Fancy, dost thou rack me so? Why dost thou image my poor children fainting in sickness, and crying to — to — their mum — um — other,” when she came to this passage little Bows buried his face in his blue cotton handkerchief, after crying out “Bravo.”

All the house was affected. Foker, for his part, taking out a large yellow bandanna, wept piteously. As for Pen, he was gone too far for that. He followed the woman about and about — when she was off the stage, it and the house were blank; the lights and the red officers, reeled wildly before his sight. He watched her at the side-scene — where she stood waiting to come on the stage, and where her father took off her shawl: when the reconciliation arrived, and she flung herself down on Mr. Bingley's shoulders, whilst the children clung to their knees, and the Countess (Mrs. Bingley) and Baron Steinforth (performed with great liveliness and spirit by Garbetts)— while the rest of the characters formed a group round them, Pen's hot eyes only saw Fotheringay, Fotheringay. The curtain fell upon him like a pall. He did not hear a word of what Bingley said, who came forward to announce the play for the next evening, and who took the tumultuous applause, as usual, for himself. Pen was not even distinctly aware that the house was calling for Miss Fotheringay, nor did the manager seem to comprehend that anybody else but himself had caused the success of the play. At last he understood it — stepped back with a grin, and presently appeared with Mrs. Haller on his arm. How beautiful she looked! Her hair had fallen down, the officers threw her flowers. She clutched them to her heart. She put back her hair, and smiled all round. Her eyes met Pen's. Down went the curtain again: and she was gone. Not one note could he hear of the overture which the brass band of the dragoons blew by kind permission of Colonel Swallowtail.

“She is a crusher, ain't she now!” Mr. Foker asked of his companion.

Pen did not know exactly what Foker said, and answered vaguely. He could not tell the other what he felt; he could not have spoken, just then, to any mortal. Besides, Pendennis did not quite know what he felt yet; it was something overwhelming, maddening, delicious; a fever of wild joy and undefined longing.

And now Rowkins and Miss Thackthwaite came on to dance the favourite double hornpipe, and Foker abandoned himself to the delights of this ballet, just as he had to the tears of the tragedy, a few minutes before. Pen did not care for it, or indeed think about the dance, except to remember that that woman was acting with her in the scene where she first came in. It was a mist before his eyes. At the end of the dance he looked at his watch and said it was time for him to go.

"Hang it, stay to see The Bravo of the Battle-Axe," Foker said, "Bingley's splendid in it; he wears red tights, and has to carry Mrs. B. over the Pine-bridge of the Cataract, only she's too heavy. It's great fun, do stop."

Pen looked at the bill with one lingering fond hope that Miss Fotheringay's name might be hidden, somewhere, in the list of the actors of the after-piece, but there was no such name. Go he must. He had a long ride home. He squeezed Foker's hand. He was choking to speak, but he couldn't. He quitted the theatre and walked frantically about the town, he knew not how long; then he mounted at the George and rode homewards, and Clavering clock sang out one as he came into the yard at Fair Oaks. The lady of the house might have been awake, but she only heard him from the passage outside his room as he dashed into bed and pulled the clothes over his head.

Pen had not been in the habit of passing wakeful nights, so he at once fell off into a sound sleep. Even in later days and with a great deal of care and other thoughtful matter to keep him awake, a man from long practice or fatigue or resolution begins by going to sleep as usual: and gets a nap in advance of Anxiety. But she soon comes up with him and jogs his shoulder, and says, "Come, my man, no more of this laziness, you must wake up and have a talk with me." Then they fall together in the midnight. Well, whatever might afterwards happen to him, poor little Pen was not come to this state yet; he tumbled into a sound sleep — did not wake until an early hour in the morning, when the rooks began to caw from the little wood beyond his bedroom windows; and — at that very instant and as his eyes started open, the beloved image was in his mind. "My dear boy," he heard her say, "you were in a sound sleep and I would not disturb you: but I have been close by your pillow all this while: and I don't intend that you shall leave me. I am Love! I bring with me fever and passion: wild longing, maddening desire; restless craving and seeking. Many a long day ere this I heard you calling out for me; and behold now I am come."

Was Pen frightened at the summons? Not he. He did not know what was coming: it was all wild pleasure and delight as yet. And as, when three years previously, and on entering the fifth form at the Cistercians, his father had made him a present of a gold watch which the boy took from under his pillow and examined on the instant of waking: for ever rubbing and polishing it up in private and retiring into corners to listen to its ticking: so the young man exulted over his new delight; felt in his waistcoat pocket to see that it was safe; wound it up at nights, and at the very first moment of waking hugged it and looked at it. — By the way, that first watch of Pen's was a showy ill-manufactured piece: it never went well from the beginning, and was always getting out of order. And after putting it aside into a drawer and forgetting it for some time, he swapped it finally away for a more useful time-keeper.

Pen felt himself to be ever so many years older since yesterday. There was no mistake about it now. He was as much in love as the best hero in the best romance he ever read. He told John to bring his shaving water with the utmost confidence. He dressed himself in some of his finest clothes that morning: and came splendidly down to breakfast, patronising his mother and little Laura, who had been strumming her music lesson for hours before; and who after he had read the prayers (of which he did not heed one single syllable) wondered at his grand appearance, and asked him to tell her what the play was about?

Pen laughed and declined to tell Laura what the play was about. In fact it was quite as well that she should not know. Then she asked him why he had got on his fine pin and beautiful new waistcoat?

Pen blushed and told his mother that the old schoolfellow with whom he had dined at Chatteris was reading with a tutor at Baymouth, a very learned man; and as he was himself to go to College, and as there were several young men pursuing their studies at Baymouth — he was anxious to ride over-and-and just see what the course of their reading was.

Laura made a long face. Helen Pendennis looked hard at her son, troubled more than ever with the vague doubt and terror which had been haunting her ever since the last night, when Farmer Gurnett brought back the news that Pen would not return home to dinner. Arthur's eyes defied her. She tried to console herself, and drive off her fears. The boy had never told her an untruth. Pen conducted himself during breakfast in a very haughty and supercilious manner; and, taking leave of the elder and younger lady, was presently heard riding out of the stablecourt. He went gently at first, but galloped like a madman as soon as he thought that he was out of hearing.

Smirke, thinking of his own affairs, and softly riding with his toes out, to give Pen his three hours' reading at Fair Oaks, met his pupil, who shot by him like the wind. Smirke's pony shied, as the other thundered past him; the gentle curate went over his head among the stinging-nettles in the hedge. Pen laughed as they met, pointed towards the Baymouth road, and was gone half a mile in that direction before poor Smirke had picked himself up.

Pen had resolved in his mind that he must see Foker that morning; he must hear about her; know about her; be with somebody who knew her; and honest Smirke, for his part, sitting up among the stinging-nettles, as his pony cropped quietly in the hedge, thought dismally to himself, ought he to go to Fair Oaks now that his pupil was evidently gone away for the day. Yes, he thought he might go, too. He might go and ask Mrs. Pendennis when Arthur would be back; and hear Miss Laura her Watts's Catechism. He got up on the little pony — both were used to his slipping off — and advanced upon the house from which his scholar had just rushed away in a whirlwind.

Thus love makes fools of all of us, big and little; and the curate had tumbled over head and heels in pursuit of it, and Pen had started in the first heat of the mad race.



CHAPTER V

MRS. HALLER AT HOME

Without slackening her pace, Rebecca the mare galloped on to Baymouth, where Pen put her up at the inn stables, and ran straightway to Mr. Foker's lodgings, which he knew from the direction given to him by that gentleman on the previous day. On reaching these apartments, which were over a chemist's shop whose stock of cigars and sodawater went off rapidly by the kind patronage of his young inmates, Pen only found Mr. Spavin, Foker's friend, and part owner of the tandem which the latter had driven into Chatteris, who was smoking, and teaching a little dog, a friend of his, tricks with a bit of biscuit.

Pen's healthy red face, fresh from the gallop, compared oddly with the waxy debauched little features of Foker's chum; the latter remarked it. "Who's that man?" he thought, "he looks as fresh as a bean. His hand don't shake of a morning, I'd bet five to one."

Foker had not come home at all. Here was a disappointment! — Mr. Spavin could not say when his friend would return. Sometimes he stopped a day, sometimes a week. Of what college was Pen? Would he have anything? There was a very fair tap of ale. Mr. Spavin was enabled to know Pendennis's name, on the card which the latter took out and laid down (perhaps Pen in these days was rather proud of having a card)— and so the young men took leave.

Then Pen went down the rock, and walked about on the sand, biting his nails by the shore of the much-sounding sea. It stretched before him bright and immeasurable. The blue waters came rolling into the bay, foaming and roaring hoarsely: Pen looked them in the face with blank eyes, hardly regarding them. What a tide there was pouring into the lad's own mind at the time, and what a little power had he to check it! Pen flung stones into the sea, but it still kept coming on. He was in a rage at not seeing Foker. He wanted to see Foker. He must see Foker. "Suppose I go on — on the Chatteris road, just to see if I can meet him," Pen thought. Rebecca was saddled in another half hour, and galloping on the grass by the Chatteris road. About four miles from Baymouth, the Clavering road branches off, as everybody knows, and the mare naturally was for taking that turn, but, cutting her over the shoulder, Pen passed the turning, and rode on to the turnpike without seeing any sign of the black tandem and red wheels.

As he was at the turnpike he might as well go on: that was quite clear. So Pen rode to the George, and the hostler told him that Mr. Foker was there sure enough, and that "he'd been a makin a tremendous row the night afore, a drinkin and a singin, and wanting to fight Tom the postboy: which I'm thinking he'd have had the worst of it," the man added, with a grin. "Have you carried up your master's 'ot water to shave with?" he added, in a very satirical manner, to Mr. Foker's domestic, who here came down the yard bearing his master's clothes, most beautifully brushed and arranged. "Show Mr. Pendennis up to 'un," and Pen followed the man at last to the apartment, where, in the midst of an immense bed, Mr. Harry Foker lay reposing.

The feather bed and bolsters swelled up all round Mr. Foker, so that you could hardly see his little sallow face and red silk nightcap.

"Hullo!" said Pen.

"Who goes there? brother, quickly tell!" sang out the voice from the bed. "What! Pendennis again? Is your Mamma acquainted with your absence? Did you sup with us last night? No stop — who supped with us last night, Stoopid?"

"There was the three officers, sir, and Mr. Bingley, sir, and Mr. Costigan, sir," the man answered, who received all Mr. Foker's remarks with perfect gravity.

"Ah yes: the cup and merry jest went round. We chanted and I remember I wanted to fight a postboy. Did I thrash him, Stoopid?"

"No, sir. Fight didn't come off, sir," said Stoopid, still with perfect gravity. He was arranging Mr. Foker's dressing-case — a trunk, the gift of a fond mother, without which the young fellow never travelled. It contained a prodigious apparatus in plate; a silver dish, a silver mug, silver boxes and bottles for all sorts of essences, and a choice of razors ready against the time when Mr. Foker's beard should come.

"Do it some other day," said the young fellow, yawning and throwing up his little lean arms over his head. "No, there

was no fight; but there was chanting. Bingley chanted, I chanted, the General chanted — Costigan I mean. — Did you ever hear him sing ‘The Little Pig under the Bed,’ Pen?”

“The man we met yesterday,” said Pen, all in a tremor, “the father of —”

“Of the Fotheringay — the very man. Ain’t she a Venus, Pen?”

“Please sir, Mr. Costigan’s in the sittin-room, sir, and says, sir, you asked him to breakfast, sir. Called five times, sir; but wouldn’t wake you on no account; and has been here since eleven o’clock, sir —”

“How much is it now?”

“One, sir.”

“What would the best of mothers say,” cried the little sluggard, “if she saw me in bed at this hour? She sent me down here with a grinder. She wants me to cultivate my neglected genus — He, be! I say, Pen, this isn’t quite like seven o’clock school — is it, old boy?” — and the young fellow burst out into a boyish laugh of enjoyment. Then he added — “Go in and talk to the General whilst I dress. And I say, Pendennis, ask him to sing you ‘The Little Pig under the Bed;’ it’s capital.” Pen went off in great perturbation, to meet Mr. Costigan, and Mr. Foker commenced his toilet.

Of Mr. Foker’s two grandfathers, the one from whom he inherited a fortune was a brewer; the other was an earl, who endowed him with the most doting mother in the world. The Fokers had been at the Cistercian school from father to son; at which place, our friend, whose name could be seen over the playground wall, on a public-house sign, under which ‘Foker’s Entire’ was painted, had been dreadfully bullied on account of his trade, his uncomely countenance, his inaptitude for learning and cleanliness, his gluttony and other weak points. But those who know how a susceptible youth, under the tyranny of his schoolfellows, becomes silent and a sneak, may understand how in a very few months after his liberation from bondage, he developed himself as he had done; and became the humorous, the sarcastic, the brilliant Foker, with whom we have made acquaintance. A dunce he always was, it is true; for learning cannot be acquired by leaving school and entering at college as a fellow-commoner; but he was now (in his own peculiar manner) as great a dandy as he before had been a slattern, and when he entered his sitting-room to join his two guests, arrived scented and arrayed in fine linen, and perfectly splendid in appearance.

General or Captain Costigan — for the latter was the rank which he preferred to assume — was seated in the window with the newspaper held before him at arm’s length. The Captain’s eyes were somewhat dim; and he was spelling the paper, with the help of his lips, as well as of those bloodshot eyes of his, as you see gentlemen do to whom reading is a rare and difficult occupation. His hat was cocked very much on one ear; and as one of his feet lay up in the window-seat, the observer of such matters might remark, by the size and shabbiness of the boots which the Captain wore, that times did not go very well with him. Poverty seems as if it were disposed, before it takes possession of a man entirely, to attack his extremities first: the coverings of his head, feet, and hands are its first prey. All these parts of the Captain’s person were particularly rakish and shabby. As soon as he saw Pen he descended from the window-seat and saluted the new-comer, first in a military manner, by conveying a couple of his fingers (covered with a broken black glove) to his hat, and then removing that ornament altogether. The Captain was inclined to be bald, but he brought a quantity of lank iron-grey hair over his pate, and had a couple of wisps of the same falling down on each side of his face. Much whisky had spoiled what complexion Mr. Costigan may have possessed in his youth. His once handsome face had now a copper tinge. He wore a very high stock, scarred and stained in many places; and a dress-coat tightly buttoned up in those parts where the buttons had not parted company from the garment.

“The young gentleman to whom I had the honour to be introjuiced yesterday in the Cathadral Yard,” said the Captain, with a splendid bow and wave of his hat. “I hope I see you well, sir. I marked ye in the thayatre last night during me daughter’s perlawrumance; and missed ye on my return. I did but conduct her home, sir, for Jack Costigan, though poor, is a gentleman; and when I reentered the house to pay me respects to me joyous young friend, Mr. Foker — ye were gone. We had a jolly night of ut, sir — Mr. Foker, the three gallant young dragoons, and your ‘umble servant. Gad, sir, it put me in mind of one of our old nights when I bore His Majesty’s commission in the Foighting Hundtherd and Third.” And he pulled out an old snuff box, which he presented with a stately air to his new acquaintance.

Arthur was a great deal too much flurried to speak. This shabby-looking buck was — was her father. The Captain was perfumed with the recollections of the last night’s cigars, and pulled and twisted the tuft on his chin as jauntily as any young dandy.

"I hope, Miss F — Miss Costigan is well, sir," Pen said, flushing up. "She — she gave me greater pleasure, than — than I — I — I ever enjoyed at a play. I think, sir — I think she's the finest actress in the world," he gasped out.

"Your hand, young man! for ye speak from your heart," cried the Captain. "Thank ye, sir, an old soldier and a fond father thanks ye. She is the finest actress in the world. I've seen the Siddons, sir, and the O'Nale — they were great, but what were they compared to Miss Fotheringay? I do not wish she should assume her own name while on the stage. Me family, sir, are proud people; and the Costigans of Costiganstown think that an honest man, who has borne Her Majesty's colours in the Hundred and Third, would demean himself, by permitting his daughter to earn her old father's bread."

"There cannot be a more honourable duty, surely," Pen said.

"Honourable! Bedad, sir, I'd like to see the man who said Jack Costigan would consent to anything dishonourable. I have a heart, sir, though I am poor; I like a man who has a heart. You have: I read it in your honest face and steady eye. And would you believe it?" he added, after a pause, and with a pathetic whisper, "that that Bingley who has made his fortune by me child, gives her but two guineas a week: out of which she finds herself in dresses, and which, added to me own small means, makes our all?"

Now the Captain's means were so small as to be, it may be said, quite invisible. But nobody knows how the wind is tempered to shorn Irish lambs, and in what marvellous places they find pasture. If Captain Costigan, whom I had the honour to know, would but have told his history, it would have been a great moral story. But he neither would have told it if he could, nor could if he would; for the Captain was not only unaccustomed to tell the truth — he was unable even to think it — and fact and fiction reeled together in his muzzy, whiskified brain.

He began life rather brilliantly with a pair of colours, a fine person and legs, and one of the most beautiful voices in the world. To his latest day he sang with admirable pathos and humour those wonderful Irish ballads which are so mirthful and so melancholy: and was always the first himself to cry at their pathos. Poor Cos! he was at once brave and maudlin, humorous and an idiot; always good-natured, and sometimes almost trustworthy. Up to the last day of his life he would drink with any man, and back any man's bill: and his end was in a spunging-house, where the sheriff's officer, who took him, was fond of him.

In his brief morning of life, Cos formed the delight of regimental messes, and had the honour of singing his songs, bacchanalian and sentimental, at the tables of the most illustrious generals and commanders-in-chief, in the course of which period he drank three times as much claret as was good for him, and spent his doubtful patrimony. What became of him subsequently to his retirement from the army, is no affair of ours. I take it, no foreigner understands the life of an Irish gentleman without money, the way in which he manages to keep afloat — the wind-raising conspiracies, in which he engages with heroes as unfortunate as himself — the means by which he contrives, during most days of the week, to get his portion of whisky-and-water: all these are mysteries to us inconceivable: but suffice it to say, that through all the storms of life Jack had floated somehow, and the lamp of his nose had never gone out.

Before he and Pen had had a half-hour's conversation, the Captain managed to extract a couple of sovereigns from the young gentleman for tickets for his daughter's benefit, which was to take place speedily; and was not a bona fide transaction such as that of the last year, when poor Miss Fotheringay had lost fifteen shillings by her venture; but was an arrangement with the manager, by which the lady was to have the sale of a certain number of tickets, keeping for herself a large portion of the sum for which they were sold.

Pen had but two pounds in his purse, and he handed them over to the Captain for the tickets; he would have been afraid to offer more lest he should offend the latter's delicacy. Costigan scrawled him an order for a box, lightly slipped the sovereigns into his waistcoat, and slapped his hand over the place where they lay. They seemed to warm his old sides.

"Faith, sir," said he, "the bullion's scarcer with me than it used to be, as is the case with many a good fellow. I won six hundred of 'em in a single night, sir, when me kind friend, His Royal Highness the Duke of Kent, was in Gibraltar." And he straightway poured out to Pen a series of stories regarding the claret drunk, the bets made, the races ridden by the garrison there, with which he kept the young gentleman amused until the arrival of their host and his breakfast.

Then it was good to see the Captain's behaviour before the devilled turkey and the mutton chops! His stories poured forth unceasingly, and his spirits rose as he chatted to the young men. When he got a bit of sunshine, the old lazzarone basked in it; he prated about his own affairs and past splendour, and all the lords, generals, and Lord-Lieutenants he had ever known. He described the death of his darling Bessie, the late Mrs. Costigan, and the challenge he had sent to Captain

Shanty Clancy, of the Slashers, for looking rude at Miss Fotheringay as she was on her kyar in the Phaynix; and then he described how the Captain apologised, gave a dinner at the Kildare Street, where six of them drank twinty-one bottles of claret, etc. He announced that to sit with two such noble and generous young fellows was the happiness and pride of an old soldier's existence; and having had a second glass of Curacoa, was so happy that he began to cry. Altogether we should say that the Captain was not a man of much strength of mind, or a very eligible companion for youth; but there are worse men, holding much better places in life, and more dishonest, who have never committed half so many rogueries as he. They walked out, the Captain holding an arm of each of his dear young friends, and in a maudlin state of contentment. He winked at one or two tradesmen's shops where, possibly, he owed a bill, as much as to say, "See the company I'm in-sure I'll pay you, my boy,"— and they parted finally with Mr. Foker at a billiard-room, where the latter had a particular engagement with some gentlemen of Colonel Swallowtail's regiment.

Pen and the shabby Captain still walked the street together; the Captain, in his sly way, making inquiries about Mr. Foker's fortune and station in life. Pen told him how Foker's father was a celebrated brewer, and his mother was Lady Agnes Milton, Lord Rosherville's daughter. The Captain broke out into a strain of exaggerated compliment and panegyric about Mr. Foker, whose "native aristocracie," he said, "could be seen with the twinkling of an oi — and only served to adawrun other qualities which he possessed, a foin intellect and a generous heart,"— in not one word of which speech did the Captain accurately believe.

Pen walked on, listening to his companion's prate, wondering, amused, and puzzled. It had not as yet entered into the boy's head to disbelieve any statement that was made to him; and being of a candid nature himself, he took naturally for truth what other people told him. Costigan had never had a better listener, and was highly flattered by the attentiveness and modest bearing of the young man.

So much pleased was he with the young gentleman, so artless, honest, and cheerful did Pen seem to be, that the Captain finally made him an invitation, which he very seldom accorded to young men, and asked Pen if he would do him the fever to enter his humble abode, which was near at hand, where the Captain would have the honour of inthroujuicing his young friend to his daughther, Miss Fotheringay?

Pen was so delightfully shocked at this invitation, and was so stricken down by the happiness thus suddenly offered to him, that he thought he should have dropped from the Captain's arm at first, and trembled lest the other should discover his emotion. He gasped out a few incoherent words, indicative of the high gratification he should have in being presented to the lady for whose — for whose talents he had conceived such an admiration — such an extreme admiration; and followed the Captain, scarcely knowing whither that gentleman led him. He was going to see her! He was going to see her! In her was the centre of the universe. She was the kernel of the world for Pen. Yesterday, before he knew her, seemed a period ever so long ago — a revolution was between him and that time, and a new world about to begin.

The Captain conducted his young friend to that quiet little street in Chatteris, which is called Prior's Lane, which lies in the ecclesiastical quarter of the town, close by Dean's Green and the canons' houses, and is overlooked by the enormous towers of the cathedral; there the Captain dwelt modestly in the first floor of a low gabled house, on the door of which was the brass plate of 'Creed, Tailor and Robe-maker.' Creed was dead, however. His widow was a pew-opener in the cathedral hard by; his eldest son was a little scamp of a choir-boy, who played toss-halfpenny, led his little brothers into mischief, and had a voice as sweet as an angel. A couple of the latter were sitting on the door-step, down which you went into the passage of the house; and they jumped up with great alacrity to meet their lodger, and plunged wildly, and rather to Pen's surprise, at the swallow-tails of the Captain's dress-coat; for the truth is, that the good-natured gentleman, when he was in cash, generally brought home an apple or a piece of gingerbread for these children. "Whereby the widdy never pressed me for rint when not convanient," as he remarked afterwards to Pen, winking knowingly, and laying a finger on his nose.

Pen tumbled down the step, and as he followed his companion up the creaking old stair, his knees trembled under him. He could hardly see when he entered, following the Captain, and stood in the room — in her room. He saw something black before him, and waving as if making a curtesy, and heard, but quite indistinctly, Costigan making a speech over him, in which the Captain, with his usual magniloquence, expressed to "me child" his wish to make her known to "his dear and admirable young friend, Mr. Awther Pindinnis, a young gentleman of property in the neighbourhood, a person of refoined moind, and enviable manners, a sincare lover of poethry, and a man possest of a feeling and affectionate heart."

"It is very fine weather," Miss Fotheringay said, in an Irish accent, and with a deep rich melancholy voice.

“Very,” said Mr. Pendennis. In this romantic way their conversation began; and he found himself seated on a chair, and having leisure to look at the young lady.

She looked still handsomer off the stage, than before the lamps. All her attitudes were naturally grand and majestic. If she went and stood up against the mantelpiece her robe draped itself classically round her; her chin supported itself on her hand, the other lines of her form arranged themselves in full harmonious undulations — she looked like a Muse in contemplation. If she sate down on a cane-bottomed chair, her arm rounded itself over the back of the seat, her hand seemed as if it ought to have a sceptre put into it, the folds of her dress fell naturally round her in order, like ladies of honour round a throne, and she looked like an empress. All her movements were graceful and imperial. In the morning you could see her hair was blue-black, her complexion of dazzling fairness, with the faintest possible blush flickering, as it were, in her cheek. Her eyes were grey, with prodigious long lashes; and as for her mouth, Mr. Pendennis has given me subsequently to understand, that it was of a staring red colour, with which the most brilliant geranium, sealing-wax, or Guardsman’s coat, could not vie.

“And very warm,” continued this empress and Queen of Sheba.

Mr. Pen again assented, and the conversation rolled on in this manner. She asked Costigan whether he had had a pleasant evening at the George, and he recounted the supper and the tumblers of punch. Then the father asked her how she had been employing the morning.

“Bows came,” said she, “at ten, and we studied Ophalia. It’s for the twenty-fourth, when I hope, sir, we shall have the honour of seeing ye.”

“Indeed, indeed, you will,” Mr. Pendennis cried; wondering that she should say ‘Ophalia,’ and speak with an Irish inflection of voice naturally, who had not the least Hibernian accent on the stage.

“I’ve secured ‘um for your benefit, dear,” said the Captain, tapping his waistcoat pocket, wherein lay Pen’s sovereigns, and winking at Pen, with one eye, at which the boy blushed.

“Mr — the gentleman’s very obleging,” said Mrs. Haller.

“My name is Pendennis,” said Pen, blushing. “I— I— hope you’ll — you’ll remember it.” His heart thumped so as he made this audacious declaration, that he almost choked in uttering it.

“Pendennis”— she answered slowly, and looking him full in the eyes, with a glance, so straight, so clear, so bright, so killing, with a voice so sweet, so round, so low, that the word and the glance shot Pen through and through, and perfectly transfixed him with pleasure.

“I never knew the name was so pretty before,” Pen said.

“’Tis a very pretty name,” Ophelia said. “Pentweazle’s not a pretty name. Remember, papa, when we were on the Norwich Circuit, Young Pentweazle, who used to play second old men, and married Miss Rancy, the Columbine; they’re both engaged in London now, at the Queen’s, and get five pounds a week. Pentweazle wasn’t his real name. ’Twas Judkin gave it him, I don’t know why. His name was Harrington; that is, his real name was Potts; fawther a clergyman, very respectable. Harrington was in London, and got in debt. Ye remember; he came out in Falkland, to Mrs. Bunce’s Julia.”

“And a pretty Julia she was,” the Captain interposed; “a woman of fifty, and a mother of ten children. ’Tis you ought to have been Julia, or my name’s not Jack Costigan.”

“I didn’t take the leading business then,” Miss Fotheringay said modestly; “I wasn’t fit for’t till Bows taught me.”

“True for you, my dear,” said the Captain: and bending to Pendennis, he added, “Rejuiced in circumstances, sir, I was for some time a fencing-master in Dublin (there’s only three men in the empire could touch me with the foil once, but Jack Costigan’s getting old and stiff now, sir), and my daughter had an engagement at the thayater there; and ’twas there that my friend, Mr. Bows, who saw her capabilities, and is an uncommon ‘cute man, gave her lessons in the dramatic art, and made her what ye see. What have ye done since Bows went, Emily?”

“Sure, I’ve made a pie,” Emily said, with perfect simplicity. She pronounced it “Poy.”

“If ye’ll try it at four o’clock, sir, say the word,” said Costigan gallantly. “That girl, sir, makes the best veal and ham pie in England, and I think I can promise ye a glass of punch of the right flavour.”

Pen had promised to be at home to dinner at six o’clock, but the rascal thought he could accommodate pleasure and duty in this point, and was only too eager to accept this invitation. He looked on with delight and wonder whilst Ophelia

busied herself about the room, and prepared for the dinner. She arranged the glasses, and laid and smoothed the little cloth, all which duties she performed with a quiet grace and good humour, which enchanted her guest more and more. The “poy” arrived from the baker’s in the hands of one of the little choir-boy’s brothers at the proper hour: and at four o’clock Pen found himself at dinner — actually at dinner with the greatest tragic actress in the world, and her father — with the handsomest woman in all creation — with his first and only love, whom he had adored ever since when? — ever since yesterday, ever since for ever. He ate a crust of her making, he poured her out a glass of beer, he saw her drink a glass of punch — just one wine-glass full — out of the tumbler which she mixed for her papa. She was perfectly good-natured, and offered to mix one for Pendennis too. It was prodigiously strong; Pen had never in his life drunk so much spirits and water. Was it the punch, or the punch-maker who intoxicated him?

During dinner, when the Captain, whom his daughter treated most respectfully, ceased prattling about himself and his adventures, Pen tried to engage the Fotheringay in conversation about poetry and about her profession. He asked her what she thought of Ophelia’s madness, and whether she was in love with Hamlet or not? “In love with such a little ojoues wretch as that stunted manager of a Bingley?” She bristled with indignation at the thought. Pen explained it was not of her he spoke, but of Ophelia of the play. “Oh, indeed; if no offence was meant, none was taken: but as for Bingley, indeed, she did not value him — not that glass of punch.” Pen next tried her on Kotzebue. “Kotzebue? who was he?” — “The author of the play in which she had been performing so admirably.” “She did not know that — the man’s name at the beginning of the book was Thompson,” she said. Pen laughed at her adorable simplicity. He told her of the melancholy fate of the author of the play, and how Sand had killed him. It was for the first time in her life that Miss Costigan had ever heard of Mr. Kotzebue’s existence, but she looked as if she was very much interested, and her sympathy sufficed for honest Pen.

And in the midst of this simple conversation, the hour and a quarter which poor Pen could afford to allow himself, passed away only too quickly; and he had taken leave, he was gone, and away on his rapid road homewards on the back of Rebecca. She was called upon to show her mettle in the three journeys which she made that day.

“What was that he was talking about, the madness of Hamlet, and the theory of the great German critic on the subject?” Emily asked of her father.

“Deed then I don’t know, Milly dear,” answered the Captain. “We’ll ask Bows when he comes.”

“Anyhow, he’s a nice, fair-spoken pretty young man,” the lady said: “how many tickets did he take of you?”

“Faith, then, he took six, and gev me two guineas, Milly,” the Captain said. “I suppose them young chaps is not too flush of coin.”

“He’s full of book-learning,” Miss Fotheringay continued. “Kotzebue! He, he, what a droll name indeed, now; and the poor fellow killed by Sand, too! Did ye ever hear such a thing? I’ll ask Bows about it, papa, dear.”

“A queer death, sure enough,” ejaculated the Captain, and changed the painful theme. “Tis an elegant mare the young gentleman rides,” Costigan went on to say; “and a grand breakfast, intirely, that young Mister Foker gave us.”

“He’s good for two private boxes, and at leest twenty tickets, I should say,” cried the daughter, a prudent lass, who always kept her fine eyes on the main chance.

“I’ll go bail of that,” answered the papa, and so their conversation continued awhile, until the tumbler of punch was finished; and their hour of departure soon came, too; for at half-past six Miss Fotheringay was to appear at the theatre again, whither her father always accompanied her; and stood, as we have seen, in the side-scene watching her, and drank spirits-and-water in the green-room with the company there.

“How beautiful she is,” thought Pen, cantering homewards. “How simple and how tender! How charming it is to see a woman of her commanding genius busying herself with the delightful, though humble, offices of domestic life, cooking dishes to make her old father comfortable, and brewing drink for him with her delicate fingers! How rude it was of me to begin to talk about professional matters, and how well she turned the conversation! By the way, she talked about professional matters herself; but then with what fun and humour she told the story of her comrade, Pentweazle, as he was called! There is no humour like Irish humour. Her father is rather tedious, but thoroughly amiable; and how fine of him, giving lessons in fencing after he quitted the army, where he was the pet of the Duke of Kent! Fencing! I should like to continue my fencing, or I shall forget what Angelo taught me. Uncle Arthur always liked me to fence — he says it is the exercise of a gentleman. Hang it. I’ll take some lessons of Captain Costigan. Go along, Rebecca — up the hill, old lady. Pendennis, Pendennis — how she spoke the word! Emily, Emily! how good, how noble, how beautiful, how perfect, she is!”

Now the reader, who has had the benefit of overhearing the entire conversation which Pen had with Miss Fotheringay, can judge for himself about the powers of her mind, and may perhaps be disposed to think that she has not said anything astonishingly humorous or intellectual in the course of the above interview. She has married, and taken her position in the world as the most spotless and irreproachable lady since, and I have had the pleasure of making her acquaintance: and must certainly own, against my friend Pen's opinion, that his adored Emily is not a clever woman. The truth is, she had not only never heard of Kotzebue, but she had never heard of Farquhar, or Congreve, or any dramatist in whose plays she had not a part: and of these dramas she only knew the part which concerned herself. A wag once told her that Dante was born at Algiers: and asked her — which Dr. Johnson wrote first, 'Irene,' or 'Every Man in his Humour.' But she had the best of the joke, for she had never heard of Irene or Every Man in his Humour, or Dante, or perhaps Algiers. It was all one to her. She acted what little Bows told her — where he told her to sob, she sobbed — where he told her to laugh, she laughed. She gave the tirade or the repartee without the slightest notion of its meaning. She went to church and goes every Sunday, with a reputation perfectly intact, and was (and is) as guiltless of sense as of any other crime.

But what did our Pen know of these things? He saw a pair of bright eyes, and he believed in them — a beautiful image, and he fell down and worshipped it. He supplied the meaning which her words wanted; and created the divinity which he loved. Was Titania the first who fell in love with an ass, or Pygmalion the only artist who has gone crazy about a stone? He had found her; he had found what his soul thirsted after. He flung himself into the stream and drank with all his might. Let those say who have been thirsty once how delicious that first draught is. As he rode down the avenue towards home — Pen shrieked with laughter as he saw the Reverend Mr. Smirke once more coming demurely away from Fair Oaks on his pony. Smirke had dawdled and stayed at the cottages on the way, and then dawdled with Laura over her lessons — and then looked at Mrs. Pendennis's gardens and improvements until he had perfectly bored out that lady: and he had taken his leave at the very last minute without that invitation to dinner which he fondly expected.

Pen was full of kindness and triumph. "What, picked up and sound?" he cried out laughing. "Come along back, old fellow, and eat my dinner — I have had mine: but we will have a bottle of the old wine and drink her health, Smirke."

Poor Smirke turned the pony's head round, and jogged along with Arthur. His mother was charmed to see him in such high spirits, and welcomed Mr. Smirke for his sake, when Arthur said he had forced the curate back to dine. He gave a most ludicrous account of the play of the night before, and of the acting of Bingley the Manager, in his rickety Hessians, and the enormous Mrs. Bingley as the Countess, in rumpled green satin and a Polish cap; he mimicked them, and delighted his mother and little Laura, who clapped her hands with pleasure.

"And Mrs. Haller?" said Mrs. Pendennis.

"She's a stunner, ma'am," Pen said, laughing, and using the words of his revered friend, Mr. Foker.

"A what, Arthur?" asked the lady.

"What is a stunner, Arthur?" cried Laura, in the same voice.

So he gave them a queer account of Mr. Foker, and how he used to be called Vats and Grains, and by other contumelious names at school: and how he was now exceedingly rich, and a Fellow Commoner at St. Boniface. But gay and communicative as he was, Mr. Pen did not say one syllable about his ride to Chatteris that day, or about the new friends whom he had made there.

When the two ladies retired, Pen, with flashing eyes, filled up two great bumpers of Madeira, and looking Smirke full in the face said, "Here's to her!"

"Here's to her," said the curate with a sigh, lifting the glass and emptying it, so that his face was a little pink when he put it down.

Pen had even less sleep that night than on the night before. In the morning, and almost before dawn, he went out and saddled that unfortunate Rebecca himself, and rode her on the Downs like mad. Again Love had roused him — and said, "Awake, Pendennis, I am here." That charming fever — that delicious longing — and fire, and uncertainty; he hugged them to him — he would not have lost them for all the world.



CHAPTER VI

CONTAINS BOTH LOVE AND WAR

Cicero and Euripides did not occupy Mr. Pen much for some time after this, and honest Mr. Smirke had a very easy time with his pupil. Rebecca was the animal who suffered most in the present state of Pen's mind, for, besides those days when he could publicly announce his intention of going to Chatteris to take a fencing-lesson, and went thither with the knowledge of his mother, whenever he saw three hours clear before him, the young rascal made a rush for the city, and found his way to Prior's Lane. He was as frantic with vexation when Rebecca went lame, as Richard at Bosworth, when his horse was killed under him: and got deeply into the books of the man who kept the hunting-stables at Chatteris for the doctoring of his own, and the hire of another animal.

Then, and perhaps once in a week, under pretence of going to read a Greek play with Smirke, this young reprobate set off so as to be in time for the Competitor down coach, stayed a couple of hours in Chatteris, and returned on the Rival which left for London at ten at night. Once his secret was nearly lost by Smirke's simplicity, of whom Mrs. Pendennis asked whether they had read a great deal the night before, or a question to that effect. Smirke was about to tell the truth, that he had never seen Mr. Pen at all, when the latter's boot-heel came grinding down on Mr. Smirke's toe under the table, and warned the curate not to betray him.

They had had conversations on the tender subject, of course. It is good sport (if you are not yourself engaged in the conversation) to hear two men in love talk. There must be a confidant and depositary somewhere. When informed, under the most solemn vows of secrecy, of Pen's condition of mind, the curate said, with no small tremor, "that he hoped it was no unworthy object — no unlawful attachment, which Pen had formed" — for if so, the poor fellow felt it would be his duty to break his vow and inform Pen's mother, and then there would be a quarrel, he felt, with sickening apprehension, and he would never again have a chance of seeing what he most liked in the world.

"Unlawful, unworthy!" Pen bounced out at the curate's question. "She is as pure as she is beautiful; I would give my heart to no other woman. I keep the matter a secret in my family, because — because — there are reasons of a weighty nature which I am not at liberty to disclose. But any man who breathes a word against her purity insults both her honour and mine, and — and dammy, I won't stand it."

Smirke, with a faint laugh, only said, "Well, well, don't call me out, Arthur, for you know I can't fight;" but by this compromise the wretched curate was put more than ever into the power of his pupil, and the Greek and mathematics suffered correspondingly.

If the reverend gentleman had had much discernment, and looked into the Poet's Corner of the County Chronicle, as it arrived in the Wednesday's bag, he might have seen 'Mrs. Haller,' 'Passion and Genius,' 'Lines to Miss Fotheringay, of the Theatre Royal,' appearing every week; and other verses of the most gloomy, thrilling, and passionate cast. But as these poems were no longer signed NEP by their artful composer, but subscribed EROS, neither the tutor nor Helen, the good soul, who cut all her son's verses out of the paper, knew that Nep was no other than that flaming Eros, who sang so vehemently the character of the new actress.

"Who is the lady," at last asked Mrs. Pendennis, "whom your rival is always singing in the County Chronicle? He writes something like you, dear Pen, but yours is much the best. Have you seen Miss Fotheringay?"

Pen said yes, he had; that night he went to see the "Stranger," she acted Mrs. Haller. By the way, she was going to have a benefit, and was to appear in Ophelia — suppose we were to go — Shakspeare, you know, mother — we can get horses from the Clavering Arms. Little Laura sprang up with delight, she longed for a play.

Pen introduced "Shakspeare, you know," because the deceased Pendennis, as became a man of his character, professed an uncommon respect for the bard of Avon, in whose works he safely said there was more poetry than in all 'Johnson's Poets' put together. And though Mr. Pendennis did not much read the works in question, yet he enjoined Pen to peruse them, and often said what pleasure he should have, when the boy was of a proper age, in taking him and mother to see some good plays of the immortal poet.

The ready tears welled up in the kind mother's eyes as she remembered these speeches of the man who was gone. She

kissed her son fondly, and said she would go. Laura jumped for joy. Was Pen happy? — was he ashamed? As he held his mother to him, he longed to tell her all, but he kept his counsel. He would see how his mother liked her; the play should be the thing, and he would try his mother like Hamlet's.

Helen, in her good humour, asked Mr. Smirke to be of the party. That ecclesiastic had been bred up by a fond parent at Clapham, who had an objection to dramatic entertainments, and he had never yet seen a play. But, Shakspeare! — but to go with Mrs. Pendennis in her carriage, and sit a whole night by her side! — he could not resist the idea of so much pleasure, and made a feeble speech, in which he spoke of temptation and gratitude, and finally accepted Mrs. Pendennis's most kind offer. As he spoke he gave her a look, which made her exceedingly uncomfortable. She had seen that look more than once, of late, pursuing her. He became more positively odious every day in the widow's eyes.

We are not going to say a great deal about Pen's courtship of Miss Fotheringay, for the reader has already had a specimen of her conversation, much of which need surely not be reported. Pen sate with her hour after hour, and poured forth all his honest boyish soul to her. Everything he knew, or hoped, or felt, or had read, or fancied, he told to her. He never tired of talking and longing. One after another, as his thoughts rose in his hot eager brain, he clothed them in words, and told them to her. Her part of the *tete-a-tete* was not to talk, but to appear as if she understood what Pen talked (a difficult matter, for the young fellow blurted out no small quantity of nonsense), and to look exceedingly handsome and sympathising. The fact is, whilst he was making one of his tirades — and delighted, perhaps, and wondering at his own eloquence, the lad would go on for twenty minutes at a time — the lovely Emily, who could not comprehend a tenth part of his talk, had leisure to think about her own affairs, and would arrange in her own mind how they should dress the cold mutton, or how she would turn the black satin, or make herself out of her scarf a bonnet like Miss Thackthwaite's new one, and so forth. Pen spouted Byron and Moore; passion and poetry: her business was to throw up her eyes, or fixing them for a moment on his face, to cry, "Oh, 'tis beautiful! Ah, how exquisite! Repeat those lines again." And off the boy went, and she returned to her own simple thoughts about the turned gown, or the hashed mutton.

In fact Pen's passion was not long a secret from the lovely Emily or her father. Upon his second visit, his admiration was quite evident to both of them, and on his departure the old gentleman said to his daughter, as he winked at her over his glass of grog, "Faith, Milly darling, I think ye've hooked that chap."

"Pooh, 'tis only a boy, papa dear," Milly remarked. "Sure he's but a child." Pen would have been very much pleased if he had heard that phrase — he was galloping home wild with pleasure, and shouting out her name as he rode.

"Ye've hooked 'um any how," said the Captain, "and let me tell ye he's not a bad fish. I asked Tom at the George, and Flint, the grocer, where his mother dales — fine fortune — drives in her chariot — splendid park and grounds — Fair Oaks Park — only son — property all his own at twenty-one — ye might go further and not fare so well, Miss Fotheringay."

"Them boys are mostly talk," said Milly, seriously. "Ye know at Dublin how ye went on about young Poldoody, and I've a whole desk full of verses he wrote me when he was in Trinity College; but he went abroad, and his mother married him to an Englishwoman."

"Lord Poldoody was a young nobleman; and in them it's natural: and ye weren't in the position in which ye are now, Milly dear. But ye mustn't encourage this young chap too much, for, bedad, Jack Costigan won't have any thrilling with his daughter."

"No more will his daughter, papa, you may be sure of that," Milly said. "A little sip more of the punch — sure, 'tis beautiful. Ye needn't be afraid about the young chap — I think I'm old enough to take care of myself, Captain Costigan."

So Pen used to come day after day, rushing in and galloping away, and growing more wild about the girl with every visit. Sometimes the Captain was present at their meetings; but having a perfect confidence in his daughter, he was more often inclined to leave the young couple to themselves, and cocked his hat over his eye, and strutted off on some errand when Pen entered. How delightful those interviews were! The Captain's drawing-room was a low wainscoted room, with a large window looking into the Dean's garden. There Pen sate and talked — and talked — Emily, looking beautiful as she sate at her work — looking beautiful and calm, and the sunshine came streaming in at the great windows, and lighted up her superb face and form. In the midst of the conversation, the great bell would begin to boom, and he would pause smiling, and be silent until the sound of the vast music died away — or the rooks in the cathedral elms would make a great noise towards sunset — or the sound of the organ and the choristers would come over the quiet air, and gently hush Pen's talking.

By the way, it must be said that Miss Fotheringay, in a plain shawl and a close bonnet and veil, went to church every Sunday of her life, accompanied by her indefatigable father, who gave the responses in a very rich and fine brogue, joined in the psalms and chanting, and behaved in the most exemplary manner.

Little Bows, the house-friend of the family, was exceedingly wroth at the notion of Miss Fotheringay's marriage with a stripling seven or eight years her junior. Bows, who was a cripple, and owned that he was a little more deformed even than Bingley the manager, so that he could not appear on the stage, was a singular wild man of no small talents and humour. Attracted first by Miss Fotheringay's beauty, he began to teach her how to act. He shrieked out in his cracked voice the parts, and his pupil learned them from his lips by rote, and repeated them in her full rich tones. He indicated the attitudes, and set and moved those beautiful arms of hers. Those who remember this grand actress on the stage can recall how she used always precisely the same gestures, looks, and tones; how she stood on the same plank of the stage in the same position, rolled her eyes at the same instant and to the same degree, and wept with precisely the same heart-rending pathos and over the same pathetic syllable. And after she had come out trembling with emotion before the audience, and looking so exhausted and tearful that you fancied she would faint with sensibility, she would gather up her hair the instant she was behind the curtain, and go home to a mutton-chop and a glass of brown stout; and the harrowing labours of the day over, she went to bed and snored as resolutely and as regularly as a porter.

Bows then was indignant at the notion that his pupil should throw her chances away in life by bestowing her hand upon a little country squire. As soon as a London manager saw her he prophesied that she would get a London engagement, and a great success. The misfortune was that the London managers had seen her. She had played in London three years before, and failed from utter stupidity. Since then it was that Bows had taken her in hand and taught her part after part. How he worked and screamed, and twisted, and repeated lines over and over again, and with what indomitable patience and dulness she followed him! She knew that he made her: and let herself be made. She was not grateful, or ungrateful, or unkind, or ill-humoured. She was only stupid; and Pen was madly in love with her.

The post-horses from the Clavering Arms arrived in due time, and carried the party to the theatre at Chatteris, where Pen was gratified in perceiving that a tolerably large audience was assembled. The young gentlemen from Baymouth had a box, in the front of which sate Mr. Foker and his friend Mr. Spavin, splendidly attired in the most full-blown evening costume. They saluted Pen in a cordial manner, and examined his party, of which they approved, for little Laura was a pretty little red-cheeked girl with a quantity of shining brown ringlets, and Mrs. Pendennis, dressed in black velvet with the diamond cross which she sported on great occasions, looked uncommonly handsome and majestic. Behind these sate Mr. Arthur, and the gentle Smirke with the curl reposing on his fair forehead, and his white tie in perfect order. He blushed to find himself in such a place — but how happy was he to be there! He and Mrs. Pendennis brought books of 'Hamlet' with them to follow the tragedy, as is the custom of honest countryfolks who go to a play in state. Samuel, coachman, groom, and gardener to Mr. Pendennis, took his place in the pit, where Mr. Foker's man was also visible. It was dotted with non-commissioned officers of the Dragoons, whose band, by kind permission of Colonel Swallowtail, were, as usual, in the orchestra; and that corpulent and distinguished warrior himself, with his Waterloo medal and a number of his young men, made a handsome show in the boxes.

"Who is that odd-looking person bowing to you, Arthur?" Mrs. Pendennis asked of her son.

Pen blushed a great deal. "His name is Captain Costigan, ma'am," he said — "a Peninsular officer." In fact it was the Captain in a new shoot of clothes, as he called them, and with a large pair of white kid gloves, one of which he waved to Pendennis, whilst he laid the other sprawling over his heart and coat-buttons. Pen did not say any more. And how was Mrs. Pendennis to know that Mr. Costigan was the father of Miss Fotheringay?

Mr. Hornbull, from London, was the Hamlet of the night, Mr. Bingley modestly contenting himself with the part of Horatio, and reserving his chief strength for William in 'Black-Eyed Susan,' which was the second piece.

We have nothing to do with the play: except to say that Ophelia looked lovely, and performed with admirable wild pathos laughing, weeping, gazing wildly, waving her beautiful white arms, and flinging about her snatches of flowers and songs with the most charming madness. What an opportunity her splendid black hair had of tossing over her shoulders! She made the most charming corpse ever seen; and while Hamlet and Laertes were battling in her grave, she was looking out from the back scenes with some curiosity towards Pen's box, and the family party assembled in it.

There was but one voice in her praise there. Mrs. Pendennis was in ecstasies with her beauty. Little Laura was

bewildered by the piece, and the Ghost, and the play within the play (during which, as Hamlet lay at Ophelia's knee, Pen felt that he would have liked to strangle Mr. Hornbull), but cried out great praises of that beautiful young creature. Pen was charmed with the effect which she produced on his mother — and the clergyman, for his part, was exceedingly enthusiastic.

When the curtain fell upon that group of slaughtered personages, who are despatched so suddenly at the end of 'Hamlet,' and whose demise astonished poor little Laura not a little, there was an immense shouting and applause from all quarters of the house; the intrepid Smirke, violently excited, clapped his hands, and cried out "Bravo, Bravo," as loud as the Dragoon officers themselves. These were greatly moved — ils s'agitaient sur leurs bancs — to borrow a phrase from our neighbours. They were led cheering into action by the portly Swallowtail, who waved his cap — the non-commissioned officers in the pit, of course, gallantly following their chiefs. There was a roar of bravos rang through the house; Pen bellowing with the loudest, "Fotheringay! Fotheringay!" and Messrs. Spavin and Foker giving the view-halloo from their box. Even Mrs. Pendennis began to wave about her pocket-handkerchief, and little Laura danced, laughed, clapped, and looked up at Pen with wonder.

Hornbull led the beneficiaire forward, amidst bursts of enthusiasm — and she looked so handsome and radiant, with her hair still over her shoulders, that Pen hardly could contain himself for rapture: and he leaned over his mother's chair, and shouted, and hurrayed, and waved his hat. It was all he could do to keep his secret from Helen, and not say, "Look! That's the woman! Isn't she peerless? I tell you I love her." But he disguised these feelings under an enormous bellowing and hurrying.

As for Miss Fotheringay and her behaviour, the reader is referred to a former page for an account of that. She went through precisely the same business. She surveyed the house all round with glances of gratitude; and trembled, and almost sank with emotion, over her favourite trap-door. She seized the flowers (Foker discharged a prodigious bouquet at her, and even Smirke made a feeble shy with a rose, and blushed dreadfully when it fell into the pit). She seized the flowers and pressed them to her swelling heart — etc., etc. — in a word — we refer the reader to earlier pages. Twinkling in her breast poor old Pen saw a locket which he had bought of Mr. Nathan in High Street, with the last shilling he was worth, and a sovereign borrowed from Smirke.

'Black-Eyed Susan' followed, at which sweet story our gentle-hearted friends were exceedingly charmed and affected: and in which Susan, with a russet gown and a pink ribbon in her cap, looked to the full as lovely as Ophelia. Bingley was great in William. Goll, as the Admiral, looked like the figure-head of a seventy-four; and Garbetts, as Captain Boldweather, a miscreant who forms a plan for carrying off Black-eyed Susan, and waving an immense cocked hat says, "Come what may, he will be the ruin of her"— all these performed their parts with their accustomed talent; and it was with a sincere regret that all our friends saw the curtain drop down and end that pretty and tender story.

If Pen had been alone with his mother in the carriage as they went home, he would have told her all, that night; but he sate on the box in the moonshine smoking a cigar by the side of Smirke, who warmed himself with a comforter. Mr. Foker's tandem and lamps whirled by the sober old Clavering posters as they were a couple of miles on their road home, and Mr. Spavin saluted Mrs. Pendennis's carriage with some considerable variations of Rule Britannia on the key-bugle.

It happened two days after the above gaieties that Mr. Dean of Chatteris entertained a few select clerical friends at dinner at his Deanery Home. That they drank uncommonly good port wine, and abused the Bishop over their dessert, are very likely matters: but with such we have nothing at present to do. Our friend Doctor Portman, of Clavering, was one of the Dean's guests, and being a gallant man, and seeing from his place at the mahogany the Dean's lady walking up and down the grass, with her children sporting around her, and her pink parasol over her lovely head — the Doctor stepped out of the French windows of the dining-room into the lawn, which skirts that apartment, and left the other white neckcloths to gird at my lord Bishop. Then the Doctor went up and offered Mrs. Dean his arm, and they sauntered over the ancient velvet lawn, which had been mowed and rolled for immemorial Deans, in that easy, quiet, comfortable manner, in which people of middle age and good temper walk after a good dinner, in a calm golden summer evening, when the sun has but just sunk behind the enormous cathedral-towers, and the sickle-shaped moon is growing every instant brighter in the heavens.

Now at the end of the Dean's garden there is, as we have stated, Mrs. Creed's house, and the windows of the first-floor room were open to admit the pleasant summer air. A young lady of six-and-twenty, whose eyes were perfectly wide open, and a luckless boy of eighteen, blind with love and infatuation, were in that chamber together; in which persons, as we have before seen them in the same place, the reader will have no difficulty in recognising Mr. Arthur Pendennis and Miss Costigan.

The poor boy had taken the plunge. Trembling with passionate emotion, his heart beating and throbbing fiercely, tears rushing forth in spite of him, his voice almost choking with feeling, poor Pen had said those words which he could withhold no more, and flung himself and his whole store of love, and admiration, and ardour at the feet of this mature beauty. Is he the first who has done so? Have none before or after him staked all their treasure of life, as a savage does his land and possessions against a draught of the fair-skins' fire-water, or a couple of bauble eyes?

"Does your mother know of this, Arthur?" said Miss Fotheringay, slowly. He seized her hand madly and kissed it a thousand times. She did not withdraw it. "Does the old lady know it?" Miss Costigan thought to herself, "well, perhaps she may," and then she remembered what a handsome diamond cross Mrs. Pendennis had on the night of the play, and thought, "Sure 'twill go in the family."

"Calm yourself, dear Arthur," she said, in her low rich voice, and sniffled sweetly and gravely upon him. Then, with her disengaged hand, she put the hair lightly off his throbbing forehead. He was in such a rapture and whirl of happiness that he could hardly speak. At last he gasped out, "My mother has seen you, and admires you beyond measure. She will learn to love you soon: who can do otherwise? She will love you because I do."

"Deed then, I think you do," said Miss Costigan, perhaps with a sort of pity for Pen.

Think she did! Of course here Mr. Pen went off into a rhapsody through which, as we have perfect command over our own feelings, we have no reason to follow the lad. Of course, love, truth, and eternity were produced: and words were tried but found impossible to plumb the tremendous depth of his affection. This speech, we say, is no business of ours. It was most likely not very wise, but what right have we to overhear? Let the poor boy fling out his simple heart at the woman's feet, and deal gently with him. It is best to love wisely, no doubt: but to love foolishly is better than not to be able to love at all. Some of us can't: and are proud of our impotence too.

At the end of his speech Pen again kissed the imperial hand with rapture — and I believe it was at this very moment, and while Mrs. Dean and Doctor Portman were engaged in conversation, that young Master Ridley Roset, her son, pulled his mother by the back of her capacious dress and said —

"I say, ma! look up there"— and he wagged his innocent head.

That was, indeed, a view from the Dean's garden such as seldom is seen by Deans — or is written in Chapters. There was poor Pen performing a salute upon the rosy fingers of his charmer, who received the embrace with perfect calmness and good humour. Master Ridley looked up and grinned, little Miss Rosa looked at her brother, and opened the mouth of astonishment. Mrs. Dean's countenance defied expression, and as for Dr. Portman, when he beheld the scene, and saw his prime favourite and dear pupil Pen, he stood mute with rage and wonder.

Mrs. Haller spied the party below at the same moment, and gave a start and a laugh. "Sure there's somebody in the Dean's garden," she cried out; and withdrew with perfect calmness, whilst Pen darted away with his face glowing like coals. The garden party had re-entered the house when he ventured to look out again. The sickle moon was blazing bright in the heavens then, the stars were glittering, the bell of the cathedral tolling nine, the Dean's guests (all save one, who had called for his horse Dumpling, and ridden off early) were partaking of tea and buttered cakes in Mrs. Dean's drawing-room — when Pen took leave of Miss Costigan.

Pen arrived at home in due time afterwards, and was going to slip off to bed, for the poor lad was greatly worn and agitated, and his high-strung nerves had been at almost a maddening pitch when a summons came to him by John the old footman, whose countenance bore a very ominous look, that his mother must see him below.

On this he tied on his neckcloth again, and went downstairs to the drawing-room. There sate not only his mother, but her friend, the Reverend Doctor Portman. Helen's face looked very pale by the light of the lamp — the Doctor's was flushed, on the contrary, and quivering with anger and emotion.

Pen saw at once that there was a crisis, and that there had been a discovery. "Now for it," he thought.

"Where have you been, Arthur?" Helen said in a trembling voice.

"How can you look that — that dear lady, and a Christian clergyman in the face, sir?" bounced out the Doctor, in spite of Helen's pale, appealing looks. "Where has he been? Where his mother's son should have been ashamed to go. For your mother's an angel, sir, an angel. How dare you bring pollution into her house, and make that spotless creature wretched with the thoughts of your crime?"

"Sir!" said Pen.

“Don’t deny it, sir,” roared the Doctor. “Don’t add lies, sir, to your other infamy. I saw you myself, sir. I saw you from the Dean’s garden. I saw you kissing the hand of that infernal painted ——”

“Stop,” Pen said, clapping his fist on the table, till the lamp flickered up and shook, “I am a very young man, but you will please to remember that I am a gentleman — I will hear no abuse of that lady.”

“Lady, sir,” cried the Doctor, “that a lady — you — you — you stand in your mother’s presence and call that — that woman a lady! ——”

“In anybody’s presence,” shouted out Pen. “She is worthy of any place. She is as pure as any woman. She is as good as she is beautiful. If any man but you insulted her, I would tell him what I thought; but as you are my oldest friend, I suppose you have the privilege to doubt of my honour.”

“No, no, Pen, dearest Pen,” cried out Helen in an excess of joy. “I told, I told you, Doctor, he was not — not what you thought:” and the tender creature coming trembling forward flung herself on Pen’s shoulder.

Pen felt himself a man, and a match for all the Doctors in Doctordom. He was glad this explanation had come. “You saw how beautiful she was,” he said to his mother, with a soothing, protecting air, like Hamlet with Gertrude in the play. “I tell you, dear mother, she is as good. When you know her you will say so. She is of all, except you, the simplest, the kindest, the most affectionate of women. Why should she not be on the stage? — She maintains her father by her labour.”

“Drunken old reprobate,” growled the Doctor, but Pen did not hear or heed.

“If you could see, as I have, how orderly her life is, how pure and pious her whole conduct, you would — as I do — yes, as I do” — (with a savage look at the Doctor) — “spurn the slanderer who dared to do her wrong. Her father was an officer, and distinguished himself in Spain. He was a friend of His Royal Highness the Duke of Kent, and is intimately known to the Duke of Wellington, and some of the first officers of our army. He has met my uncle Arthur at Lord Hill’s, he thinks. His own family is one of the most ancient and respectable in Ireland, and indeed is as good as our own. The Costigans were kings of Ireland.”

“Why, God bless my soul,” shrieked out the Doctor, hardly knowing whether to burst with rage or laughter, “you don’t mean to say you want to marry her?”

Pen put on his most princely air. “What else, Dr. Portman,” he said, “do you suppose would be my desire?”

Utterly foiled in his attack, and knocked down by this sudden lunge of Pen’s, the Doctor could only gasp out, “Mrs. Pendennis, ma’am, send for the Major.”

“Send for the Major? with all my heart,” said Arthur Prince of Pendennis and Grand Duke of Fair Oaks, with a most superb wave of the hand. And the colloquy terminated by the writing of those two letters which were laid on Major Pendennis’s breakfast-table, in London, at the commencement of Prince Arthur’s most veracious history.



CHAPTER VII

IN WHICH THE MAJOR MAKES HIS APPEARANCE

Our acquaintance, Major Arthur Pendennis, arrived in due time at Fair Oaks, after a dreary night passed in the mail-coach, where a stout fellow-passenger, swelling preternaturally with great-coats, had crowded him into a corner, and kept him awake by snoring indecently; where a widow lady, opposite, had not only shut out the fresh air by closing all the windows of the vehicle, but had filled the interior with fumes of Jamaica rum and water, which she sucked perpetually from a bottle in her reticule; where, whenever he caught a brief moment of sleep, the twanging of the horn at the turnpike-gates, or the scuffling of his huge neighbour wedging him closer and closer, or the play of the widow's feet on his own tender toes, speedily woke up the poor gentleman to the horrors and realities of life — a life which has passed away now and become impossible, and only lives in fond memories. Eight miles an hour, for twenty or five-and-twenty hours, a tight mail-coach, a hard seat, a gouty tendency, a perpetual change of coachmen grumbling because you did not fee them enough, a fellow-passenger partial to spirits-and-water — who has not borne with these evils in the jolly old times? and how could people travel under such difficulties? And yet they did, and were merry too. Next the widow, and by the side of the Major's servant on the roof, were a couple of school-boys going home for the midsummer holidays, and Major Pendennis wondered to see them sup at the inn at Bagshot, where they took in a cargo of ham, eggs, pie, pickles, tea, coffee, and boiled beef, which surprised the poor Major, sipping a cup of very feeble tea, and thinking with a tender dejection that Lord Steyne's dinner was coming off at that very moment. The ingenuous ardour of the boys, however, amused the Major, who was very good-natured, and he became the more interested when he found that the one who travelled inside with him was a lord's son, whose noble father Pendennis, of course, had met in the world of fashion which he frequented. The little lord slept all night through, in spite of the squeezing, and the horn-blowing, and the widow; and he looked as fresh as paint (and, indeed; pronounced himself to be so) when the Major, with a yellow face, a bristly beard, a wig out of curl, and strong rheumatic griefs shooting through various limbs of his uneasy body, descended at the little lodge-gate at Fair Oaks, where the portress and gardener's wife reverentially greeted him, and, still more respectfully, Mr. Morgan, his man.

Helen was on the look-out for this expected guest, and saw him from her window. But she did not come forward immediately to greet him. She knew the Major did not like to be seen at a surprise, and required a little preparation before he cared to be visible. Pen, when a boy, had incurred sad disgrace by carrying off from the Major's dressing-table a little morocco box, which it must be confessed contained the Major's back teeth, which he naturally would leave out of his jaws in a jolting mail-coach, and without which he would not choose to appear. Morgan, his man, made a mystery of mystery of his wigs: curling them in private places: introducing them mysteriously to his master's room; — nor without his head of hair would the Major care to show himself to any member of his family, or any acquaintance. He went to his apartment then and supplied these deficiencies; he groaned, and moaned, and wheezed, and cursed Morgan through his toilet, as an old buck will, who has been up all night with a rheumatism, and has a long duty to perform. And finally being belted, curled, and set straight, he descended upon the drawing-room, with a grave majestic air, such as befitted one who was at once a man of business and a man of fashion.

Pen was not there, however; only Helen, and little Laura sewing at her knees; and to whom he never presented more than a forefinger, as he did on this occasion after saluting his sister-in-law. Laura took the finger trembling and dropped it — and then fled out of the room. Major Pendennis did not want to keep her, or indeed to have her in the house at all, and had his private reason for disapproving of her: which we may mention on some future occasion. Meanwhile Laura disappeared and wandered about the premises seeking for Pen: whom she presently found in the orchard, pacing up and down a walk there in earnest conversation with Mr. Smirke. He was so occupied that he did not hear Laura's clear voice singing out, until Smirke pulled him by the coat and pointed towards her as she came running.

She ran up and put her hand into his. "Come in, Pen," she said, "there's somebody come; uncle Arthur's come."

"He is, is he?" said Pen, and she felt him grasp her little hand. He looked round at Smirke with uncommon fierceness, as much as to say, I am ready for him or any man. — Mr. Smirke cast up his eyes as usual and heaved a gentle sigh.

"Lead on, Laura," Pen said, with a half fierce, half comic air — "Lead on, and say I wait upon my uncle." But he was

laughing in order to hide a great anxiety: and was screwing his courage inwardly to face the ordeal which he knew was now before him.

Pen had taken Smirke into his confidence in the last two days, and after the outbreak attendant on the discovery of Doctor Portman, and during every one of those forty-eight hours which he had passed in Mr. Smirke's society, had done nothing but talk to his tutor about Miss Fotheringay — Miss Emily Fotheringay — Emily, etc., to all which talk Smirke listened without difficulty, for he was in love himself, most anxious in all things to propitiate Pen, and indeed very much himself enraptured by the personal charms of this goddess, whose like, never having been before at a theatrical representation, he had not beheld until now. Pen's fire and volubility, his hot eloquence and rich poetical tropes and figures, his manly heart, kind, ardent, and hopeful, refusing to see any defects in the person he loved, any difficulties in their position that he might not overcome, had half convinced Mr. Smirke that the arrangement proposed by Mr. Pen was a very feasible and prudent one, and that it would be a great comfort to have Emily settled at Fairoaks, Captain Costigan in the yellow room, established for life there, and Pen married at eighteen.

And it is a fact that in these two days the boy had almost talked over his mother, too; had parried all her objections one after another with that indignant good sense which is often the perfection of absurdity; and had brought her almost to acquiesce in the belief that if the marriage was doomed in heaven, why doomed it was — that if the young woman was a good person, it was all that she for her part had to ask; and rather to dread the arrival of the guardian uncle who she foresaw would regard Mr. Pen's marriage in a manner very different to that simple, romantic, honest, and utterly absurd way in which the widow was already disposed to look at questions of this sort.

For as in the old allegory of the gold and silver shield, about which the two knights quarrelled, each is right according to the point from which he looks: so about marriage; the question whether it is foolish or good, wise or otherwise, depends upon the point of view from which you regard it. If it means a snug house in Belgravia, and pretty little dinner-parties, and a pretty little brougham to drive in the Park, and a decent provision not only for the young people, but for the little Belgravians to come; and if these are the necessities of life (and they are with many honest people), to talk of any other arrangement is an absurdity: of love in lodgings — a babyish folly of affection: that can't pay coach-hire or afford a decent milliner — as mere wicked balderdash and childish romance. If on the other hand your opinion is that people, not with an assured subsistence, but with a fair chance to obtain it, and with the stimulus of hope, health, and strong affection, may take the chance of Fortune for better or worse, and share its good or its evil together, the polite theory then becomes an absurdity in its turn: worse than an absurdity, a blasphemy almost, and doubt of Providence; and a man who waits to make his chosen woman happy, until he can drive her to church in a neat little carriage with a pair of horses, is no better than a coward or a trifler, who is neither worthy of love nor of fortune.

I don't say that the town folks are not right, but Helen Pendennis was a country-bred woman, and the book of life, as she interpreted it, told her a different story to that page which is read in cities. Like most soft and sentimental women, matchmaking, in general, formed a great part of her thoughts, and I daresay she had begun to speculate about her son's falling in love and marrying long before the subject had ever entered into the brains of the young gentleman. It pleased her (with that dismal pleasure which the idea of sacrificing themselves gives to certain women) to think of the day when she would give up all to Pen, and he should bring his wife home, and she would surrender the keys and the best bedroom, and go and sit at the side of the table, and see him happy. What did she want in life, but to see the lad prosper? As an empress certainly was not too good for him, and would be honoured by becoming Mrs. Pen; so if he selected humble Esther instead of Queen Vashti, she would be content with his lordship's choice. Never mind how lowly or poor the person might be who was to enjoy that prodigious honour, Mrs. Pendennis was willing to bow before her and welcome her, and yield her up the first place. But an actress — a mature woman, who had long ceased blushing except with rouge, as she stood under the eager glances of thousands of eyes — an illiterate and ill-bred person, very likely, who must have lived with light associates, and have heard doubtful conversation — Oh! it was hard that such a one should be chosen, and that the matron should be deposed to give place to such a Sultana.

All these doubts the widow laid before Pen during the two days which had of necessity to elapse ere the uncle came down; but he met them with that happy frankness and ease which a young gentleman exhibits at his time of life, and routed his mother's objections with infinite satisfaction to himself. Miss Costigan was a paragon of virtue and delicacy; she was as sensitive as the most timid maiden; she was as pure as the unsullied snow; she had the finest manners, the most graceful wit and genius, the most charming refinement and justness of appreciation in all matters of taste; she had the

most admirable temper and devotion to her father, a good old gentleman of high family and fallen fortunes, who had lived, however, with the best society in Europe: he was in no hurry, and could afford to wait any time — till he was one-and-twenty. But he felt (and here his face assumed an awful and harrowing solemnity) that he was engaged in the one only passion of his life, and that DEATH alone could close it.

Helen told him, with a sad smile and shake of the head, that people survived these passions, and as for long engagements contracted between very young men and old women — she knew an instance in her own family — Laura's poor father was an instance — how fatal they were.

Mr. Pen, however, was resolved that death must be his doom in case of disappointment, and rather than this — rather than baulk him, in fact — this lady would have submitted to any sacrifice or personal pain, and would have gone down on her knees and have kissed the feet of a Hottentot daughter-in-law.

Arthur knew his power over the widow, and the young tyrant was touched whilst he exercised it. In those two days he brought her almost into submission, and patronised her very kindly; and he passed one evening with the lovely pie-maker at Chatteris, in which he bragged of his influence over his mother; and he spent the other night in composing a most flaming and conceited copy of verses to his divinity, in which he vowed, like Montrose, that he would make her famous with his sword and glorious by his pen, and that he would love her as no mortal woman had been adored since the creation of womankind.

It was on that night, long after midnight, that wakeful Helen, passing stealthily by her son's door, saw a light streaming through the chink of the door into the dark passage, and heard Pen tossing and tumbling, and mumbling verses in his bed. She waited outside for a while, anxiously listening to him. In infantile fevers and early boyish illnesses, many a night before, the kind soul had so kept watch. She turned the lock very softly now, and went in so gently, that Pen for a moment did not see her. His face was turned from her. His papers on his desk were scattered about, and more were lying on the bed round him. He was biting a pencil and thinking of rhymes and all sorts of follies and passions. He was Hamlet jumping into Ophelia's grave: he was the Stranger taking Mrs. Haller to his arms, beautiful Mrs. Haller, with the raven ringlets falling over her shoulders. Despair and Byron, Thomas Moore and all the Loves of the Angels, Waller and Herrick, Beranger and all the love-songs he had ever read, were working and seething in this young gentleman's mind, and he was at the very height and paroxysm of the imaginative frenzy when his mother found him.

"Arthur," said the mother's soft silver voice: and he started up and turned round. He clutched some of the papers and pushed them under the pillow.

"Why don't you go to sleep, my dear?" she said, with a sweet tender smile, and sate down on the bed and took one of his hot hands.

Pen looked at her wildly for an instant — "I couldn't sleep," he said — "I — I was — I was writing." — And hereupon he flung his arms round her neck and said, "O mother! I love her, I love her!" — How could such a kind soul as that help soothing and pitying him? The gentle creature did her best: and thought with a strange wonderment and tenderness that it was only yesterday that he was a child in that bed; and how she used to come and say her prayers over it before he woke upon holiday mornings.

They were very grand verses, no doubt, although Miss Fotheringay did not understand them; but old Cos, with a wink and a knowing finger on his nose, said, "Put them up with th' other letthers, Milly darling. Poldoody's pomes was nothing to this." So Milly locked up the manuscripts.

When then, the Major being dressed and presentable, presented himself to Mrs. Pendennis, he found in the course of ten minutes' colloquy that the poor widow was not merely distressed at the idea of the marriage contemplated by Pen, but actually more distressed at thinking that the boy himself was unhappy about it, and that his uncle and he should have any violent altercation on the subject. She besought Major Pendennis to be very gentle with Arthur: "He has a very high spirit, and will not brook unkind words," she hinted. "Dr. Portman spoke to him rather roughly — and I must own unjustly, the other night — for my dearest boy's honour is as high as any mother can desire — but Pen's answer quite frightened me, it was so indignant. Recollect he is a man now; and be very — very cautious," said the widow, laying a fair long hand on the Major's sleeve.

He took it up, kissed it gallantly and looked in her alarmed face with wonder, and a scorn which he was too polite to show. "Bon Dieu!" thought the old negotiator, "the boy has actually talked the woman round, and she'd get him a wife as

she would a toy if Master cried for it. Why are there no such things as lettres-de-cachet — and a Bastille for young fellows of family?” The Major lived in such good company that he might be excused for feeling like an Earl. — He kissed the widow’s timid hand, pressed it in both his, and laid it down on the table with one of his own over it, as he smiled and looked her in the face.

“Confess,” said he, “now, that you are thinking how you possibly can make it up to your conscience to let the boy have his own way.”

She blushed and was moved in the usual manner of females. “I am thinking that he is very unhappy — and I am too —”

“To contradict him or to let him have his own wish?” asked the other; and added, with great comfort to his inward self, “I’m d — d if he shall.”

“To think that he should have formed so foolish and cruel and fatal an attachment,” the widow said, “which can but end in pain whatever be the issue.”

“The issue shan’t be marriage, my dear sister,” the Major said resolutely. “We’re not going to have a Pendennis, the head of the house, marry a strolling mountebank from a booth. No, no, we won’t marry into Greenwich Fair, ma’am.”

“If the match is broken suddenly off,” the widow interposed, “I don’t know what may be the consequence. I know Arthur’s ardent temper, the intensity of his affections, the agony of his pleasures and disappointments, and I tremble at this one if it must be. Indeed, indeed, it must not come on him too suddenly.”

“My dear madam,” the Major said, with an air of the deepest commiseration “I’ve no doubt Arthur will have to suffer confoundedly before he gets over the little disappointment. But is he, think you, the only person who has been so rendered miserable?”

“No, indeed,” said Helen, holding down her eyes. She was thinking of her own case, and was at that moment seventeen again — and most miserable.

“I, myself,” whispered her brother-in-law, “have undergone a disappointment in early life. A young woman with fifteen thousand pounds, niece to an Earl — most accomplished creature — a third of her money would have run up my promotion in no time, and I should have been a lieutenant — colonel at thirty: but it might not be. I was but a penniless lieutenant: her parents interfered: and I embarked for India, where I had the honour of being secretary to Lord Buckley, when commander-in-Chief without her. What happened? We returned our letters, sent back our locks of hair (the Major here passed his fingers through his wig), we suffered — but we recovered. She is now a baronet’s wife with thirteen grown-up children; altered, it is true, in person; but her daughters remind me of what she was, and the third is to be presented early next week.”

Helen did not answer. She was still thinking of old times. I suppose if one lives to be a hundred: there are certain passages of one’s early life whereof the recollection will always carry us back to youth again, and that Helen was thinking of one of these.

“Look at my own brother, my dear creature,” the Major continued gallantly: “he himself, you know, had a little disappointment when he started in the — the medical profession — an eligible opportunity presented itself. Miss Balls, I remember the name, was daughter of an apoth — a practitioner in very large practice; my brother had very nearly succeeded in his suit. — But difficulties arose: disappointments supervened, and — and I am sure he had no reason to regret the disappointment, which gave him this hand,” said the Major, and he once more politely pressed Helen’s fingers.

“Those marriages between people of such different rank and age,” said Helen, “are sad things. I have known them produce a great deal of unhappiness. — Laura’s father, my cousin, who — who was brought up with me” — she added, in a low voice, “was an instance of that.”

“Most injudicious,” cut in the Major. “I don’t know anything more painful than for a man to marry his superior in age or his inferior in station. Fancy marrying a woman of low rank of life, and having your house filled with her confounded tag-rag-and-bobtail of relations! Fancy your wife attached to a mother who dropped her h’s, or called Maria Marire! How are you to introduce her into society? My dear Mrs. Pendennis, I will name no names, but in the very best circles of London society I have seen men suffering the most excruciating agony, I have known them to be cut, to be lost utterly, from the vulgarity of their wives’ connections. What did Lady Snapperton do last year at her dejeune dansant after the Bohemian Ball? She told Lord Brouncker that he might bring his daughters or send them with a proper chaperon, but that she would

not receive Lady Brouncker who was a druggist's daughter, or some such thing, and as Tom Wagg remarked of her, never wanted medicine certainly, for she never had an h in her life. Good Ged, what would have been the trifling pang of a separation in the first instance to the enduring infliction of a constant misalliance and intercourse with low people?"

"What, indeed!" said Helen, dimly disposed towards laughter, but yet checking the inclination, because she remembered in what prodigious respect her deceased husband held Major Pendennis and his stories of the great world.

"Then this fatal woman is ten years older than that silly young scapegrace of an Arthur. What happens in such cases, my dear creature? I don't mind telling you, now we are alone that in the highest state of society, misery, undeviating misery, is the result. Look at Lord Clodworthy come into a room with his wife — why, good Ged, she looks like Clodworthy's mother. What's the case between Lord and Lady Willowbank, whose love match was notorious? He has already cut her down twice when she has hanged herself out of jealousy for Mademoiselle de Sainte Cunegonde, the dancer; and mark my words, good Ged, one day he'll not cut the old woman down. No, my dear madam, you are not in the world, but I am: you are a little romantic and sentimental (you know you are — women with those large beautiful eyes always are); you must leave this matter to my experience. Marry this woman! Marry at eighteen an actress of thirty — bah bah! — I would as soon he sent into the kitchen and married the cook."

"I know the evils of premature engagements," sighed out Helen: and as she has made this allusion no less than thrice in the course of the above conversation, and seems to be so oppressed with the notion of long engagements and unequal marriages, and as the circumstance we have to relate will explain what perhaps some persons are anxious to know, namely who little Laura is, who has appeared more than once before us, it will be as well to clear up these points in another chapter.



CHAPTER VIII

IN WHICH PEN IS KEPT WAITING AT THE DOOR, WHILE THE READER IS INFORMED WHO LITTLE LAURA WAS.

Once upon a time, then, there was a young gentleman of Cambridge University who came to pass the long vacation at the village where young Helen Thistlewood was living with her mother, the widow of the lieutenant slain at Copenhagen. This gentleman, whose name was the Reverend Francis Bell, was nephew to Mrs. Thistlewood, and by consequence, own cousin to Miss Helen, so that it was very right that he should take lodgings in his aunt's house, who lived in a very small way; and there he passed the long vacation, reading with three or four pupils who accompanied him to the village. Mr. Bell was fellow of a college, and famous in the University for his learning and skill as a tutor.

His two kinswomen understood pretty early that the reverend gentleman was engaged to be married, and was only waiting for a college living to enable him to fulfil his engagement. His intended bride was the daughter of another parson, who had acted as Mr. Bell's own private tutor in Bell's early life, and it was whilst under Mr. Coacher's roof, indeed, and when only a boy of seventeen or eighteen years of age, that the impetuous young Bell had flung himself at the feet of Miss Martha Coacher, whom he was helping to pick peas in the garden. On his knees, before those peas and her, he pledged himself to an endless affection.

Miss Coacher was by many years the young fellow's senior and her own heart had been lacerated by many previous disappointments in the matrimonial line. No less than three pupils of her father had trifled with those young affections. The apothecary of the village had despicably jilted her. The dragoon officer, with whom she had danced so many many times during that happy season which she passed at Bath with her gouty grandmamma, one day gaily shook his bridle-rein and galloped away never to return. Wounded by the shafts of repeated ingratitude, can it be wondered at that the heart of Martha Coacher should pant to find rest somewhere? She listened to the proposals of the gawky gallant honest boy, with great kindness and good-humour; at the end of his speech she said, "Law, Bell, I'm sure you are too young to think of such things;" but intimated that she too would revolve them in her own virgin bosom. She could not refer Mr. Bell to her mamma, for Mr. Coacher was a widower, and being immersed in his books, was of course unable to take the direction of so frail and wondrous an article as a lady's heart, which Miss Martha had to manage for herself.

A lock of her hair, tied up in a piece of blue ribbon, conveyed to the happy Bell the result of the Vestal's conference with herself. Thrice before had she snipt off one of her auburn ringlets, and given them away. The possessors were faithless, but the hair had grown again; and Martha had indeed occasion to say that men were deceivers when she handed over this token of love to the simple boy.

Number 6, however, was an exception to former passions — Francis Bell was the most faithful of lovers. When his time arrived to go to college, and it became necessary to acquaint Mr. Coacher of the arrangements that had been made, the latter cried, "God bless my soul, I hadn't the least idea what was going on;" as was indeed very likely, for he had been taken in three times before in precisely a similar manner; and Francis went to the University resolved to conquer honours, so as to be able to lay them at the feet of his beloved Martha.

This prize in view made him labour prodigiously. News came, term after term, of the honours he won. He sent the prize-books for his college essays to old Coacher, and his silver declamation cup to Miss Martha. In due season he was high among the Wranglers, and a fellow of his college; and during all the time of these transactions a constant tender correspondence was kept up with Miss Coacher, to whose influence, and perhaps with justice, he attributed the successes which he had won.

By the time, however, when the Rev. Francis Bell, M.A., and Fellow and Tutor of his College, was twenty-six years of age, it happened that Miss Coacher was thirty-four, nor had her charms, her manners, or her temper improved since that sunny day in the springtime of life when he found her picking peas in the garden. Having achieved his honours he relaxed in the ardour of his studies, and his judgment and tastes also perhaps became cooler. The sunshine of the pea-garden faded away from Miss Martha, and poor Bell found himself engaged — and his hand pledged to that bond in a thousand letters — to a coarse, ill-tempered, ill-favoured, ill-mannered, middle-aged woman.

It was in consequence of one of many altercations (in which Martha's eloquence shone, and in which therefore she was frequently pleased to indulge) that Francis refused to take his pupils to Bearleader's Green, where Mr. Coacher's living was, and where Bell was in the habit of spending the summer: and he bethought him that he would pass the vacation at his aunt's village, which he had not seen for many years — not since little Helen was a girl and used to sit on his knee. Down then he came and lived with them. Helen was grown a beautiful young woman now. The cousins were nearly four months together, from June to October. They walked in the summer evenings: they met in the early morn. They read out of the same book when the old lady dozed at night over the candles. What little Helen knew, Frank taught her. She sang to him: she gave her artless heart to him. She was aware of all his story. Had he made any secret? — had he not shown the picture of the woman to whom he was engaged, and with a blush — her letters, hard, eager, and cruel? — The days went on and on, happier and closer, with more kindness, more confidence, and more pity. At last one morning in October came, when Francis went back to college, and the poor girl felt that her tender heart was gone with him.

Frank too wakened up from the delightful midsummer dream to the horrible reality of his own pain. He gnashed and tore at the chain which bound him. He was frantic to break it and be free. Should he confess? — give his savings to the woman to whom he was bound, and beg his release? — there was time yet — he temporised. No living might fall in for years to come. The cousins went on corresponding sadly and fondly: the betrothed woman, hard, jealous, and dissatisfied, complaining bitterly, and with reason, of her Francis's altered tone.

At last things came to a crisis, and the new attachment was discovered. Francis owned it, cared not to disguise it, rebuked Martha with her violent temper and angry imperiousness, and, worst of all, with her inferiority and her age.

Her reply was, that if he did not keep his promise she would carry his letters into every court in the kingdom — letters in which his love was pledged to her ten thousand times; and, after exposing him to the world as the perjurer and traitor he was, she would kill herself.

Frank had one more interview with Helen, whose mother was dead then, and who was living companion with old Lady Pontypool — one more interview, where it was resolved that he was to do his duty; that is, to redeem his vow; that is, to pay a debt cozened from him by a sharper; that is, to make two honest people miserable. So the two judged their duty to be, and they parted.

The living fell in only too soon; but yet Frank Bell was quite a grey and worn-out man when he was inducted into it. Helen wrote him a letter on his marriage, beginning "My dear Cousin," and ending "always truly yours." She sent him back the other letters, and the lock of his hair — all but a small piece. She had it in her desk when she was talking to the Major.

Bell lived for three or four years in his living, at the end of which time, the Chaplainship of Coventry Island falling vacant, Frank applied for it privately, and having procured it, announced the appointment to his wife. She objected, as she did to everything. He told her bitterly that he did not want her to come: so she went. Bell went out in Governor Crawley's time, and was very intimate with that gentleman in his later years. And it was in Coventry Island, years after his own marriage, and five years after he had heard of the birth of Helen's boy, that his own daughter was born.

She was not the daughter of the first Mrs. Bell, who died of island fever very soon after Helen Pendennis and her husband, to whom Helen had told everything, wrote to inform Bell of the birth of their child. "I was old, was I?" said Mrs. Bell the first; "I was old, and her inferior, was I? but I married you, Mr. Bell, and kept you from marrying her?" and hereupon she died. Bell married a colonial lady, whom he loved fondly. But he was not doomed to prosper in love; and, this lady dying in childbirth, Bell gave up too: sending his little girl home to Helen Pendennis and her husband, with a parting prayer that they would befriend her.

The little thing came to Fair Oaks from Bristol, which is not very far off, dressed in black, and in company of a soldier's wife, her nurse, at parting from whom she wept bitterly. But she soon dried up her grief under Helen's motherly care.

Round her neck she had a locket with hair, which Helen had given, ah how many years ago! to poor Francis, dead and buried. This child was all that was left of him, and she cherished, as so tender a creature would, the legacy which he had bequeathed to her. The girl's name, as his dying letter stated, was Helen Laura. But John Pendennis, though he accepted the trust, was always rather jealous of the orphan; and gloomily ordered that she should be called by her own mother's name; and not by that first one which her father had given her. She was afraid of Mr. Pendennis, to the last moment of his life. And it was only when her husband was gone that Helen dared openly to indulge in the tenderness which she felt for the little girl.

Thus it was that Laura Bell became Mrs. Pendennis's daughter. Neither her husband nor that gentleman's brother, the Major, viewed her with very favourable eyes. She reminded the first of circumstances in his wife's life which he was forced to accept, but would have forgotten much more willingly and as for the second, how could he regard her? She was neither related to his own family of Pendennis, nor to any nobleman in this empire, and she had but a couple of thousand pounds for her fortune.

And now let Mr. Pen come in, who has been waiting all this while.

Having strung up his nerves, and prepared himself, without at the door, for the meeting, he came to it, determined to face the awful uncle. He had settled in his mind that the encounter was to be a fierce one, and was resolved on bearing it through with all the courage and dignity of the famous family which he represented. And he flung open the door and entered with the most severe and warlike expression, armed cap-a-pie as it were, with lance couched and plumes displayed, and glancing at his adversary, as if to say, "Come on, I'm ready."

The old man of the world, as he surveyed the boy's demeanour, could hardly help a grin at his admirable pompous simplicity. Major Pendennis too had examined his ground; and finding that the widow was already half won over to the enemy, and having a shrewd notion that threats and tragic exhortations would have no effect upon the boy, who was inclined to be perfectly stubborn and awfully serious, the Major laid aside the authoritative manner at once, and with the most good-humoured natural smile in the world, held out his hands to Pen, shook the lad's passive fingers gaily, and said, "Well, Pen, my boy, tell us all about it."

Helen was delighted with the generosity of the Major's good-humour. On the contrary, it quite took aback and disappointed poor Pen, whose nerves were strung up for a tragedy, and who felt that his grand entree was altogether baulked and ludicrous. He blushed and winced with mortified vanity and bewilderment. He felt immensely inclined to begin to cry — "I — I — I didn't know that you were come till just now," he said: "is — is — town very full, I suppose?"

If Pen could hardly gulp his tears down, it was all the Major could do to keep from laughter. He turned round and shot a comical glance at Mrs. Pendennis, who too felt that the scene was at once ridiculous and sentimental. And so, having nothing to say, she went up and kissed Mr. Pen: as he thought of her tenderness and soft obedience to his wishes, it is very possible too the boy was melted.

"What a couple of fools they are," thought the old guardian. "If I hadn't come down, she would have driven over in state to pay a visit and give her blessing to the young lady's family."

"Come, come," said he, still grinning at the couple, "let us have as little sentiment as possible, and, Pen, my good fellow, tell us the whole story."

Pen got back at once to his tragic and heroical air. "The story is, sir," said he, "as I have written it to you before. I have made the acquaintance of a most beautiful and most virtuous lady; of a high family, although in reduced circumstances: I have found the woman in whom I know that the happiness of my life is centred; I feel that I never, never can think about any woman but her. I am aware of the difference of our ages and other difficulties in my way. But my affection was so great that I felt I could surmount all these; that we both could: and she has consented to unite her lot with mine, and to accept my heart and my fortune."

"How much is that, my boy?" said the Major. "Has anybody left you some money? I don't know that you are worth a shilling in the world."

"You know what I have is his," cried out Mrs. Pendennis.

"Good heavens, madam, hold your tongue!" was what the guardian was disposed to say; but he kept his temper, not without a struggle. "No doubt, no doubt," he said. "You would sacrifice anything for him. Everybody knows that. But it is, after all then, your fortune which Pen is offering to the young lady; and of which he wishes to take possession at eighteen."

"I know my mother will give me anything," Pen said, looking rather disturbed.

"Yes, my good fellow, but there is reason in all things. If your mother keeps the house, it is but fair that she should select her company. When you give her house over her head, and transfer her banker's account to yourself for the benefit of Miss What-d'-you-call-'em — Miss Costigan — don't you think you should at least have consulted my sister as one of the principal parties in the transaction? I am speaking to you, you see, without the least anger or assumption of authority, such as the law and your father's will give me over you for three years to come — but as one man of the world to another — and I ask you, if you think that, because you can do what you like with your mother, therefore you have a right to do so? As you

are her dependent, would it not have been more generous to wait before you took this step, and at least to have paid her the courtesy to ask her leave?"

Pen held down his head, and began dimly to perceive that the action on which he had prided himself as a most romantic, generous instance of disinterested affection, was perhaps a very selfish and headstrong piece of folly.

"I did it in a moment of passion," said Pen, floundering; "I was not aware what I was going to say or to do" (and in this he spoke with perfect sincerity) "But now it is said, and I stand to it. No; I neither can nor will recall it. I'll die rather than do so. And I— I don't want to burthen my mother," he continued. "I'll work for myself. I'll go on the stage, and act with her. She — she says I should do well there."

"But will she take you on those terms?" the Major interposed. "Mind, I do not say that Miss Costigan is not the most disinterested of women: but, don't you suppose now, fairly, that your position as a young gentleman of ancient birth and decent expectations forms a part of the cause why she finds your addresses welcome?"

"I'll die, I say, rather than forfeit my pledge to her," said Pen, doubling his fists and turning red.

"Who asks you, my dear friend?" answered the imperturbable guardian. "No gentleman breaks his word, of course, when it has been given freely. But after all, you can wait. You owe something to your mother, something to your family — something to me as your father's representative."

"Oh, of course," Pen said, feeling rather relieved.

"Well, as you have pledged your word to her, give us another, will you Arthur?"

"What is it?" Arthur asked.

"That you will make no private marriage — that you won't be taking a trip to Scotland, you understand."

"That would be a falsehood. Pen never told his mother a falsehood," Helen said.

Pen hung down his head again, and his eyes filled with tears of shame. Had not this whole intrigue been a falsehood to that tender and confiding creature who was ready to give up all for his sake? He gave his uncle his hand.

"No, sir — on my word of honour, as a gentleman," he said, "I will never marry without my mother's consent!" and giving Helen a bright parting look of confidence and affection unchangeable, the boy went out of the drawing-room into his own study.

"He's an angel — he's an angel," the mother cried out in one of her usual raptures.

"He comes of a good stock, ma'am," said her brother-inlaw — "of a good stock on both sides." The Major was greatly pleased with the result of his diplomacy — so much so, that he once more saluted the tips of Mrs. Pendennis's glove, and dropping the curt, manly, and straightforward tone in which he had conducted the conversation with the lad, assumed a certain drawl which he always adopted when he was most conceited and fine.

"My dear creature," said he, in that his politest tone, "I think it certainly as well that I came down, and I flatter myself that last botte was a successful one. I tell you how I came to think of it. Three years ago my kind friend Lady Ferrybridge sent for me in the greatest state of alarm about her son Gretna, whose affair you remember, and implored me to use my influence with the young gentleman, who was engaged in an affaire de coeur with a Scotch clergyman's daughter, Miss MacToddy. I implored, I entreated gentle measures. But Lord Ferrybridge was furious, and tried the high hand. Gretna was sulky and silent, and his parents thought they had conquered. But what was the fact, my dear creature? The young people had been married for three months before Lord Ferrybridge knew anything about it. And that was why I extracted the promise from Master Pen."

"Arthur would never have done so," Mrs. Pendennis said.

"He hasn't — that is one comfort," answered the brother-inlaw.

Like a wary and patient man of the world, Major Pendennis did not press poor Pen any farther for the moment, but hoped the best from time, and that the young fellow's eyes would be opened before long to see the absurdity of which he was guilty. And having found out how keen the boy's point of honour was, he worked kindly upon that kindly feeling with great skill, discoursing him over their wine after dinner, and pointing out to Pen the necessity of a perfect uprightness and openness in all his dealings, and entreating that his communications with his interesting young friend (as the Major politely called Miss Fotheringay) should be carried on with the knowledge, if not approbation, of Mrs. Pendennis. "After all, Pen," the Major said, with a convenient frankness that did not displease the boy, whilst it advanced the interests of the

negotiator, “you must bear in mind that you are throwing yourself away. Your mother may submit to your marriage as she would to anything else you desired, if you did but cry long enough for it: but be sure of this, that it can never please her. You take a young woman off the boards of a country theatre and prefer her, for such is the case, to one of the finest ladies in England. And your mother will submit to your choice, but you can’t suppose that she will be happy under it. I have often fancied, *entre nous*, that my sister had it in her eye to make a marriage between you and that little ward of hers — Flora, Laura — what’s her name? And I always determined to do my small endeavour to prevent any such match. The child has but two thousand pounds, I am given to understand. It is only with the utmost economy and care that my sister can provide for the decent maintenance of her house, and for your appearance and education as a gentleman; and I don’t care to own to you that I had other and much higher views for you. With your name and birth, sir — with your talents, which I suppose are respectable, with the friends whom I have the honour to possess, I could have placed you in an excellent position — a remarkable position for a young man of such exceeding small means, and had hoped to see you, at least, try to restore the honours of our name. Your mother’s softness stopped one prospect, or you might have been a general, like our gallant ancestor who fought at Ramillies and Malplaquet. I had another plan in view: my excellent and kind friend, Lord Bagwig, who is very well disposed towards me, would, I have little doubt, have attached you to his mission at Pumpernickel, and you might have advanced in the diplomatic service. But, pardon me for recurring to the subject; how is a man to serve a young gentleman of eighteen, who proposes to marry a lady of thirty, whom he has selected from a booth in a fair? — well, not a fair — a barn. That profession at once is closed to you. The public service is closed to you. Society is closed to you. You see, my good friend, to what you bring yourself. You may get on at the bar to be sure, where I am given to understand that gentlemen of merit occasionally marry out of their kitchens; but in no other profession. Or you may come and live down here — down here, *mon Dieu!* for ever” (said the Major, with a dreary shrug, as he thought with inexpressible fondness of Pall Mall), “where your mother will receive the Mrs. Arthur that is to be, with perfect kindness; where the good people of the county won’t visit you; and where, by Gad, sir, I shall be shy of visiting you myself, for I’m a plain-spoken man, and I own to you that I like to live with gentlemen for my companions; where you will have to live, with rum-and-water — drinking gentlemen — farmers, and drag through your life the young husband of an old woman, who, if she doesn’t quarrel with your mother, will at least cost that lady her position in society, and drag her down into that dubious caste into which you must inevitably fall. It is no affair of mine, my good sir. I am not angry. Your downfall will not hurt me farther than that it will extinguish the hopes I had of seeing my family once more taking its place in the world. It is only your mother and yourself that will be ruined. And I pity you both from my soul. Pass the claret: it is some I sent to your poor father; I remember I bought it at poor Lord Levant’s sale. But of course,” added the Major, smacking the wine, “having engaged yourself, you will do what becomes you as a man of honour, however fatal your promise may be. However, promise us on our side, my boy, what I set out by entreating you to grant — that there shall be nothing clandestine, that you will pursue your studies, that you will only visit your interesting friend at proper intervals. Do you write to her much?”

Pen blushed and said, “Why, yes, he had written.”

“I suppose verses, eh! as well as prose? I was a dab at verses myself. I recollect when I first joined, I used to write verses for the fellows in the regiment; and did some pretty things in that way. I was talking to my old friend General Hobbler about some lines I dashed off for him in the year 1806, when we were at the Cape, and, Gad, he remembered every line of them still; for he’d used ’em so often, the old rogue, and had actually tried ’em on Mrs. Hobbler, sir — who brought him sixty thousand pounds. I suppose you’ve tried verses, eh, Pen?”

Pen blushed again, and said, “Why, yes, he had written verses.”

“And does the fair one respond in poetry or prose?” asked the Major, eyeing his nephew with the queerest expression, as much as to say, “O Moses and Green Spectacles! what a fool the boy is.”

Pen blushed again. She had written, but not in verse, the young lover owned, and he gave his breast-pocket the benefit of a squeeze with his left arm, which the Major remarked, according to his wont.

“You have got the letters there, I see,” said the old campaigner, nodding at Pen and pointing to his own chest (which was manfully wadded with cotton by Mr. Stultz). “You know you have. I would give twopence to see ’em.”

“Why,” said Pen, twiddling the stalks of the strawberries, “I— I,” but this sentence never finished; for Pen’s face was so comical and embarrassed, as the Major watched it, that the elder could contain his gravity no longer, and burst into a fit of laughter, in which chorus Pen himself was obliged to join after a minute: when he broke out fairly into a guffaw.

It sent them with great good-humour into Mrs. Pendennis's drawing-room. She was pleased to hear them laughing in the hall as they crossed it.

"You sly rascal!" said the Major, putting his arm gaily on Pen's shoulder, and giving a playful push at the boy's breast-pocket. He felt the papers crackling there sure enough. The young fellow was delighted — conceited — triumphant — and in one word, a spoony.

The pair came to the tea-table in the highest spirits. The Major's politeness was beyond expression. He had never tasted such good tea, and such bread was only to be had in the country. He asked Mrs. Pendennis for one of her charming songs. He then made Pen sing, and was delighted and astonished at the beauty of the boy's voice: he made his nephew fetch his maps and drawings, and praised them as really remarkable works of talent in a young fellow: he complimented him on his French pronunciation: he flattered the simple boy as adroitly as ever lover flattered a mistress: and when bedtime came, mother and son went to their several rooms perfectly enchanted with the kind Major.

When they had reached those apartments, I suppose Helen took to her knees as usual: and Pen read over his letters before going to bed: just as if he didn't know every word of them by heart already. In truth there were but three of those documents and to learn their contents required no great effort of memory.

In No. 1, Miss Fotheringay presents grateful compliments to Mr. Pendennis, and in her papa's name and her own begs to thank him for his most beautiful presents. They will always be kept carefully; and Miss F. and Captain C. will never forget the delightful evening which they passed on Tuesday last.

No. 2 said — Dear Sir, we shall have a small quiet party of social friends at our humble board, next Tuesday evening, at an early tea, when I shall wear the beautiful scarf which, with its accompanying delightful verses, I shall ever, ever cherish: and papa bids me say how happy he will be if you will join 'the feast of reason and the flow of soul' in our festive little party, as I am sure will be your truly grateful Emily Fotheringay.

No. 3 was somewhat more confidential, and showed that matters had proceeded rather far. You were odious yesterday night, the letter said. Why did you not come to the stage-door? Papa could not escort me on account of his eye; he had an accident, and fell down over a loose carpet on the stair on Sunday night. I saw you looking at Miss Diggle all night; and you were so enchanted with Lydia Languish you scarcely once looked at Julia. I could have crushed Bingley, I was so angry. I play Ella Rosenberg on Friday: will you come then? Miss Diggle performs — ever your E. F.

These three letters Mr. Pen used to read at intervals, during the day and night, and embrace with that delight and fervour which such beautiful compositions surely warranted. A thousand times at least he had kissed fondly the musky satin paper, made sacred to him by the hand of Emily Fotheringay. This was all he had in return for his passion and flames, his vows and protests, his rhymes and similes, his wakeful nights and endless thoughts, his fondness, fears and folly. The young wiseacre had pledged away his all for this: signed his name to endless promissory notes, conferring his heart upon the bearer: bound himself for life, and got back twopence as an equivalent. For Miss Costigan was a young lady of such perfect good-conduct and self-command, that she never would have thought of giving more, and reserved the treasures of her affection until she could transfer them lawfully at church.

Howbeit, Mr. Pen was content with what tokens of regard he had got, and mumbled over his three letters in a rapture of high spirits, and went to sleep delighted with his kind old uncle from London, who must evidently yield to his wishes in time; and, in a word, in a preposterous state of contentment with himself and all the world.



CHAPTER IX

IN WHICH THE MAJOR OPENS THE CAMPAIGN

Let those who have a real and heartfelt relish for London society and the privilege of an entree into its most select circles, admit that Major Pendennis was a man of no ordinary generosity and affection, in the sacrifice which he now made. He gave up London in May — his newspapers and his mornings — his afternoons from club to club, his little confidential visits to my Ladies, his rides in Rotten Row, his dinners, and his stall at the Opera, his rapid escapades to Fulham or Richmond on Saturdays and Sundays, his bow from my Lord Duke or my Lord Marquis at the great London entertainments, and his name in the Morning Post of the succeeding day — his quieter little festivals, more select, secret, and delightful — all these he resigned to lock himself into a lone little country house, with a simple widow and a greenhorn of a son, a mawkish curate, and a little girl of ten years of age.

He made the sacrifice, and it was the greater that few knew the extent of it. His letters came down franked from town, and he showed the invitations to Helen with a sigh. It was beautiful and tragical to see him refuse one party after another — at least to those who could understand, as Helen didn't, the melancholy grandeur of his self-denial. Helen did not, or only smiled at the awful pathos with which the Major spoke of the Court Guide in general: but young Pen looked with great respect at the great names upon the superscriptions of his uncle's letters, and listened to the Major's stories about the fashionable world with constant interest and sympathy.

The elder Pendennis's rich memory was stored with thousands of these delightful tales, and he poured them into Pen's willing ear with unfailing eloquence. He knew the name and pedigree of everybody in the Peerage, and everybody's relations. "My dear boy," he would say, with a mournful earnestness and veracity, "you cannot begin your genealogical studies too early; I wish to Heavens you would read in Debrett every day. Not so much the historical part (for the pedigrees, between ourselves, are many of them very fabulous, and there are few families that can show such a clear descent as our own) as the account of family alliances, and who is related to whom. I have known a man's career in life blasted by ignorance on this important, this all-important subject. Why, only last month, at dinner at my Lord Hobanob's, a young man, who has lately been received among us, young Mr. Suckling (author of a work, I believe), began to speak lightly of Admiral Bowser's conduct for ratting to Ministers, in what I must own is the most audacious manner. But who do you think sate next and opposite to this Mr. Suckling? Why — why, next to him was Lady Grampound Bowser's daughter, and opposite to him was Lord Grampound Bowser's son-in-law. The infatuated young man went on cutting his jokes at the Admiral's expense, fancying that all the world was laughing with him, and I leave you to imagine Lady Hobanob's feelings — Hobanob's! — those of every well-bred man, as the wretched intruder was so exposing himself. He will never dine again in South Street. I promise you that."

With such discourses the Major entertained his nephew, as he paced the terrace in front of the house for his two hours' constitutional walk, or as they sate together after dinner over their wine. He grieved that Sir Francis Clavering had not come down to the park, to live in it since his marriage, and to make a society for the neighbourhood. He mourned that Lord Eyrie was not in the country, that he might take Pen and present him to his lordship. "He has daughters," the Major said. "Who knows? you might have married Lady Emily or Lady Barbara Trehawk; but all those dreams are over; my poor fellow, you must lie on the bed which you have made for yourself."

These things to hear did young Pendennis seriously incline. They are not so interesting in print as when delivered orally; but the Major's anecdotes of the great George, of the Royal Dukes, of the statesmen, beauties, and fashionable ladies of the day, filled young Pen's soul with longing and wonder; and he found the conversations with his guardian, which sadly bored and perplexed poor Mrs. Pendennis, for his own part never tedious.

It can't be said that Mr. Pen's new guide, philosopher, and friend discoursed him on the most elevated subjects, or treated the subjects which he chose in the most elevated manner. But his morality, such as it was, was consistent. It might not, perhaps, tend to a man's progress in another world, but it was pretty well calculated to advance his interests in this; and then it must be remembered that the Major never for one instant doubted that his views were the only views practicable, and that his conduct was perfectly virtuous and respectable. He was a man of honour, in a word: and had his eyes, what he called, open. He took pity on this young greenhorn of a nephew, and wanted to open his eyes too.

No man, for instance, went more regularly to church when in the country than the old bachelor. "It don't matter so much in town, Pen," he said, "for there the women go and the men are not missed. But when a gentleman is sur ses terres, he must give an example to the country people: and if I could turn a tune, I even think I should sing. The Duke of Saint David's, whom I have the honour of knowing, always sings in the country, and let me tell you, it has a doosed fine effect from the family pew. And you are somebody down here. As long as the Claverings are away you are the first man in the parish: and as good as any. You might represent the town if you played your cards well. Your poor dear father would have done so had he lived; so might you. — Not if you marry a lady, however amiable, whom the country people won't meet. — Well, well: it's a painful subject. Let us change it, my boy." But if Major Pendennis changed the subject once he recurred to it a score of times in the day: and the moral of his discourse always was, that Pen was throwing himself away. Now it does not require much coaxing or wheedling to make a simple boy believe that he is a very fine fellow.

Pen took his uncle's counsels to heart. He was glad enough, we have said, to listen to his elder's talk. The conversation of Captain Costigan became by no means pleasant to him, and the idea of that tipsy old father-inlaw haunted him with terror. He couldn't bring that man, unshaven and reeking of punch, to associate with his mother. Even about Emily — he faltered when the pitiless guardian began to question him. "Was she accomplished?" He was obliged to own, no. "Was she clever?" Well, she had a very good average intellect: but he could not absolutely say she was clever. "Come, let us see some of her letters." So Pen confessed that he had but those three of which we have made mention — and that they were but trivial invitations or answers.

"She is cautious enough," the Major said, drily. "She is older than you, my poor boy;" and then he apologised with the utmost frankness and humility, and flung himself upon Pen's good feelings, begging the lad to excuse a fond old uncle, who had only his family's honour in view — for Arthur was ready to flame up in indignation whenever Miss Costigan's honesty was doubted, and swore that he would never have her name mentioned lightly, and never, never would part from her.

He repeated this to his uncle and his friends at home, and also, it must be confessed, to Miss Fotheringay and the amiable family, at Chatteris, with whom he still continued to spend some portion of his time. Miss Emily was alarmed when she heard of the arrival of Pen's guardian, and rightly conceived that the Major came down with hostile intentions to herself. "I suppose ye intend to leave me, now your grand relation has come down from town. He'll carry ye off, and you'll forget your poor Emily, Mr. Arthur!"

Forget her! In her presence, in that of Miss Rouncy, the Columbine and Milly's confidential friend of the Company, in the presence of the Captain himself, Pen swore he never could think of any other woman but his beloved Miss Fotheringay; and the Captain, looking up at his foils which were hung as a trophy on the wall of the room where Pen and he used to fence, grimly said, he would not advise any man to meddle rashly with the affections of his darling child; and would never believe his gallant young Arthur, whom he treated as his son, whom he called his son, would ever be guilty of conduct so revolting to every idaya of honour and humanity.

He went up and embraced Pen after speaking. He cried, and wiped his eye with one large dirty hand as he clasped Pen with the other. Arthur shuddered in that grasp, and thought of his uncle at home. His father-inlaw looked unusually dirty and shabby; the odour of whisky-and-water was even more decided than in common. How was he to bring that man and his mother together? He trembled when he thought that he had absolutely written to Costigan (enclosing to him a sovereign, the loan of which the worthy gentleman had need), and saying that one day he hoped to sign himself his affectionate son, Arthur Pendennis. He was glad to get away from Chatteris that day; from Miss Rouncy the confidante; from the old toping father-inlaw; from the divine Emily herself. "O, Emily, Emily," he cried inwardly, as he rattled homewards on Rebecca, "you little know what sacrifices I am making for you! — for you who are always so cold, so cautious, so mistrustful;" and he thought of a character in Pope to whom he had often involuntarily compared her.

Pen never rode over to Chatteris upon a certain errand, but the Major found out on what errand the boy had been. Faithful to his plan, Major Pendennis gave his nephew no let or hindrance; but somehow the constant feeling that the senior's eye was upon him, an uneasy shame attendant upon that inevitable confession which the evening's conversation would be sure to elicit in the most natural simple manner, made Pen go less frequently to sigh away his soul at the feet of his charmer than he had been wont to do previous to his uncle's arrival. There was no use trying to deceive him; there was no pretext of dining with Smirke, or reading Greek plays with Foker; Pen felt, when he returned from one of his flying visits, that everybody knew whence he came, and appeared quite guilty before his mother and guardian, over their books or their game at picquet.

Once having walked out half a mile, to the Fair Oaks Inn, beyond the Lodge gates, to be in readiness for the Competitor coach, which changed horses there, to take a run for Chatteris, a man on the roof touched his hat to the young gentleman: it was his uncle's man, Mr. Morgan, who was going on a message for his master, and had been took up at the Lodge, as he said. And Mr. Morgan came back by the Rival, too; so that Pen had the pleasure of that domestic's company both ways. Nothing was said at home. The lad seemed to have every decent liberty; and yet he felt himself dimly watched and guarded, and that there were eyes upon him even in the presence of his Dulcinea.

In fact, Pen's suspicions were not unfounded, and his guardian had sent forth to gather all possible information regarding the lad and his interesting young friend. The discreet and ingenious Mr. Morgan, a London confidential valet, whose fidelity could be trusted, had been to Chatteris more than once, and made every inquiry regarding the past history and present habits of the Captain and his daughter. He delicately cross-examined the waiters, the ostlers, and all the inmates of the bar at the George, and got from them what little they knew respecting the worthy Captain. He was not held in very great regard there, as it appeared. The waiters never saw the colour of his money, and were warned not to furnish the poor gentleman with any liquor for which some other party was not responsible. He swaggered sadly about the coffee-room there, consumed a toothpick, and looked over the paper, and if any friend asked him to dinner he stayed. Morgan heard at the George of Pen's acquaintance with Mr. Foker, and he went over to Baymouth to enter into relations with that gentleman's man; but the young student was gone to a Coast Regatta, and his servant, of course, travelled in charge of the dressing-case.

From the servants of the officers at the barracks Mr. Morgan found that the Captain had so frequently and outrageously inebriated himself there, that Colonel Swallowtail had forbidden him the messroom. The indefatigable Morgan then put himself in communication with some of the inferior actors at the theatre, and pumped them over their cigars and punch, and all agreed that Costigan was poor, shabby, and given to debt and to drink. But there was not a breath upon the reputation of Miss Fotheringay: her father's courage was reported to have displayed itself on more than one occasion towards persons disposed to treat his daughter with freedom. She never came to the theatre but with her father: in his most inebriated moments, that gentleman kept a watch over her; finally Mr. Morgan, from his own experience added that he had been to see her act, and was uncommon delighted with the performance, besides thinking her a most splendid woman.

Mrs. Creed, the pew-opener, confirmed these statements to Doctor Portman, who examined her personally, and threatened her with the terrors of the Church one day after afternoon service. Mrs. Creed had nothing unfavourable to her lodger to divulge. She saw nobody; only one or two ladies of the theatre. The Captain did intoxicate himself sometimes, and did not always pay his rent regularly, but he did when he had money, or rather Miss Fotheringay did. Since the young gentleman from Clavering had been and took lessons in fencing, one or two more had come from the barracks; Sir Derby Oaks, and his young friend, Mr. Foker, which was often together; and which was always driving over from Baymouth in the tandem. But on the occasions of the lessons, Miss F. was very seldom present, and generally came downstairs to Mrs. Creed's own room.

The Doctor and the Major consulting together as they often did, groaned in spirit over that information. Major Pendennis openly expressed his disappointment; and, I believe, the Divine himself was ill pleased at not being able to jack a hole in poor Miss Fotheringay's reputation.

Even about Pen himself, Mrs. Creed's reports were desperately favourable. "Whenever he come," Mrs. Creed said, "She always have me or one of the children with her. And Mrs. Creed, marm, says she, if you please, marm, you'll on no account leave the room when that young gentleman's here. And many's the time I've seen him a lookin' as if he wished I was away, poor young man: and he took to coming in service-time, when I wasn't at home, of course: but she always had one of the boys up if her Pa wasn't at home, or old Mr. Bowser with her a teaching of her her lesson, or one of the young ladies of the theayter."

It was all true: whatever encouragements might have been given him before he avowed his passion, the prudence of Miss Emily was prodigious after Pen had declared himself: and the poor fellow chafed against her hopeless reserve, which maintained his ardour as it excited his anger.

The Major surveyed the state of things with a sigh. "If it were but a temporary liaison," the excellent man said, "one could bear it. A young fellow must sow his wild oats, and that sort of thing. But a virtuous attachment is the deuce. It comes of the d — d romantic notions boys get from being brought up by women."

“Allow me to say, Major, that you speak a little too like a man of the world,” replied the Doctor. “Nothing can be more desirable for Pen than a virtuous attachment for a young lady of his own rank and with a corresponding fortune — this present infatuation, of course, I must deplore as sincerely as you do. If I were his guardian I should command him to give it up.”

“The very means, I tell you, to make him marry tomorrow. We have got time from him, that is all, and we must do our best with that.

“I say, Major,” said the Doctor, at the end of the conversation in which the above subject was discussed — “I am not, of course, a play-going man — but suppose, I say, we go and see her.”

The Major laughed — he had been a fortnight at Fair Oaks, and strange to say, had not thought of that. “Well,” he said, “why not? After all, it is not my niece, but Miss Fotheringay the actress, and we have as good a right as any other of the public to see her if we pay our money.” So upon a day when it was arranged that Pen was to dine at home, and pass the evening with his mother, the two elderly gentlemen drove over to Chatteris in the Doctor’s chaise, and there, like a couple of jolly bachelors, dined at the George Inn, before proceeding to the play.

Only two other guests were in the room — an officer of the regiment quartered at Chatteris, and a young gentleman whom the Doctor thought he had somewhere seen. They left them at their meal, however, and hastened to the theatre. It was Hamlet over again. Shakspeare was Article XL. of stout old Doctor Portman’s creed, to which he always made a point of testifying publicly at least once in a year.

We have described the play before, and how those who saw Miss Fotheringay perform in Ophelia saw precisely the same thing on one night as on another. Both the elderly gentlemen looked at her with extraordinary interest, thinking how very much young Pen was charmed with her.

“Gad,” said the Major, between his teeth, as he surveyed her when she was called forward as usual, and swept her curtsies to the scanty audience, “the young rascal has not made a bad choice.”

The Doctor applauded her loudly and loyally. “Upon my word,” said he, “She is a very clever actress; and I must say, Major, she is endowed with very considerable personal attractions.”

“So that young officer thinks in the stage-box,” Major Pendennis answered, and he pointed out to Doctor Portman’s attention the young dragoon of the George Coffee-room, who sate in the box in question, and applauded with immense enthusiasm. She looked extremely sweet upon him too, thought the Major: but that’s their way — and he shut up his natty opera-glass and pocketed it, as if he wished to see no more that night. Nor did the Doctor, of course, propose to stay for the after-piece, so they rose and left the theatre; the Doctor returning to Mrs. Portman, who was on a visit at the Deanery, and the Major walking home full of thought towards the George, where he had bespoken a bed.



CHAPTER X

FACING THE ENEMY

SAuntering slowly homewards, Major Pendennis reached the George presently, and found Mr. Morgan, his faithful valet, awaiting him at the door of the George Inn, who stopped his master as he was about to take a candle to go to bed, and said, with his usual air of knowing deference, "I think, sir, if you would go into the coffee-room, there's a young gentleman there as you would like to see."

"What, is Mr. Arthur here?" the Major said, in great anger.

"No, sir — but his great friend, Mr. Foker, sir. Lady Hagnes Foker's son is here, sir. He's been asleep in the coffee-room since he took his dinner, and has just rung for his coffee, sir. And I think, p'raps, you might like to git into conversation with him," the valet said, opening the coffee-room door.

The Major entered; and there indeed was Mr. Foker, the only occupant of the place. He was rubbing his eyes, and sate before a table rated with empty decanters and relics of dessert. He had intended to go to the play too, but sleep had overtaken him after a copious meal, and he had flung up his legs on the bench, and indulged in a nap instead of the dramatic amusement. The Major was meditating how to address the young man, but the latter prevented him that trouble.

"Like to look at the evening paper, sir?" said Mr. Foker, who was always communicative and affable; and he took up the Globe from his table, and offered it to the new-comer.

"I am very much obliged to you," said the Major, with a grateful bow and smile. "If I don't mistake the family likeness, I have the pleasure of speaking to Mr. Henry Foker, Lady Agnes Foker's son. I have the happiness to name her ladyship among my acquaintances — and you bear, sir, a Rosherville face."

"Hullo! I beg your pardon," Mr. Foker said, "I took you," — he was going to say — "I took you for a commercial gent." But he stopped that phrase. "To whom have I the pleasure of speaking?" he added.

"To a relative of a friend and schoolfellow of yours — Arthur Pendennis, my nephew, who has often spoken to me about you in terms of great regard. I am Major Pendennis, of whom you may have heard him speak. May I take my soda-water at your table? I have had the pleasure of sitting at your grandfather's."

"Sir, you do me proud," said Mr. Foker, with much courtesy. "And so you are Arthur Pendennis's uncle, are you?"

"And guardian," added the Major.

"He's as good a fellow as ever stepped, sir," said Mr. Foker.

"I am glad you think so."

"And clever, too — I was always a stupid chap, I was — but you see, sir, I know 'em when they are clever, and like 'em of that sort."

"You show your taste and your modesty, too," said the Major. "I have heard Arthur repeatedly speak of you, and he said your talents were very good."

"I'm not good at the books," Mr. Foker said, wagging his head — "never could manage that — Pendennis could — he used to do half the chaps' verses — and yet" — the young gentleman broke out, "you are his guardian; and I hope you will pardon me for saying that I think he's what we call flat," the candid young gentleman said.

The Major found himself on the instant in the midst of a most interesting and confidential conversation. "And how is Arthur a flat?" he asked, with a smile.

"You know," Foker answered, winking at him — he would have winked at the Duke of Wellington with just as little scruple, for he was in that state of absence, candour, and fearlessness which a man sometimes possesses after drinking a couple of bottles of wine — "You know Arthur's a flat — about women I mean."

"He is not the first of us, my dear Mr. Harry," answered the Major. "I have heard something of this — but pray tell me more."

"Why, sir, you see — it's partly my fault. He went to the play one night — for you see I'm down here readin' for my little go during the Long, only I come over from Baymouth pretty often in my drag — well, sir, we went to the play, and Pen was

struck all of a heap with Miss Fotheringay — Costigan her real name is — an uncommon fine gal she is too; and the next morning I introduced him to the General, as we call her father — a regular old scamp and such a boy for the whisky-and-water! — and he's gone on being intimate there. And he's fallen in love with her — and I'm blessed if he hasn't proposed to her," Foker said, slapping his hand on the table, until all the dessert began to jingle.

"What! you know it too?" asked the Major.

"Know it! don't I? and many more too. We were talking about it at mess, yesterday, and chaffing Derby Oaks — until he was as mad as a hatter. Know Sir Derby Oaks? We dined together, and he went to the play: we were standing at the door smoking, I remember, when you passed in to dinner."

"I remember Sir Thomas Oaks, his father, before he was a Baronet or a Knight; he lived in Cavendish-square, and was physician to Queen Charlotte."

"The young one is making the money spin, I can tell you," Mr. Foker said.

"And is Sir Derby Oaks," the Major said, with great delight and anxiety, "another soup-irant?"

"Another what?" inquired Mr. Foker.

"Another admirer of Miss Fotheringay?"

"Lord bless you! we call him Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and Pen Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. But mind you, nothing wrong! No, no! Miss F. is a deal too wide-awake for that, Major Pendennis. She plays one off against the other. What you call two strings to her bow."

"I think you seem tolerably wide-awake, too, Mr. Foker, Pendennis said, laughing.

"Pretty well, thank you, sir — how are you?" Foker replied, imperturbably. "I'm not clever, p'raps: but I am rather downy; and partial friends say I know what's o'clock tolerably well. Can I tell you the time of day in any way?"

"Upon my word," the Major answered, quite delighted, "I think you may be of very great service to me. You are a young man of the world, and with such one likes to deal. And as such I need not inform you that our family is by no means delighted at this absurd intrigue in which Arthur is engaged."

"I should rather think not," said Mr. Foker. "Connexion not eligible. Too much beer drunk on the premises. No Irish need apply. That I take to be your meaning."

The Major said it was, exactly; though in truth he did not quite understand what Mr. Foker's meaning was: and he proceeded to examine his new acquaintance regarding the amiable family into which his nephew proposed to enter, and soon got from the candid witness a number of particulars regarding the House of Costigan.

We must do Mr. Foker the justice to say that he spoke most favourably of Mr. and Miss Costigan's moral character. "You see," said he, "I think the General is fond of the jovial bowl, and if I wanted to be very certain of my money, it isn't in his pocket I'd invest it — but he has always kept a watchful eye on his daughter, and neither he nor she will stand anything but what's honourable. Pen's attentions to her are talked about in the whole Company, and I hear all about them from a young lady who used to be very intimate with her, and with whose family I sometimes take tea in a friendly way. Miss Rouncy says, Sir Derby Oaks has been hanging about Miss Fotheringay ever since his regiment has been down here; but Pen has come in and cut him out lately, which has made the Baronet so mad, that he has been very near on the point of proposing too. Wish he would; and you'd see which of the two Miss Fotheringay would jump at."

"I thought as much," the Major said. "You give me a great deal of pleasure, Mr. Foker. I wish I could have seen you before."

"Didn't like to put in my oar," replied the other. "Don't speak till I'm asked, when, if there's no objections, I speak pretty freely. Heard your man had been hankering about my servant — didn't know myself what was going on until Miss Fotheringay and Miss Rouncy had the row about the ostrich feathers, when Miss R. told me everything."

"Miss Rouncy, I gather, was the confidante of the other."

"Confidant? I believe you. Why, she's twice as clever a girl as Fotheringay, and literary and that, while Miss Foth can't do much more than read."

"She can write," said the Major, remembering Pen's breast-pocket.

Foker broke out into a sardonic "He, he! Rouncy writes her letters," he said; "every one of 'em; and since they've quarrelled, she don't know how the deuce to get on. Miss Rouncy is an uncommon pretty hand, whereas the old one makes

dreadful work of the writing and spelling when Bows ain't by. Rouncy's been settin' her copies lately — she writes a beautiful hand, Rouncy does."

"I suppose you know it pretty well," said the Major archly upon which Mr. Foker winked at him again.

"I would give a great deal to have a specimen of her hand-writing," continued Major Pendennis, "I dare say you could give me one."

"No, no, that would be too bad," Foker replied. "Perhaps I oughtn't to have said as much as I have. Miss F.'s writin' ain't so very bad, I dare say; only she got Miss R. to write the first letter, and has gone on ever since. But you mark my word, that till they are friends again the letters will stop."

"I hope they will never be reconciled," the Major said with great sincerity; "and I can't tell you how delighted I am to have had the good fortune of making your acquaintance. You must feel, my dear sir, as a man of the world, how fatal to my nephew's prospects in life is this step which he contemplates, and how eager we all must be to free him from this absurd engagement."

"He has come out uncommon strong," said Mr. Foker; "I have seen his verses; Rouncy copied 'em. And I said to myself when I saw 'em, 'Catch me writin' verses to a woman — that's all.'"

"He has made a fool of himself, as many a good fellow has before him. How can we make him see his folly, and cure it? I am sure you will give us what aid you can in extricating a generous young man from such a pair of schemers as this father and daughter seem to be. Love on the lady's side is out of the question."

"Love, indeed!" Foker said. "If Pen hadn't two thousand a year when he came of age —"

"If Pen hadn't what?" cried out the Major in astonishment.

"Two thousand a year: hasn't he got two thousand a year? — the General says he has."

"My dear friend," shrieked out the Major, with an eagerness which this gentleman rarely showed, "thank you! — thank you! — I begin to see now. — Two thousand a year! Why, his mother has but five hundred a year in the world. — She is likely to live to eighty, and Arthur has not a shilling but what she can allow him."

"What! he ain't rich then?" Foker asked.

"Upon my honour he has no more than what I say."

"And you ain't going to leave him anything?"

The Major had sunk every shilling he could scrape together on an annuity, and of course was going to leave Pen nothing; but he did not tell Foker this. "How much do you think a Major on half-pay can save?" he asked. "If these people have been looking at him as a fortune, they are utterly mistaken-and-and you have made me the happiest man in the world."

"Sir to you," said Mr. Foker, politely, and when they parted for the night they shook hands with the greatest cordiality; the younger gentleman promising the elder not to leave Chatteris without a further conversation in the morning. And as the Major went up to his room, and Mr. Foker smoked his cigar against the door pillars of the George, Pen, very likely, ten miles off; was lying in bed kissing the letter from his Emily.

The next morning, before Mr. Foker drove off in his drag, the insinuating Major had actually got a letter of Miss Rouncy's in his own pocket-book. Let it be a lesson to women how they write. And in very high spirits Major Pendennis went to call upon Doctor Portman at the Deanery, and told him what happy discoveries he had made on the previous night. As they sate in confidential conversation in the Dean's oak breakfast-parlour they could look across the lawn and see Captain Costigan's window, at which poor Pen had been only too visible some three weeks since. The Doctor was most indignant against Mrs. Creed, the landlady, for her duplicity, in concealing Sir Derby Oaks's constant visits to her lodgers, and threatened to excommunicate her out of the Cathedral. But the wary Major thought that all things were for the best; and, having taken counsel with himself over night, felt himself quite strong enough to go and face Captain Costigan.

"I'm going to fight the dragon," he said, with a laugh, to Doctor Portman.

"And I shrive you, sir, and bid good fortune go with you," answered the Doctor. Perhaps he and Mrs. Portman and Miss Myra, as they sate with their friend, the Dean's lady, in her drawing-room, looked up more than once at the enemy's window to see if they could perceive any signs of the combat.

The Major walked round, according to the directions given him, and soon found Mrs. Creed's little door. He passed it,

and as he ascended to Captain Costigan's apartment, he could hear a stamping of feet, and a great shouting of "Ha, ha!" within.

"It's Sir Derby Oaks taking his fencing lesson," said the child, who piloted Major Pendennis. "He takes it Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays."

The Major knocked, and at length a tall gentleman came forth, with a foil and mask in one hand, and a fencing glove on the other.

Pendennis made him a deferential bow. "I believe I have the honour of speaking to Captain Costigan — My name is Major Pendennis."

The Captain brought his weapon up to the salute, and said, "Major, the honer is moine; I'm deloighted to see ye."



CHAPTER XI

NEGOTIATION

The Major and Captain Costigan were old soldiers and accustomed to face the enemy, so we may presume that they retained their presence of mind perfectly; but the rest of the party assembled in Cos's sitting-room were, perhaps, a little flurried at Pendennis's apparition. Miss Fotheringay's slow heart began to beat no doubt, for her cheek flushed up with a great healthy blush, as Lieutenant Sir Derby Oaks looked at her with a scowl. The little crooked old man in the window-seat, who had been witnessing the fencing-match between the two gentlemen (whose stamping and jumping had been such as to cause him to give up all attempts to continue writing the theatre music, in the copying of which he had been engaged) looked up eagerly towards the new-comer as the Major of the well-blackened boots entered the apartment distributing the most graceful bows to everybody present.

"Me daughter — me friend, Mr. Bows — me gallant young pupil and friend, I may call 'um, Sir Derby Oaks," said Costigan, splendidly waving his hand, and pointing each of these individuals to the Major's attention. "In one moment, Meejor, I'm your humble servant," and to dash into the little adjoining chamber where he slept, to give a twist to his lank hair with his hair-brush (a wonderful and ancient piece), to tear off his old stock and put on a new one which Emily had constructed for him, and to assume a handsome clean collar, and the new coat which had been ordered upon the occasion of Miss Fotheringay's benefit, was with the still active Costigan the work of a minute.

After him Sir Derby entered, and presently emerged from the same apartment, where he also cased himself in his little shell-jacket, which fitted tightly upon the young officer's big person; and which he, and Miss Fotheringay, and poor Pen too, perhaps, admired prodigiously.

Meanwhile conversation was engaged between the actress and the new-comer; and the usual remarks about the weather had been interchanged before Costigan re-entered in his new 'Shoot,' as he called it.

"I needn't apologise to ye, Meejor," he said, in his richest and most courteous manner, "for receiving ye in me shirt-sleeves."

"An old soldier can't be better employed than in teaching a young one the use of his sword," answered the Major, gallantly. "I remember in old times hearing that you could use yours pretty well, Captain Costigan."

"What, ye've heard of Jack Costigan, Major," said the other, greatly.

The Major had, indeed; he had pumped his nephew concerning his new friend, the Irish officer; and whether he had no other knowledge of the Captain than what he had thus gained, or whether he actually remembered him, we cannot say. But Major Pendennis was a person of honour and undoubted veracity, and said that he perfectly well recollected meeting Mr. Costigan, and hearing him sing at Sir Richard Strachan's table at Walcheren.

At this information, and the bland and cordial manner in which it was conveyed, Bows looked up, entirely puzzled. "But we will talk of these matters another time," the Major continued, perhaps not wishing to commit himself; "it is to Miss Fotheringay that I came to pay my respects today;" and he performed another bow for her, so courtly and gracious, that if she had been a duchess he could not have made it more handsome.

"I had heard of your performances from my nephew, madam," the Major said, "who raves about you, as I believe you know pretty well. But Arthur is but a boy, and a wild enthusiastic young fellow, whose opinions one must not take au pied de la lettre; and I confess I was anxious to judge for myself. Permit me to say your performance delighted and astonished me. I have seen our best actresses, and, on my word, I think you surpass them all. You are as majestic as Mrs. Siddons."

"Faith, I always said so," Costigan said, winking at his daughter; "Major, take a chair." Milly rose at this hint, took an unripped satin garment off the only vacant seat, and brought the latter to Major Pendennis with one of her finest curtsies.

"You are as pathetic as Miss O'Neill," he continued, bowing and seating himself; "your snatches of song reminded me of Mrs. Jordan in her best time, when we were young men, Captain Costigan; and your manner reminded me of Mars. Did you ever see the Mars, Miss Fotheringay?"

"There was two Mahers in Crow Street," remarked Miss Emily; "Fanny was well enough, but Biddy was no great things."

"Sure, the Major means the god of war, Milly, my dear," interposed the parent.

"It is not that Mars I meant, though Venus, I suppose, may be pardoned for thinking about him," the Major replied with a smile directed in full to Sir Derby Oaks, who now re-entered in his shell-jacket; but the lady did not understand the words of which he made use, nor did the compliment at all pacify Sir Derby, who, probably, did not understand it either, and at any rate received it with great sulkiness and stiffness, scowling uneasily at Miss Fotheringay, with an expression which seemed to ask what the deuce does this man here?

Major Pendennis was not in the least annoyed by the gentleman's ill-humour. On the contrary, it delighted him. "So," thought he, "a rival is in the field;" and he offered up vows that Sir Derby might be, not only a rival, but a winner too, in this love-match in which he and Pen were engaged.

"I fear I interrupted your fencing lesson; but my stay in Chatteris is very short, and I was anxious to make myself known to my old fellow-campaigner Captain Costigan, and to see a lady nearer who had charmed me so much from the stage. I was not the only man epris last night, Miss Fotheringay (if I must call you so, though your own family name is a very ancient and noble one). There was a reverend friend of mine, who went home in raptures with Ophelia; and I saw Sir Derby Oaks fling a bouquet which no actress ever merited better. I should have brought one myself, had I known what I was going to see. Are not those the very flowers in a glass of water on the mantelpiece yonder?"

"I am very fond of flowers," said Miss Fotheringay, with a languishing ogle at Sir Derby Oaks — but the Baronet still scowled sulkily.

"Sweets to the sweet — isn't that the expression of the play?" Mr. Pendennis asked, bent upon being good-humoured.

"Pon my life, I don't know. Very likely it is. I ain't much of a literary man," answered Sir Derby.

"Is it possible?" the Major continued, with an air of surprise. You don't inherit your father's love of letters, then, Sir Derby? He was a remarkably fine scholar, and I had the honour of knowing him very well."

"Indeed," said the other, and gave a sulky wag of his head.

"He saved my life," continued Pendennis.

"Did he now?" cried Miss Fotheringay, rolling her eyes first upon the Major with surprise, then towards Sir Derby with gratitude — but the latter was proof against those glances: and far from appearing to be pleased that the Apothecary, his father, should have saved Major Pendennis's life, the young man actually looked as if he wished the event had turned the other way.

"My father, I believe, was a very good doctor," the young gentleman said by way of reply. "I'm not in that line myself. I wish you good morning, sir. I've got an appointment — Cos, bye-bye — Miss Fotheringay, good morning." And, in spite of the young lady's imploring looks and appealing smiles, the Dragoon bowed stiffly out of the room, and the clatter of his sabre was heard as he strode down the creaking stair; and the angry tones of his voice as he cursed little Tom Creed, who was disporting in the passage, and whose peg-top Sir Derby kicked away with an oath into the street.

The Major did not smile in the least, though he had every reason to be amused. "Monstrous handsome young man that — as fine a looking soldier as ever I saw," he said to Costigan.

"A credit to the army and to human nature in general," answered Costigan. "A young man of reformed manners, polite affabillitee, and princely fortune. His table is sumptuous: he's adawr'd in the regiment: and he rides sixteen stone."

"A perfect champion," said the Major, laughing. "I have no doubt all the ladies admire him."

"He's very well, in spite of his weight, now he's young," said Milly; "but he's no conversation."

"He's best on horseback," Mr. Bows said; on which Milly replied, that the Baronet had ridden third in the steeple-chase on his horse Tareaways, and the Major began to comprehend that the young lady herself was not of a particular genius, and to wonder how she should be so stupid and act so well.

Costigan, with Irish hospitality, of course pressed refreshment upon his guest: and the Major, who was no more hungry than you are after a Lord Mayor's dinner, declared that he should like a biscuit and a glass of wine above all things, as he felt quite faint from long fasting — but he knew that to receive small kindnesses flatters the donors very much, and that people must needs grow well disposed towards you as they give you their hospitality.

"Some of the old Madara, Milly, love," Costigan said, winking to his child — and that lady, turning to her father a glance of intelligence, went out of the room, and down the stair, where she softly summoned her little emissary Master

Tommy Creed: and giving him a piece of money, ordered him to go buy a pint of Madara wine at the Grapes, and sixpennyworth of sorted biscuits at the baker's, and to return in a hurry, when he might have two biscuits for himself.

Whilst Tommy Creed was gone on this errand, Miss Costigan sate below with Mrs. Creed, telling her landlady how Mr. Arthur Pendennis's uncle, the Major, was above-stairs; a nice, soft-spoken old gentleman; that butter wouldn't melt in his mouth: and how Sir Derby had gone out of the room in a rage of jealousy, and thinking what must be done to pacify both of them.

"She keeps the keys of the cellar, Major," said Mr. Costigan, as the girl left the room.

"Upon my word you have a very beautiful butler," answered Pendennis, gallantly, "and I don't wonder at the young fellows raving about her. When we were of their age, Captain Costigan, I think plainer women would have done our business."

"Faith, and ye may say that, sir — and lucky is the man who gets her. Ask me friend Bob Bows here whether Miss Fotheringay's moind is not even shuparior to her person, and whether she does not possess a cultiveated intellect, a refoined understanding, and an emiable disposition?"

"O of course," said Mr. Bows, rather drily. "Here comes Hebe blushing from the cellar. Don't you think it is time to go to rehearsal, Miss Hebe? You will be fined if you are later"— and he gave the young lady a look, which intimated that they had much better leave the room and the two elders together.

At this order Miss Hebe took up her bonnet and shawl, looking uncommonly pretty, good-humoured, and smiling; and Bows gathered up his roll of papers, and hobbled across the room for his hat and cane.

"Must you go?" said the Major. "Can't you give us a few minutes more, Miss Fotheringay? Before you leave us, permit an old fellow to shake you by the hand, and believe that I am proud to have had the honour of making your acquaintance, and am most sincerely anxious to be your friend."

Miss Fotheringay made a low curtsy at the conclusion of this gallant speech, and the Major followed her retreating steps to the door, where he squeezed her hand with the kindest and most paternal pressure. Bows was puzzled with this exhibition of cordiality: "The lad's relatives can't be really wanting to marry him to her," he thought — and so they departed.

"Now for it," thought Major Pendennis; and as for Mr. Costigan he profited instantaneously by his daughter's absence to drink up the rest of the wine; and tossed off one bumper after another of the Madeira from the Grapes, with an eager shaking hand. The Major came up to the table, and took up his glass and drained it with a jovial smack. If it had been Lord Steyne's particular, and not public-house Cape, he could not have appeared to relish it more.

"Capital Madeira, Captain Costigan," he said. "Where do you get it? I drink the health of that charming creature in a bumper. Faith, Captain, I don't wonder that the men are wild about her. I never saw such eyes in my life, or such a grand manner. I am sure she is as intellectual as she is beautiful; and I have no doubt she's as good as she is clever."

"A good girl, sir — a good girl, sir," said the delighted father; "and I pledge a toast to her with all my heart. Shall I send to the — to the cellar for another pint? It's handy by. No? Well, indeed sir, ye may say she is a good girl, and the pride and glory of her father — honest old Jack Costigan. The man who gets her will have a jew'l to a wife, sir; and I drink his health, sir, and ye know who I mean, Major."

"I am not surprised at young or old falling in love with her," said the Major, "and frankly must tell you, that though I was very angry with my poor nephew Arthur, when I heard of the boy's passion — now I have seen the lady I can pardon him any extent of it. By George, I should like to enter for the race myself, if I weren't an old fellow and a poor one."

"And no better man, Major, I'm sure," cried Jack enraptured.

"Your friendship, sir, delights me. Your admiration for my girl brings tears to me eyes — tears, sir — manlee tears — and when she leaves me humble home for your own more splendid mansion, I hope she'll keep a place for her poor old father, poor old Jack Costigan."— The Captain suited the action to the word, and his bloodshot eyes were suffused with water, as he addressed the Major.

"Your sentiments do you honour," the other said. "But, Captain Costigan, I can't help smiling at one thing you have just said."

"And what's that, sir?" asked Jack, who was at a too heroic and sentimental pitch to descend from it. You were

speaking about our splendid mansion — my sister's house, I mean.

"I mane the park and mansion of Arthur Pendennis, Esquire, of Fair Oaks Park, whom I hope to see a Mamber of Parliament for his native town of Clavering, when he is of ege to take that responsible stetion," cried the Captain with much dignity.

The Major smiled as he recognised a shaft of his own bow. It was he who had set Pen upon the idea of sitting in Parliament for the neighbouring borough — and the poor lad had evidently been bragging on the subject to Costigan and the lady of his affections. "Fair Oaks Park, my dear sir," he said. "Do you know our history? We are of excessively ancient family certainly, but I began life with scarce enough money to purchase my commission, and my eldest brother was a country apothecary: who made every shilling he died possessed of out of his pestle and mortar."

"I have consented to waive that objection, sir," said Costigan majestically, "in consideration of the known respectability of your family."

"Curse your impudence," thought the Major; but he only smiled and bowed.

"The Costigans, too, have met with misfortunes; and our house of Castle Costigan is by no manes what it was. I have known very honest men apothecaries, sir, and there's some in Dublin that has had the honour of dining at the Lord Lieutenant's teetle."

"You are very kind to give us the benefit of your charity," the Major continued: "but permit me to say that is not the question. You spoke just now of my little nephew as heir of Fair Oaks Park and I don't know what besides."

"Funded property, I've no doubt, Meejor, and something handsome eventually from yourself."

"My good sir, I tell you the boy is the son of a country apothecary," cried out Major Pendennis; "and that when he comes of age he won't have a shilling."

"Pooh, Major, you're laughing at me," said Mr. Costigan, "me young friend, I make no doubt, is heir to two thousand pounds a year."

"Two thousand fiddlesticks! I beg your pardon, my dear sir; but has the boy been humbugging you? — it is not his habit. Upon my word and honour, as a gentleman and an executor to my brother's will too, he left little more than five hundred a year behind him."

"And with aconomy, a handsome sum of money too, sir," the Captain answered. "Faith, I've known a man drink his clart, and drive his coach-and-four on five hundred a year and strict aconomy, in Ireland, sir. We'll manage on it, sir — trust Jack Costigan for that."

"My dear Captain Costigan — I give you my word that my brother did not leave a shilling to his son Arthur."

"Are ye joking with me, Meejor Pendennis?" cried Jack Costigan. "Are ye thrifling with the feelings of a father and a gentleman?"

"I am telling you the honest truth," said Major Pendennis. "Every shilling my brother had, he left to his widow: with a partial reversion, it is true, to the boy. But she is a young woman, and may marry if he offends her — or she may outlive him, for she comes of an uncommonly long-lived family. And I ask you, as a gentleman and a man of the world, what allowance can my sister, Mrs. Pendennis, make to her son out of five hundred a year, which is all her fortune — that shall enable him to maintain himself and your daughter in the rank befitting such an accomplished young lady?"

"Am I to understand, sir, that the young gentleman, your nephew, and whom I have fostered and cherished as the son of me bosom, is an imposther who has been thrifling with the affections of me beloved child?" exclaimed the General, with an outbreak of wrath. — "Have you yourself been working upon the feelings of the young man's susceptible nature to injuice him to break off an engagement, and with it me adored Emily's heart? Have a care, sir, how you thrifle with the honour of John Costigan. If I thought any mortal man meant to do so, be heavens I'd have his blood, sir — were he old or young."

"Mr. Costigan!" cried out the Major.

"Mr. Costigan can protect his own and his daughter's honour, and will, sir," said the other. "Look at that chest of dthrawers, it contains heaps of letthers that that viper has addressed to that innocent child. There's promises there, sir, enough to fill a bandbox with; and when I have dragged the scoundthrel before the Courts of Law, and shown up his perjury and his dishonour, I have another remedy in yondther mahogany case, sir, which shall set me right, sir, with any

individual — ye mark me words, Major Pendennis — with any individual who has counselled your nephew to insult a soldier and a gentleman. What? Me daughter to be jilted, and me grey hairs dishonoured by an apothecary's son. By the laws of Heaven, Sir, I should like to see the man that shall do it."

"I am to understand then that you threaten in the first place to publish the letters of a boy of eighteen to a woman of eight-and-twenty: and afterwards to do me the honour of calling me out," the Major said, still with perfect coolness.

"You have described my intentions with perfect accuracy, Meejor Pendennis," answered the Captain, as he pulled his ragged whiskers over his chin.

"Well, well; these shall be the subjects of future arrangements, but before we come to powder and ball, my good sir — do have the kindness to think with yourself in what earthly way I have injured you? I have told you that my nephew is dependent upon his mother, who has scarcely more than five hundred a year."

"I have my own opinion of the correctness of that assertion," said the Captain.

"Will you go to my sister's lawyers, Messrs. Tatham here, and satisfy yourself?"

"I decline to meet those gentlemen," said the Captain, with rather a disturbed air. "If it be as you say, I have been atrociously deceived by some one, and on that person I'll be revenged."

"Is it my nephew?" cried the Major, starting up and putting on his hat. "Did he ever tell you that his property was two thousand a year? If he did, I'm mistaken in the boy. To tell lies has not been a habit in our family, Mr. Costigan, and I don't think my brother's son has learned it as yet. Try and consider whether you have not deceived yourself; or adopted extravagant reports from hearsay — As for me, sir, you are at liberty to understand that I am not afraid of all the Costigans in Ireland, and know quite well how to defend myself against any threats from any quarter. I come here as the boy's guardian to protest against a marriage, most absurd and unequal, that cannot but bring poverty and misery with it: and in preventing it I conceive I am quite as much your daughter's friend (who I have no doubt is an honourable young lady) as the friend of my own family: and prevent the marriage I will, sir, by every means in my power. There, I have said my say, sir."

"But I have not said mine, Major Pendennis — and ye shall hear more from me," Mr. Costigan said, with a look of tremendous severity.

"Sdeath, sir, what do you mean?" the Major asked, turning round on the threshold of the door, and looking the intrepid Costigan in the face.

"Ye said, in the coorse of conversation, that ye were at the George Hotel, I think," Mr. Costigan said in a stately manner. "A friend shall wait upon ye there before ye leave town, sir."

"Let him make haste, Mr. Costigan," cried out the Major, almost beside himself with rage. "I wish you a good morning, sir." And Captain Costigan bowed a magnificent bow of defiance to Major Pendennis over the landing-place as the latter retreated down the stairs.



CHAPTER XII

IN WHICH A SHOOTING MATCH IS PROPOSED

Early mention has been made in this history of Mr. Garbetts, Principal Tragedian, a promising and athletic young actor, of jovial habits and irregular inclinations, between whom and Mr. Costigan there was a considerable intimacy. They were the chief ornaments of the convivial club held at the Magpie Hotel; they helped each other in various bill transactions in which they had been engaged, with the mutual loan of each other's valuable signatures. They were friends, in fine: although Mr. Garbetts seldom called at Costigan's house, being disliked by Miss Fotheringay, of whom in her turn Mrs. Garbetts was considerably jealous. The truth is, that Garbetts had paid his court to Miss Fotheringay and been refused by her, before he offered his hand to Mrs. G. Their history, however, forms no part of our present scheme — suffice it, Mr. Garbetts was called in by Captain Costigan immediately after his daughter and Mr. Bows had quitted the house, as a friend proper to be consulted at the actual juncture. He was a large man, with a loud voice and fierce aspect, who had the finest legs of the whole company, and could break a poker in mere sport across his stalwart arm.

"Run, Tommy," said Mr. Costigan to the little messenger, "and fetch Mr. Garbetts from his lodgings over the tripe shop, ye know, and tell 'em to send two glasses of whisky-and-water, hot, from the Grapes." So Tommy went his way; and presently Mr. Garbetts and the whisky came.

Captain Costigan did not disclose to him the whole of the previous events, of which the reader is in possession; but, with the aid of the spirits-and-water, he composed a letter of a threatening nature to Major Pendennis's address, in which he called upon that gentleman to offer no hindrance to the marriage projected between Mr. Arthur Pendennis and his daughter, Miss Fotheringay, and to fix an early day for its celebration: or, in any other case, to give him the satisfaction which was usual between gentlemen of honour. And should Major Pendennis be disinclined to this alternative, the Captain hinted, that he would force him to accept by the use of a horsewhip, which he should employ upon the Major's person. The precise terms of this letter we cannot give, for reasons which shall be specified presently; but it was, no doubt, couched in the Captain's finest style, and sealed elaborately with the great silver seal of the Costigans — the only bit of the family plate which the Captain possessed.

Garbetts was despatched then with this message and letter; and bidding Heaven bless 'um the General squeezed his ambassador's hand, and saw him depart. Then he took down his venerable and murderous duelling-pistols, with flint locks, that had done the business of many a pretty fellow in Dublin: and having examined these, and seen that they were in a satisfactory condition, he brought from the drawer all Pen's letters and poems which he kept there, and which he always read before he permitted his Emily to enjoy their perusal.

In a score of minutes Garbetts came back with an anxious and crestfallen countenance.

"Ye've seen 'um?" the Captain said.

"Why, yes," said Garbetts.

"And when is it for?" asked Costigan, trying the lock of one of the ancient pistols, and bringing it to a level with his eye — as he called that bloodshot orb.

"When is what for?" asked Mr. Garbetts.

"The meeting, my dear fellow?"

"You don't mean to say, you mean mortal combat, Captain," Garbetts said, aghast.

"What the devil else do I mean, Garbetts? — I want to shoot that man that has trajaiced me honor, or meself dthrop a victim on the sod."

"D—— if I carry challenges," Mr. Garbetts replied. "I'm a family man, Captain, and will have nothing to do with pistols — take back your letter;" and, to the surprise and indignation of Captain Costigan, his emissary flung the letter down, with its great sprawling superscription and blotched seal.

"Ye don't mean to say ye saw 'um and didn't give 'um the letter?" cried out the Captain in a fury.

"I saw him, but I could not have speech with him, Captain," said Mr. Garbetts.

"And why the devil not?" asked the other.

"There was one there I cared not to meet, nor would you," the tragedian answered in a sepulchral voice. "The minion Tatham was there, Captain."

"The cowardly scoundthrel!" roared Costigan. "He's frightened, and already going to swear the peace against me."

"I'll have nothing to do with the fighting, mark that," the tragedian doggedly said, "and I wish I'd not seen Tatham neither, nor that bit of —"

"Hold your tongue, Bob Acres. It's my belief ye're no better than a coward," said Captain Costigan, quoting Sir Lucius O'Trigger, which character he had performed with credit, both off and on the stage, and after some more parley between the couple they separated in not very good humour.

Their colloquy has been here condensed, as the reader knows the main point upon which it turned. But the latter will now see how it is impossible to give a correct account of the letter which the Captain wrote to Major Pendennis, as it was never opened at all by that gentleman.

When Miss Costigan came home from rehearsal, which she did in the company of the faithful Mr. Bows, she found her father pacing up and down their apartment in a great state of agitation, and in the midst of a powerful odour of spirits-and-water, which, as it appeared, had not succeeded in pacifying his disordered mind. The Pendennis papers were on the table surrounding the empty goblets and now useless teaspoon which had served to hold and mix the Captain's liquor and his friend's. As Emily entered he seized her in his arms, and cried out, "Prepare yourself, me child, me blessed child," in a voice of agony, and with eyes brimful of tears.

"Ye're tipsy again, Papa," Miss Fotheringay said, pushing back her sire. "Ye promised me ye wouldn't take spirits before dinner."

"It's to forget me sorrows, me poor girl, that I've taken just a drop," cried the bereaved father — "it's to drown me care that I drain the bowl."

"Your care takes a deal of drowning, Captain dear," said Bows, mimicking his friend's accent; "what has happened? Has that soft-spoken gentleman in the wig been vexing you?"

"The oily miscreant! I'll have his blood!" roared Cos. Miss Milly, it must be premised, had fled to her room out of his embrace, and was taking off her bonnet and shawl there.

"I thought he meant mischief. He was so uncommon civil," the other said. "What has he come to say?"

"O Bows! He has overwhellum'd me," the Captain said. "There's a hellish conspiracy on foot against me poor girl; and it's me opinion that both them Pendennises, nephew and uncle, is two infernal thrators and scoundthrels, who should be consunsumed from off the face of the earth."

"What is it? What has happened?" said Mr. Bows, growing rather excited.

Costigan then told him the Major's statement that the young Pendennis had not two thousand, nor two hundred pounds a year; and expressed his fury that he should have permitted such an impostor to coax and wheedle his innocent girl, and that he should have nourished such a viper in his own personal bosom. "I have shaken the reptile from me, however," said Costigan; "and as for his uncle, I'll have such a revenge on that old man, as shall make 'um rue the day he ever insulted a Costigan."

"What do you mean, General?" said Bows.

"I mean to have his life, Bows — his villanous, skulking life, my boy;" and he rapped upon the battered old pistol-case in an ominous and savage manner. Bows had often heard him appeal to that box of death, with which he proposed to sacrifice his enemies; but the Captain did not tell him that he had actually written and sent a challenge to Major Pendennis, and Mr. Bows therefore rather disregarded the pistols in the present instance.

At this juncture Miss Fotheringay returned to the common sitting-room from her private apartment, looking perfectly healthy, happy, and unconcerned, a striking and wholesome contrast to her father, who was in a delirious tremor of grief, anger, and other agitation. She brought in a pair of ex-white satin shoes with her, which she proposed to rub as clean as might be with bread-crumbs: intending to go mad with them upon next Tuesday evening in Ophelia, in which character she was to reappear on that night.

She looked at the papers on the table; stopped as if she was going to ask a question, but thought better of it, and going

to the cupboard, selected an eligible piece of bread wherewith she might operate on the satin slippers: and afterwards coming back to the table, seated herself there commodiously with the shoes, and then asked her father, in her honest, Irish brogue, "What have ye got them letthers, and pothry, and stuff, of Master Arthur's out for, Pa? Sure ye don't want to be reading over that nonsense."

"O Emilee!" cried the Captain, "that boy whom I loved as the boy of mee bosom is only a scoundthrel, and a deceiver, mee poor girl:" and he looked in the most tragical way at Mr. Bows, opposite; who, in his turn, gazed somewhat anxiously at Miss Costigan.

"He! pooh! Sure the poor lad's as simple as a schoolboy," she said. "All them children write verses and nonsense."

"He's been acting the part of a viper to this fireside, and a traitor in this familee," cried the Captain. "I tell ye he's no better than an impostor."

"What has the poor fellow done, Papa?" asked Emily.

"Done? He has deceived us in the most atrocious manner," Miss Emily's papa said. "He has thrifled with your affections, and outraged my own fine feelings. He has represented himself as a man of property, and it turrns out that he is no betther than a beggar. Haven't I often told ye he had two thousand a year? He's a pauper, I tell ye, Miss Costigan; a dependant upon the bountee of his mother; a good woman, who may marry again, who's likely to live for ever, and who has but five hundred a year. How dar he ask ye to marry into a family which has not the means of providing for ye? Ye've been grossly deceived and put upon, Milly, and it's my belief his old ruffian of an uncle in a wig is in the plot against us."

"That soft old gentleman? What has he been doing, Papa?" continued Emily, still imperturbable.

Costigan informed Milly, that when she was gone, Major Pendennis told him in his double-faced Pall Mall polite manner, that young Arthur had no fortune at all, that the Major had asked him (Costigan) to go to the lawyers ("wherein he knew the scoundthrels have a bill of mine, and I can't meet them," the Captain parenthetically remarked), and see the lad's father's will and finally, that an infernal swindle had been practised upon him by the pair, and that he was resolved either on a marriage, or on the blood of both of them.

Milly looked very grave and thoughtful, rubbing the white satin shoes. "Sure, if he's no money, there's no use marrying him, Papa," she said sententiously.

"Why did the villain say he was a man of prawpertee?" asked Costigan.

"The poor fellow always said he was poor," answered the girl. "'Twas you would have it he was rich, Papa — and made me agree to take him."

"He should have been explicit and told us his income, Milly," answered the father. "A young fellow who rides a blood mare, and makes presents of shawls and bracelets, is an impostor if he has no money; — and as for his uncle, bedad I'll pull off his wig whenever I see 'um. Bows, here, shall take a message to him and tell him so. Either it's a marriage, or he meets me in the field like a man, or I tweak 'um on the nose in front of his hotel or in the gravel walks of Fair Oaks Park before all the county, bedad."

"Bedad, you may send somebody else with the message," said Bows, laughing. "I'm a fiddler, not a fighting man, Captain."

"Pooh, you've no spirit, sir," roared the General. "I'll be my own second, if no one will stand by and see me injured. And I'll take my case of pistols and shoot 'um in the Coffee-room of the George."

"And so poor Arthur has no money?" sighed out Miss Costigan, rather plaintively. "Poor lad, he was a good lad too: wild and talking nonsense, with his verses and pothry and that, but a brave, generous boy, and indeed I liked him — and he liked me too," she added, rather softly, and rubbing away at the shoe.

"Why don't you marry him if you like him so?" Mr. Bows said, rather savagely. "He is not more than ten years younger than you are. His mother may relent, and you might go and live and have enough at Fair Oaks Park. Why not go and be a lady? I could go on with the fiddle, and the General live on his half-pay. Why don't you marry him? You know he likes you."

"There's others that likes me as well, Bows, that has no money and that's old enough," Miss Milly said sententiously.

"Yes, d — it," said Bows, with a bitter curse — "that are old enough and poor enough and fools enough for anything."

"There's old fools, and young fools too. You've often said so you silly man," the imperious beauty said, with a conscious glance at the old gentleman. "If Pendennis has not enough money to live upon, it's folly to talk about marrying him: and

that's the long and short of it."

"And the boy?" said Mr. Bows. "By Jove! you throw a man away like an old glove, Miss Costigan."

"I don't know what you mean, Bows," said Miss Fotheringay, placidly, rubbing the second shoe. "If he had had half of the two thousand a year that Papa gave him, or the half of that, I would marry him. But what is the good of taking on with a beggar? We're poor enough already. There's no use in my going to live with an old lady that's testy and cross, maybe, and would grudge me every morsel of meat." (Sure, it's near dinner time, and Suky not laid the cloth yet.) "And then," added Miss Costigan quite simply, "suppose there was a family? — why, Papa, we shouldn't be as well off as we are now."

"Deed, then, you would not, Milly dear," answered the father.

"And there's an end to all the fine talk about Mrs. Arthur Pendennis of Fair Oaks Park — the member of Parliament's lady," said Milly, with a laugh. "Pretty carriages and horses we should have to ride! — that you were always talking about, Papa! But it's always the same. If a man looked at me, you fancied he was going to marry me; and if he had a good coat, you fancied he was as rich as Croesus."

"— As Croesus," said Mr. Bows.

"Well, call 'um what ye like. But it's a fact now that Papa has married me these eight years a score of times. Wasn't I to be my Lady Poldoody of Oysterstown Castle? Then there was the Navy Captain at Portsmouth, and the old surgeon at Norwich, and the Methodist preacher here last year, and who knows how many more? Well, I bet a penny, with all your scheming, I shall die Milly Costigan at last. So poor little Arthur has no money? Stop and take dinner, Bows; we've a beautiful beef-steak pudding."

"I wonder whether she is on with Sir Derby Oaks," thought Bows, whose eyes and thoughts were always watching her. "The dodges of women beat all comprehension; and I am sure she wouldn't let the lad off so easily, if she had not some other scheme on hand."

It will have been perceived that Miss Fotheringay, though silent in general, and by no means brilliant as a conversationist, where poetry, literature, or the fine arts were concerned, could talk freely, and with good sense, too, in her own family circle. She cannot justly be called a romantic person: nor were her literary acquirement great: she never opened a Shakspeare from the day she left the stage, nor, indeed, understood it during all the time she adorned the boards: but about a pudding, a piece of needle-work, or her own domestic affairs, she was as good a judge as could be found; and not being misled by a strong imagination or a passionate temper, was better enabled to keep her judgment cool. When, over their dinner, Costigan tried to convince himself and the company, that the Major's statement regarding Pen's finances was unworthy of credit, and a mere ruse upon the old hypocrite's part so as to induce them, on their side, to break off the match, Miss Milly would not, for a moment, admit the possibility of deceit on the side of the adversary: and pointed out clearly that it was her father who had deceived himself, and not poor little Pen who had tried to take them in. As for that poor lad, she said she pitied him with all her heart. And she ate an exceedingly good dinner; to the admiration of Mr. Bows, who had a remarkable regard and contempt for this woman, during and after which repast, the party devised upon the best means of bringing this love-matter to a close. As for Costigan, his idea of tweaking the Major's nose vanished with his supply of after-dinner whisky-and-water; and he was submissive to his daughter, and ready for any plan on which she might decide, in order to meet the crisis which she saw was at hand.

The Captain, who, as long as he had a notion that he was wronged, was eager to face and demolish both Pen and his uncle, perhaps shrank from the idea of meeting the former, and asked "what the juice they were to say to the lad if he remained steady to his engagement, and they broke from theirs?" "What? don't you know how to throw a man over?" said Bows; "ask a woman to tell you?" and Miss Fotheringay showed how this feat was to be done simply enough — nothing was more easy. "Papa writes to Arthur to know what settlements he proposes to make in event of a marriage; and asks what his means are. Arthur writes back and says what he's got, and you'll find it's as the Major says, I'll go bail. Then papa writes, and says it's not enough, and the match had best be at an end."

"And, of course, you enclose a parting line, in which you say you will always regard him as a brother," said Mr. Bows, eyeing her in his scornful way.

"Of course, and so I shall," answered Miss Fotheringay. "He's a most worthy young man, I'm sure. I'll thank ye hand me the salt. Them filberts is beautiful."

"And there will be no noses pulled, Cos, my boy? I'm sorry you're baulked," said Mr. Bows.

“Dad, I suppose not,” said Cos, rubbing his own. —“What’ll ye do about them letters, and verses, and pomes, Milly, darling? — Ye must send ’em back.”

“Wigsby would give a hundred pound for ’em,” Bows said, with a sneer.

“Deed, then, he would,” said Captain Costigan, who was easily led.

“Papa!” said Miss Milly. —“Ye wouldn’t be for not sending the poor boy his letters back? Them letters and pomes is mine. They were very long, and full of all sorts of nonsense, and Latin, and things I couldn’t understand the half of; indeed I’ve not read ’em all; but we’ll send ’em back to him when the proper time comes.” And going to a drawer, Miss Fotheringay took out from it a number of the County Chronicle and Chatteris Champion, in which Pen had written a copy of flaming verses celebrating her appearance in the character of Imogen, and putting by the leaf upon which the poem appeared (for, like ladies of her profession, she kept the favourable printed notices of her performances), she wrapped up Pen’s letters, poems, passions, and fancies, and tied them with a piece of string neatly, as she would a parcel of sugar.

Nor was she in the least moved while performing this act. What hours the boy had passed over those papers! What love and longing: what generous faith and manly devotion — what watchful nights and lonely fevers might they tell of! She tied them up like so much grocery, and sate down and made tea afterwards with a perfectly placid and contented heart: while Pen was yearning after her ten miles off: and hugging her image to his soul.



CHAPTER XIII

A CRISIS

Meanwhile they were wondering at Fairoaks that the Major had not returned. Dr. Portman and his lady, on their way home to Clavering, stopped at Helen's lodge-gate, with a brief note for her from Major Pendennis, in which he said he should remain at Chatteris another day, being anxious to have some talk with Messrs. Tatham, the lawyers, whom he would meet that afternoon; but no mention was made of the transaction in which the writer had been engaged during the morning. Indeed the note was written at the pause after the first part of the engagement, and when the Major had decidedly had the worst of the battle.

Pen did not care somehow to go into the town whilst his uncle was there. He did not like to have to fancy that his guardian might be spying at him from that abominable Dean's grass-plot, whilst he was making love in Miss Costigan's drawing-room; and the pleasures of a walk (a delight which he was very rarely permitted to enjoy) would have been spoiled if he had met the man of the polished boots on that occasion. His modest love could not show in public by any outward signs, except the eyes (with which the poor fellow ogled and gazed violently to be sure), but it was dumb in the presence of third parties; and so much the better, for of all the talk which takes place in this world, that of love-makers is surely, to the uninitiated, the most silly. It is the vocabulary without the key; it is the lamp without the flame. Let the respected reader look or think over some old love-letters that he (or she) has had and forgotten, and try them over again. How blank and meaningless they seem! What glamour of infatuation was it which made that nonsense beautiful? One wonders that such puling and trash could ever have made one happy. And yet there were dates when you kissed those silly letters with rapture — lived upon six absurd lines for a week, and until the reactionary period came, when you were restless and miserable until you got a fresh supply of folly.

That is why we decline to publish any of the letters and verses which Mr. Pen wrote at this period of his life, out of mere regard for the young fellow's character. They are too spooney and wild. Young ladies ought not to be called upon to read them in cold blood. Bide your time, young women; perhaps you will get and write them on your own account soon. Meanwhile we will respect Mr. Pen's first outpourings, and keep them tied up in the newspapers with Miss Fotheringay's string, and sealed with Captain Costigan's great silver seal.

The Major came away from his interview with Captain Costigan in a state of such concentrated fury as rendered him terrible to approach! "The impudent bog-trotting scamp," he thought, "dare to threaten me! Dare to talk of permitting his damned Costigans to marry with the Pendennises! Send me a challenge! If the fellow can get anything in the shape of a gentleman to carry it, I have the greatest mind in life not to baulk him. — Psha! what would people say if I were to go out with a tipsy mountebank, about a row with an actress in a barn!" So when the Major saw Dr. Portman, who asked anxiously regarding the issue of his battle with the dragon, Mr. Pendennis did not care to inform the divine of the General's insolent behaviour, but stated that the affair was a very ugly and disagreeable one, and that it was by no means over yet.

He enjoined Doctor and Mrs. Portman to say nothing about the business at Fairoaks; whither he contented himself with despatching the note we have before mentioned. And then he returned to his hotel, where he vented his wrath upon Mr. Morgan his valet, "dammin and cussin upstairs and downstairs," as that gentleman observed to Mr. Foker's man, in whose company he partook of dinner in the servants' room of the George.

The servant carried the news to his master; and Mr. Foker having finished his breakfast about this time, it being two o'clock in the afternoon, remembered that he was anxious to know the result of the interview between his two friends, and having inquired the number of the Major's sitting-room, went over in his brocade dressing-gown, and knocked for admission.

Major Pendennis had some business, as he had stated, respecting a lease of the widow's, about which he was desirous of consulting old Mr. Tatham, the lawyer, who had been his brother's man of business, and who had a branch-office at Clavering, where he and his son attended market and other days three or four in the week. This gentleman and his client were now in consultation when Mr. Foker showed his grand dressing-gown and embroidered skull-cap at Major Pendennis's door.

Seeing the Major engaged with papers and red-tape, and an old man with a white head, the modest youth was for drawing back — and said, “O, you’re busy — call again another time.” But Mr. Pendennis wanted to see him, and begged him, with a smile, to enter: whereupon Mr. Foker took off the embroidered tarboosh or fez (it had been worked by the fondest of mothers) and advanced, bowing to the gentlemen and smiling on them graciously. Mr. Tatham had never seen so splendid an apparition before as this brocaded youth, who seated himself in an arm-chair, spreading out his crimson skirts, and looking with exceeding kindness and frankness on the other two tenants of the room. “You seem to like my dressing-gown, sir,” he said to Mr. Tatham. “A pretty thing, isn’t it? Neat, but not in the least gaudy. And how do you do, Major Pendennis, sir, and how does the world treat you?”

There was that in Foker’s manner and appearance which would have put an Inquisitor into good humour, and it smoothed the wrinkles under Pendennis’s head of hair.

“I have had an interview with that Irishman (you may speak before my friend, Mr. Tatham here, who knows all the affairs of the family), and it has not, I own, been very satisfactory. He won’t believe that my nephew is poor: he says we are both liars: he did me the honour to hint that I was a coward, as I took leave. And I thought when you knocked at the door, that you might be the gentleman whom I expect with a challenge from Mr. Costigan — that is how the world treats me, Mr. Foker.”

“You don’t mean that Irishman, the actress’s father?” cried Mr. Tatham, who was a dissenter himself, and did not patronise the drama.

“That Irishman, the actress’s father — the very man. Have not you heard what a fool my nephew has made of himself about the girl?” — Mr. Tatham, who never entered the walls of a theatre, had heard nothing: and Major Pendennis had to recount the story of his nephew’s loves to the lawyer, Mr. Foker coming in with appropriate comments in his usual familiar language.

Tatham was lost in wonder at the narrative. Why had not Mrs. Pendennis married a serious man, he thought — Mr. Tatham was a widower — and kept this unfortunate boy from perdition? As for Mr. Costigan’s daughter, he would say nothing: her profession was sufficient to characterise her. Mr. Foker here interposed to say he had known some uncommon good people in the booths, as he called the Temple of the Muses. Well, it might be so, Mr. Tatham hoped so — but the father, Tatham knew personally — a man of the worst character, a wine-bibber and an idler in taverns and billiard-rooms, and a notorious insolvent. “I can understand the reason, Major,” he said, “why the fellow would not come to my office to ascertain the truth of the statements which you made him. — We have a writ out against him and another disreputable fellow, one of the play-actors, for a bill given to Mr. Skinner of this city, a most respectable Grocer and Wine and Spirit Merchant, and a Member of the Society of Friends. This Costigan came crying to Mr. Skinner — crying in the shop, sir — and we have not proceeded against him or the other, as neither were worth powder and shot.”

It was whilst Mr. Tatham was engaged in telling this story that a third knock came to the door, and there entered an athletic gentleman in a shabby braided frock, bearing in his hand a letter with a large blotched red seal.

“Can I have the honour of speaking with Major Pendennis in private?” he began — “I have a few words for your ear, sir. I am the bearer of a mission from my friend Captain Costigan,” — but here the man with the bass voice paused, faltered, and turned pale — he caught sight of the red and well-remembered face of Mr. Tatham.

“Hullo, Garbetts, speak up!” cried Mr. Foker, delighted.

“Why, bless my soul, it is the other party to the bill!” said Mr. Tatham. “I say, sir; stop I say.” But Garbetts, with a face as blank as Macbeth’s when Banquo’s ghost appears upon him, gasped some inarticulate words, and fled out of the room.

The Major’s gravity was also entirely upset, and he burst out laughing. So did Mr. Foker, who said, “By Jove, it was a good ‘un.” So did the attorney, although by profession a serious man.

“I don’t think there’ll be any fight, Major,” young Foker said; and began mimicking the tragedian. “If there is, the old gentleman — your name Tatham? — very happy to make your acquaintance, Mr. Tatham — may send the bailiffs to separate the men;” and Mr. Tatham promised to do so. The Major was by no means sorry at the ludicrous issue of the quarrel. “It seems to me, sir,” he said to Mr. Foker, “that you always arrive to put me into good-humour.”

Nor was this the only occasion on which Mr. Foker this day was destined to be of service to the Pendennis family. We have said that he had the entree of Captain Costigan’s lodgings, and in the course of the afternoon he thought he would pay the General a visit, and hear from his own lips what had occurred in the conversation, in the morning, with Mr. Pendennis.

Captain Costigan was not at home. He had received permission, nay, encouragement from his daughter, to go to the convivial club at the Magpie Hotel, where no doubt he was bragging at that moment of his desire to murder a certain ruffian; for he was not only brave, but he knew it too, and liked to take out his courage, and, as it were, give it an airing in company.

Costigan then was absent, but Miss Fotheringay was at home washing the tea-cups whilst Mr. Bows sate opposite to her.

“Just done breakfast I see — how do?” said Mr. Foker, popping in his little funny head.

“Get out, you funny little man,” cried Miss Fotheringay.

“You mean come in, answered the other. — Here we are!” and entering the room he folded his arms and began twirling his head round and round with immense rapidity, like Harlequin in the Pantomime when he first issues from his cocoon or envelope. Miss Fotheringay laughed with all her heart: a wink of Foker’s would set her off laughing, when the bitterest joke Bows ever made could not get a smile from her, or the finest of poor Pen’s speeches would only puzzle her. At the end of the harlequinade he sank down on one knee and kissed her hand. “You’re the drollest little man,” she said, and gave him a great good-humoured slap. Pen used to tremble as he kissed her hand. Pen would have died of a slap.

These preliminaries over, the three began to talk; Mr. Foker amused his companions by recounting to them the scene which he had just witnessed of the discomfiture of Mr. Garbetts, by which they learned, for the first time, how far the General had carried his wrath against Major Pendennis. Foker spoke strongly in favour of the Major’s character for veracity and honour, and described him as a tip-top swell, moving in the upper-circle of society, who would never submit to any deceit — much more to deceive such a charming young woman as Miss Foth.

He touched delicately upon the delicate marriage question, though he couldn’t help showing that he held Pen rather cheap. In fact, he had a perhaps just contempt for Mr. Pen’s high-flown sentimentality; his own weakness, as he thought, not lying that way. “I knew it wouldn’t do, Miss Foth,” said he, nodding his little head. “Couldn’t do. Didn’t like to put my hand into the bag, but knew it couldn’t do. He’s too young for you: too green: a deal too green: and he turns out to be poor as Job. Can’t have him at no price, can she, Mr. Bo?”

“Indeed he’s a nice poor boy,” said the Fotheringay rather sadly.

“Poor little beggar,” said Bows, with his hands in his pockets, and stealing up a queer look at Miss Fotheringay. Perhaps he thought and wondered at the way in which women play with men, and coax them and win them and drop them.

But Mr. Bows had not the least objection to acknowledge that he thought Miss Fotheringay was perfectly right in giving up Mr. Arthur Pendennis, and that in his idea the match was always an absurd one: and Miss Costigan owned that she thought so herself, only she couldn’t send away two thousand a year. “It all comes of believing Papa’s silly stories,” she said; “faith I’ll choose for meself another time” — and very likely the large image of Lieutenant Sir Derby Oaks entered into her mind at that instant.

After praising Major Pendennis, whom Miss Costigan declared to be a proper gentleman entirely, smelling of lavender, and as neat as a pin — and who was pronounced by Mr. Bows to be the right sort of fellow, though rather too much of an old buck, Mr. Foker suddenly bethought him to ask the pair to come and meet the Major that very evening at dinner at his apartment at the George. “He agreed to dine with me, and I think after the — after the little shindy this morning, in which I must say the General was wrong, it would look kind, you know. — I know the Major fell in love with you, Miss Foth: he said so.”

“So she may be Mrs. Pendennis still,” Bows said with a sneer — “No, thank you, Mr. F. — I’ve dined.”

“Sure, that was at three o’clock,” said Miss Costigan, who had an honest appetite, “and I can’t go without you.”

“We’ll have lobster-salad and champagne,” said the little monster, who could not construe a line of Latin, or do a sum beyond the Rule of Three. Now, for lobster-salad and champagne in an honourable manner, Miss Costigan would have gone anywhere — and Major Pendennis actually found himself at seven o’clock seated at a dinner-table in company with Mr. Bows, a professional fiddler, and Miss Costigan, whose father had wanted to blow his brains out a few hours before.

To make the happy meeting complete, Mr. Foker, who knew Costigan’s haunts, despatched Stoopid to the club at the Magpie, where the General was in the act of singing a pathetic song, and brought him off to supper. To find his daughter and Bows seated at the board was a surprise indeed — Major Pendennis laughed, and cordially held out his hand, which the General Officer grasped avec effusion as the French say. In fact he was considerably inebriated, and had already been

crying over his own song before he joined the little party at the George. He burst into tears more than once, during the entertainment, and called the Major his dearest friend. Stoopid and Mr. Foker walked home with him: the Major gallantly giving his arm to Miss Costigan. He was received with great friendliness when he called the next day, when many civilities passed between the gentlemen. On taking leave he expressed his anxious desire to serve Miss Costigan on any occasion in which he could be useful to her, and he shook hands with Mr. Foker most cordially and gratefully, and said that gentleman had done him the very greatest service.

“All right,” said Mr. Foker: and they parted with mutual esteem.

On his return to Fair Oaks the next day, Major Pendennis did not say what had happened to him on the previous night, or allude to the company in which he had passed it. But he engaged Mr. Smirke to stop to dinner; and any person accustomed to watch his manner might have remarked that there was something constrained in his hilarity and talkativeness, and that he was unusually gracious and watchful in his communications with his nephew. He gave Pen an emphatic God-bless-you when the lad went to bed; and as they were about to part for the night, he seemed as if he was going to say something to Mrs. Pendennis, but he bethought him that if he spoke he might spoil her night’s rest, and allowed her to sleep in peace.

The next morning he was down in the breakfast-room earlier than was his custom, and saluted everybody there with great cordiality. The post used to arrive commonly about the end of this meal. When John, the old servant, entered, and discharged the bag of its letters and papers, the Major looked hard at Pen as the lad got his — Arthur blushed, and put his letter down. He knew the hand, it was that of old Costigan, and he did not care to read it in public. Major Pendennis knew the letter, too. He had put it into the post himself in Chatteris the day before.

He told little Laura to go away, which the child did, having a thorough dislike to him; and as the door closed on her, he took Mrs. Pendennis’s hand, and giving her a look full of meaning, pointed to the letter under the newspaper which Pen was pretending to read. “Will you come into the drawing-room?” he said. “I want to speak to you.” And she followed him, wondering, into the hall.

“What is it?” she said nervously.

“The affair is at an end,” Major Pendennis said. “He has a letter there giving him his dismissal. I dictated it myself yesterday. There are a few lines from the lady, too, bidding him farewell. It is all over.”

Helen ran back to the dining-room, her brother following. Pen had jumped at his letter the instant they were gone. He was reading it with a stupefied face. It stated what the Major had said, that Mr. Costigan was most gratified for the kindness with which Arthur had treated his daughter, but that he was only now made aware of Mr. Pendennis’s pecuniary circumstances. They were such that marriage was at present out of the question, and considering the great disparity in the age of the two, a future union was impossible. Under these circumstances, and with the deepest regret and esteem for him, Mr. Costigan bade Arthur farewell, and suggested that he should cease visiting, for some time at least, at his house.

A few lines from Miss Costigan were enclosed. She acquiesced in the decision of her Papa. She pointed out that she was many years older than Arthur, and that an engagement was not to be thought of. She would always be grateful for his kindness to her, and hoped to keep his friendship. But at present, and until the pain of the separation should be over, she entreated they should not meet.

Pen read Costigan’s letter and its enclosure mechanically, hardly knowing what was before his eyes. He looked up wildly, and saw his mother and uncle regarding him with sad faces. Helen’s, indeed, was full of tender maternal anxiety.

“What — what is this?” Pen said. “It’s some joke. This is not her writing. This is some servant’s writing. Who’s playing these tricks upon me?”

“It comes under her father’s envelope,” the Major said. “Those letters you had before were not in her hand: that is hers.”

“How do you know?” said Pen very fiercely.

“I saw her write it,” the uncle answered, as the boy started up; and his mother, coming forward, took his hand. He put her away.

“How came you to see her? How came you between me and her? What have I ever done to you that you should — Oh, it’s not true! it’s not true!” — Pen broke out with a wild execration. “She can’t have done it of her own accord. She can’t mean it. She’s pledged to me. Who has told her lies to break her from me?”

"Lies are not told in the family, Arthur," Major Pendennis replied. "I told her the truth, which was, that you had no money to maintain her, for her foolish father had represented you to be rich. And when she knew how poor you were, she withdrew at once, and without any persuasion of mine. She was quite right. She is ten years older than you are. She is perfectly unfitted to be your wife, and knows it. Look at that handwriting, and ask yourself, is such a woman fitted to be the companion of your mother?"

"I will know from herself if it is true," Arthur said, crumpling up the paper.

"Won't you take my word of honour? Her letters were written by a confidant of hers, who writes better than she can — look here. Here's one from the lady to your friend, Mr. Foker. You have seen her with Miss Costigan, as whose amanuensis she acted" — the Major said, with ever so little of a sneer, and laid down a certain billet which Mr. Foker had given to him.

"It's not that," said Pen, burning with shame and rage. "I suppose what you say is true, sir, but I'll hear it from herself."

"Arthur!" appealed his mother.

"I will see her," said Arthur. "I'll ask her to marry me, once more. I will. No one shall prevent me."

"What, a woman who spells affection with one f? Nonsense, sir. Be a man, and remember that your mother is a lady. She was never made to associate with that tipsy old swindler or his daughter. Be a man and forget her, as she does you."

"Be a man and comfort your mother, my Arthur," Helen said, going and embracing him: and seeing that the pair were greatly moved, Major Pendennis went out of the room and shut the door upon them, wisely judging that they were best alone.

He had won a complete victory. He actually had brought away Pen's letters in his portmanteau from Chatteris: having complimented Mr. Costigan, when he returned them, by giving him the little promissory note which had disquieted himself and Mr. Garbetts; and for which the Major settled with Mr. Tatham.

Pen rushed wildly off to Chatteris that day, but in vain attempted to see Miss Fotheringay, for whom he left a letter, enclosed to her father. The enclosure was returned by Mr. Costigan, who begged that all correspondence might end; and after one or two further attempts of the lad's, the indignant General desired that their acquaintance might cease. He cut Pen in the street. As Arthur and Foker were pacing the Castle walk, one day, they came upon Emily on her father's arm. She passed without any nod of recognition. Foker felt poor Pen trembling on his arm.

His uncle wanted him to travel, to quit the country for a while, and his mother urged him too: for he was growing very ill, and suffered severely. But he refused, and said point-blank he would not go. He would not obey in this instance: and his mother was too fond, and his uncle too wise to force him. Whenever Miss Fotheringay acted, he rode over to the Chatteris Theatre and saw her. One night there were so few people in the house that the Manager returned the money. Pen came home and went to bed at eight o'clock, and had a fever. If this continues, his mother will be going over and fetching the girl, the Major thought, in despair. As for Pen, he thought he should die. We are not going to describe his feelings, or give a dreary journal of his despair and passion. Have not other gentlemen been baulked in love besides Mr. Pen? Yes, indeed: but few die of the malady.



CHAPTER XIV

IN WHICH MISS FOTHERINGAY MAKES A NEW ENGAGEMENT

Within a short period of the events above narrated, Mr. Manager Bingley was performing his famous character of 'Rolla,' in 'Pizarro,' to a house so exceedingly thin, that it would appear as if the part of Rolla was by no means such a favourite with the people of Chatteris as it was with the accomplished actor himself. Scarce anybody was in the theatre. Poor Pen had the boxes almost all to himself, and sate there lonely, with bloodshot eyes, leaning over the ledge, and gazing haggardly towards the scene, when Cora came in. When she was not on the stage he saw nothing. Spaniards and Peruvians, processions and battles, priests and virgins of the sun, went in and out, and had their talk, but Arthur took no note of any of them; and only saw Cora whom his soul longed after. He said afterwards that he wondered he had not taken a pistol to shoot her, so mad was he with love, and rage, and despair; and had it not been for his mother at home, to whom he did not speak about his luckless condition, but whose silent sympathy and watchfulness greatly comforted the simple half heart-broken fellow, who knows but he might have done something desperate, and have ended his days prematurely in front of Chatteris gaol? There he sate then, miserable, and gazing at her. And she took no more notice of him than he did of the rest of the house.

The Fotheringay was uncommonly handsome, in a white raiment and leopard skin, with a sun upon her breast, and fine tawdry bracelets on her beautiful glancing arms. She spouted to admiration the few words of her part, and looked it still better. The eyes, which had overthrown Pen's soul, rolled and gleamed as lustrous as ever; but it was not to him that they were directed that night. He did not know to whom, or remark a couple of gentlemen, in the box next to him, upon whom Miss Fotheringay's glances were perpetually shining.

Nor had Pen noticed the extraordinary change which had taken place on the stage a short time after the entry of these two gentlemen into the theatre. There were so few people in the house, that the first act of the play languished entirely, and there had been some question of returning the money, as upon that other unfortunate night when poor Pen had been driven away. The actors were perfectly careless about their parts, and yawned through the dialogue, and talked loud to each other in the intervals. Even Bingley was listless, and Mrs. B. in Elvira spoke under her breath.

How came it that all of a sudden Mrs. Bingley began to raise her voice and bellow like a bull of Bashan? Whence was it that Bingley, flinging off his apathy, darted about the stage and yelled like Dean? Why did Garbetts and Rowkins and Miss Rouncy try, each of them, the force of their charms or graces, and act and swagger and scowl and spout their very loudest at the two gentlemen in box No. 3?

One was a quiet little man in black, with a grey head and a jolly shrewd face — the other was in all respects a splendid and remarkable individual. He was a tall and portly gentleman with a hooked nose and a profusion of curling brown hair and whiskers; his coat was covered with the richest frogs-braiding and velvet. He had under-waistcoats, many splendid rings, jewelled pins and neck-chains. When he took out his yellow pocket-handkerchief with his hand that was cased in white kids, a delightful odour of musk and bergamot was shaken through the house. He was evidently a personage of rank, and it was at him that the little Chatteris company was acting.

He was, in a word, no other than Mr. Dolphin, the great manager from London, accompanied by his faithful friend and secretary Mr. William Minns: without whom he never travelled. He had not been ten minutes in the theatre before his august presence there was perceived by Bingley and the rest: and they all began to act their best and try to engage his attention. Even Miss Fotheringay's dull heart, which was disturbed at nothing, felt perhaps a flutter, when she came in presence of the famous London Impresario. She had not much to do in her part, but to look handsome, and stand in picturesque attitudes encircling her child and she did this work to admiration. In vain the various actors tried to win the favour of the great stage Sultan. Pizarro never got a hand from him. Bingley yelled, and Mrs. Bingley bellowed, and the Manager only took snuff out of his great gold box. It was only in the last scene, when Rolla comes in staggering with the infant (Bingley is not so strong as he was and his fourth son Master Talma Bingley is a monstrous large child for his age)—when Rolla comes staggering with the child to Cora, who rushes forward with a shriek, and says —“O God, there's blood upon him!” — that the London manager clapped his hands, and broke out with an enthusiastic bravo.

Then having concluded his applause, Mr. Dolphin gave his secretary a slap on the shoulder, and said, "By Jove, Billy, she'll do!"

"Who taught her that dodge?" said old Billy, who was a sardonic old gentleman. "I remember her at the Olympic, and hang me if she could say Bo to a goose."

It was little Mr. Bows in the orchestra who had taught her the 'dodge' in question. All the company heard the applause, and, as the curtain went down, came round her and congratulated and hated Miss Fotheringay.

Now Mr. Dolphin's appearance in the remote little Chatteris theatre may be accounted for in this manner. In spite of all his exertions, and the perpetual blazes of triumph, coruscations of talent, victories of good old English comedy, which his play-bills advertised, his theatre (which, if you please, and to injure no present susceptibilities and vested interests, we shall call the Museum Theatre) by no means prospered, and the famous Impresario found himself on the verge of ruin. The great Hubbard had acted legitimate drama for twenty nights, and failed to remunerate anybody but himself: the celebrated Mr. and Mrs. Cawdor had come out in Mr. Rawhead's tragedy, and in their favourite round of pieces, and had not attracted the public. Herr Garbage's lions and tigers had drawn for a little time, until one of the animals had bitten a piece out of the Herr's shoulder; when the Lord Chamberlain interfered, and put a stop to this species of performance: and the grand Lyrical Drama, though brought out with unexampled splendour and success, with Monsieur Poumons as first tenor, and an enormous orchestra, had almost crushed poor Dolphin in its triumphant progress: so that great as his genius and resources were, they seemed to be at an end. He was dragging on his season wretchedly with half salaries, small operas, feeble old comedies, and his ballet company; and everybody was looking out for the day when he should appear in the Gazette.

One of the illustrious patrons of the Museum Theatre, and occupant of the great proscenium-box, was a gentleman whose name has been mentioned in a previous history; that refined patron of the arts, and enlightened lover of music and the drama, the Most Noble the Marquis of Steyne. His lordship's avocations as a statesman prevented him from attending the playhouse very often, or coming very early. But he occasionally appeared at the theatre in time for the ballet, and was always received with the greatest respect by the Manager, from whom he sometimes condescended to receive a visit in his box. It communicated with the stage, and when anything occurred there which particularly pleased him, when a new face made its appearance among the coryphees, or a fair dancer executed a pas with especial grace or agility, Mr. Wenham, Mr. Wagg, or some other aide-de-camp of the noble Marquis, would be commissioned to go behind the scenes, and express the great man's approbation, or make the inquiries which were prompted by his lordship's curiosity, or his interest in the dramatic art. He could not be seen by the audience, for Lord Steyne sate modestly behind a curtain, and looked only towards the stage — but you could know he was in the house, by the glances which all the corps-de-ballet, and all the principal dancers, cast towards his box. I have seen many scores of pairs of eyes (as in the Palm Dance in the ballet of Cook at Otaheite, where no less than a hundred-and-twenty lovely female savages in palm leaves and feather aprons, were made to dance round Floridor as Captain Cook) ogling that box as they performed before it, and have often wondered to remark the presence of mind of Mademoiselle Sauterelle, or Mademoiselle de Bondi (known as la petite Caoutchoue), who, when actually up in the air quivering like so many shuttlecocks, always kept their lovely eyes winking at that box in which the great Steyne sate. Now and then you would hear a harsh voice from behind the curtain cry, "Brava, Brava," or a pair of white gloves wave from it, and begin to applaud. Bondi, or Sauterelle, when they came down to earth, curtsied and smiled, especially to those hands, before they walked up the stage again, panting and happy.

One night this great Prince surrounded by a few choice friends was in his box at the Museum, and they were making such a noise and laughter that the pit was scandalised, and many indignant voices were bawling out silence so loudly, that Wagg wondered the police did not interfere to take the rascals out. Wenham was amusing the party in the box with extracts from a private letter which he had received from Major Pendennis, whose absence in the country at the full London season had been remarked, and of course deplored by his friends.

"The secret is out," said Mr. Wenham, "there's a woman in the case."

"Why, d — it, Wenham, he's your age," said the gentleman behind the curtain.

"Pour les ames bien nees, l'amour ne compte pas le nombre des annees," said Mr. Wenham, with a gallant air. "For my part, I hope to be a victim till I die, and to break my heart every year of my life." The meaning of which sentence was, "My lord, you need not talk; I'm three years younger than you, and twice as well conserve."

"Wenham, you affect me," said the great man, with one of his usual oaths. "By — you do. I like to see a fellow

preserving all the illusions of youth up to our time of life — and keeping his heart warm as yours is. Hang it, sir, it's a comfort to meet with such a generous, candid creature. — Who's that gal in the second row, with blue ribbons, third from the stage — fine gal. Yes, you and I are sentimentalists. Wagg I don't think so much cares — it's the stomach rather more than the heart with you, eh, Wagg, my boy?"

"I like everything that's good," said Mr. Wagg, generously. "Beauty and Burgundy, Venus and Venison. I don't say that Venus's turtles are to be despised, because they don't cook them at the London Tavern: but — but tell us about old Pendennis, Mr. Wenham," he abruptly concluded — for his joke flagged just then, as he saw that his patron was not listening. In fact, Steyne's glasses were up, and he was examining some object on the stage.

"Yes, I've heard that joke about Venus's turtle and the London Tavern before — you begin to fail, my poor Wagg. If you don't mind I shall be obliged to have a new Jester," Lord Steyne said, laying down his glass. "Go on, Wenham, about old Pendennis."

"Dear Wenham," — he begins, Mr. Wenham read — "as you have had my character in your hands for the last three weeks, and no doubt have torn me to shreds, according to your custom, I think you can afford to be good-humoured by way of variety, and to do me a service. It is a delicate matter, *entre nous*, *une affaire de coeur*. There is a young friend of mine who is gone wild about a certain Miss Fotheringay, an actress at the theatre here, and I must own to you, as handsome a woman, and, as it appears to me, as good an actress as ever put on rouge. She does Ophelia, Lady Teazle, Mrs. Haller — that sort of thing. Upon my word, she is as splendid as Georges in her best days, and as far as I know, utterly superior to anything we have on our scene. I want a London engagement for her. Can't you get your friend Dolphin to come and see her — to engage her — to take her out of this place? A word from a noble friend of ours (you understand) would be invaluable, and if you could get the Gaunt House interest for me — I will promise anything I can in return for your service — which I shall consider one of the greatest that can be done to me. Do, do this now as a good fellow, which I always said you were: and in return, command yours truly, A. Pendennis."

"It's a clear case," said Mr. Wenham, having read this letter; "old Pendennis is in love."

"And wants to get the woman up to London — evidently," continued Mr. Wagg.

"I should like to see Pendennis on his knees, with the rheumatism," said Mr. Wenham.

"Or accommodating the beloved object with a lock of his hair," said Wagg.

"Stuff," said the great man. "He has relations in the country, hasn't he? He said something about a nephew, whose interest could return a member. It is the nephew's affair, depend on it. The young one is in a scrape. I was myself — when I was in the fifth form at Eton — a market-gardener's daughter — and swore I'd marry her. I was mad about her — poor Polly!" — here he made a pause, and perhaps the past rose up to Lord Steyne, and George Gaunt was a boy again not altogether lost. — "But I say, she must be a fine woman from Pendennis's account. Have in Dolphin, and let us hear if he knows anything of her."

At this Wenham sprang out of the box, passed the servitor who waited at the door communicating with the stage, and who saluted Mr. Wenham with profound respect; and the latter emissary, pushing on and familiar with the place, had no difficulty in finding out the manager, who was employed, as he not unfrequently was, in swearing and cursing the ladies of the *corps-de-ballet* for not doing their duty.

The oaths died away on Mr. Dolphin's lips, as soon as he saw Mr. Wenham; and he drew off the hand which was clenched in the face of one of the offending coryphees, to grasp that of the new-comer. "How do, Mr. Wenham? How's his lordship to-night? Looks uncommonly well," said the manager smiling, as if he had never been out of temper in his life; and he was only too delighted to follow Lord Steyne's ambassador, and pay his personal respects to that great man.

The visit to Chatteris was the result of their conversation: and Mr. Dolphin wrote to his lordship from that place, and did himself the honour to inform the Marquess of Steyne, that he had seen the lady about whom his lordship had spoken, that he was as much struck by her talents as he was by her personal appearance, and that he had made an engagement with Miss Fotheringay, who would soon have the honour of appearing before a London audience, and his noble and enlightened patron the Marquess of Steyne.

Pen read the announcement of Miss Fotheringay's engagement in the Chatteris paper, where he had so often praised her charms. The Editor made very handsome mention of her talent and beauty, and prophesied her success in the metropolis. Bingley, the manager, began to advertise "The last night of Miss Fotheringay's engagement." Poor Pen and Sir

Derby Oaks were very constant at the play: Sir Derby in the stage-box, throwing bouquets and getting glances. — Pen in the almost deserted boxes, haggard, wretched and lonely. Nobody cared whether Miss Fotheringay was going or staying except those two — and perhaps one more, which was Mr. Bows of the orchestra.

He came out of his place one night, and went into the house to the box where Pen was; and he held out his hand to him, and asked him to come and walk. They walked down the street together; and went and sate upon Chatteris bridge in the moonlight, and talked about Her. “We may sit on the same bridge,” said he; “we have been in the same boat for a long time. You are not the only man who has made a fool of himself about that woman. And I have less excuse than you, because I am older and know her better. She has no more heart than the stone you are leaning on; and it or you or I might fall into the water, and never come up again, and she wouldn’t care. Yes — she would care for me, because she wants me to teach her: and she won’t be able to get on without me, and will be forced to send for me from London. But she wouldn’t if she didn’t want me. She has no heart and no head, and no sense, and no feelings, and no griefs or cares, whatever. I was going to say no pleasures — but the fact is, she does like her dinner, and she is pleased when people admire her.”

“And you do?” said Pen, interested out of himself, and wondering at the crabbed homely little old man.

“It’s a habit, like taking snuff, or drinking drams,” said the other. “I’ve been taking her these five years, and can’t do without her. It was I made her. If she doesn’t send for me, I shall follow her: but I know she’ll send for me. She wants me. Some day she’ll marry, and fling me over, as I do the end of this cigar.”

The little flaming spark dropped into the water below, and disappeared; and Pen, as he rode home that night, actually thought about somebody but himself.



CHAPTER XV

THE HAPPY VILLAGE

Until the enemy had retired altogether from before the place, Major Pendennis was resolved to keep his garrison in Fair Oaks. He did not appear to watch Pen's behaviour or to put any restraint on his nephew's actions, but he managed nevertheless to keep the lad constantly under his eye or those of his agents, and young Arthur's comings and goings were quite well known to his vigilant guardian.

I suppose there is scarcely any man who reads this or any other novel but has been baulked in love some time or the other, by fate and circumstance, by falsehood of women, or his own fault. Let that worthy friend recall his own sensations under the circumstances, and apply them as illustrative of Mr. Pen's anguish. Ah! what weary nights and sickening fevers! Ah! what mad desires dashing up against some rock of obstruction or indifference, and flung back again from the unimpressible granite! If a list could be made this very night in London of the groans, thoughts, imprecations of tossing lovers, what a catalogue it would be! I wonder what a percentage of the male population of the metropolis will be lying awake at two or three o'clock tomorrow morning, counting the hours as they go by knelling drearily, and rolling from left to right, restless, yearning and heart-sick? What a pang it is! I never knew a man die of love certainly, but I have known a twelve-stone man go down to nine-stone five under a disappointed passion, so that pretty nearly quarter of him may be said to have perished: and that is no small portion. He has come back to his old size subsequently; perhaps is bigger than ever: very likely some new affection has closed round his heart and ribs and made them comfortable, and young Pen is a man who will console himself like the rest of us. We say this lest the ladies should be disposed to deplore him prematurely, or be seriously uneasy with regard to his complaint. His mother was, but what will not a maternal fondness fear or invent? "Depend on it, my dear creature," Major Pendennis would say gallantly to her, "the boy will recover. As soon as we get her out of the country we will take him somewhere, and show him a little life. Meantime make yourself easy about him. Half a fellow's pangs at losing a woman result from vanity more than affection. To be left by a woman is the deuce and all, to be sure; but look how easily we leave 'em."

Mrs. Pendennis did not know. This sort of knowledge had by no means come within the simple lady's scope. Indeed she did not like the subject or to talk of it: her heart had had its own little private misadventure and she had borne up against it and cured it: and perhaps she had not much patience with other folk's passions, except, of course, Arthur's, whose sufferings she made her own, feeling indeed very likely in many of the boy's illnesses and pains a great deal more than Pen himself endured. And she watched him through this present grief with a jealous silent sympathy; although, as we have said, he did not talk to her of his unfortunate condition.

The Major must be allowed to have had not a little merit and forbearance, and to have exhibited a highly creditable degree of family affection. The life at Fair Oaks was uncommonly dull to a man who had the entree of half the houses in London, and was in the habit of making his bow in three or four drawing-rooms of a night. A dinner with Doctor Portman or a neighbouring Squire now and then; a dreary rubber at backgammon with the widow, who did her utmost to amuse him; these were the chief of his pleasures. He used to long for the arrival of the bag with the letters, and he read every word of the evening paper. He doctored himself too, assiduously — a course of quiet living would suit him well, he thought, after the London banquets. He dressed himself laboriously every morning and afternoon: he took regular exercise up and down the terrace walk. Thus with his cane, his toilet, his medicine-chest, his backgammon-box, and his newspaper, this worthy and worldly philosopher fenced himself against ennui; and if he did not improve each shining hour, like the bees by the widow's garden wall, Major Pendennis made one hour after another pass as he could, and rendered his captivity just tolerable. After this period it was remarked that he was fond of bringing round the conversation to the American war, the massacre of Wyoming and the brilliant actions of Saint Lucie, the fact being that he had a couple of volumes of the 'Annual Register' in his bedroom, which he sedulously studied. It is thus a well-regulated man will accommodate himself to circumstances, and show himself calmly superior to fortune.

Pen sometimes took the box at backgammon of a night, or would listen to his mother's simple music of summer evenings — but he was very restless and wretched in spite of all: and has been known to be up before the early daylight even; and down at a carp-pond in Clavering Park, a dreary pool with innumerable whispering rushes and green alders,

where a milkmaid drowned herself in the Baronet's grandfather's time, and her ghost was said to walk still. But Pen did not drown himself, as perhaps his mother fancied might be his intention. He liked to go and fish there, and think and think at leisure, as the float quivered in the little eddies of the pond, and the fish flapped about him. If he got a bite he was excited enough: and in this way occasionally brought home carps, tenches, and eels, which the Major cooked in the Continental fashion.

By this pond, and under a tree, which was his favourite resort, Pen composed a number of poems suitable to his circumstances over which verses he blushed in after days, wondering how he could ever have invented such rubbish. And as for the tree, why it is in a hollow of this very tree, where he used to put his tin-box of ground-bait, and other fishing commodities, that he afterwards — but we are advancing matters. Suffice it to say, he wrote poems and relieved himself very much. When a man's grief or passion is at this point, it may be loud, but it is not very severe. When a gentleman is cudgelling his brain to find any rhyme for sorrow, besides borrow and tomorrow, his woes are nearer at an end than he thinks for. So were Pen's. He had his hot and cold fits, his days of sullenness and peevishness, and of blank resignation and despondency, and occasional mad paroxysms of rage and longing, in which fits Rebecca would be saddled and galloped fiercely about the country, or into Chatteris, her rider gesticulating wildly on her back, and astonishing carters and turnpikemen as he passed, crying out the name of the false one.

Mr. Foker became a very frequent and welcome visitor at Fair Oaks during this period, where his good spirits and oddities always amused the Major and Pendennis, while they astonished the widow and little Laura not a little. His tandem made a great sensation in Clavering market-place; where he upset a market stall, and cut Mrs. Pybus's poodle over the shaven quarters, and drank a glass of raspberry bitters at the Clavering Arms. All the society in the little place heard who he was, and looked out his name in their Peerages. He was so young, and their books so old, that his name did not appear in many of their volumes; and his mamma, now quite an antiquated lady, figured amongst the progeny of the Earl of Rosherville, as Lady Agnes Milton still. But his name, wealth, and honourable lineage were speedily known about Clavering, where you may be sure that poor Pen's little transaction with the Chatteris actress was also pretty freely discussed.

Looking at the little old town of Clavering St. Mary from the London road as it runs by the lodge at Fair Oaks, and seeing the rapid and shining Brawl winding down from the town and skirting the woods of Clavering Park, and the ancient church tower and peaked roofs of the houses rising up amongst trees and old walls, behind which swells a fair background of sunshiny hills that stretch from Clavering westwards towards the sea — the place looks so cheery and comfortable that many a traveller's heart must have yearned towards it from the coach-top, and he must have thought that it was in such a calm friendly nook he would like to shelter at the end of life's struggle. Tom Smith, who used to drive the Alacrity coach, would often point to a tree near the river, from which a fine view of the church and town was commanded, and inform his companion on the box that "Artises come and take huff the Church from that there tree — It was a Habby once, sir:" — and indeed a pretty view it is, which I recommend to Mr. Stanfield or Mr. Roberts, for their next tour.

Like Constantinople seen from the Bosphorus; like Mrs. Rougemont viewed in her box from the opposite side of the house; like many an object which we pursue in life, and admire before we have attained it; Clavering is rather prettier at a distance than it is on a closer acquaintance. The town so cheerful of aspect a few furlongs off, looks very blank and dreary. Except on market days there is nobody in the streets. The clack of a pair of pattens echoes through half the place, and you may hear the creaking of the rusty old ensign at the Clavering Arms, without being disturbed by any other noise. There has not been a ball in the Assembly Rooms since the Clavering volunteers gave one to their Colonel, the old Sir Francis Clavering; and the stables which once held a great part of that brilliant, but defunct regiment, are now cheerless and empty, except on Thursdays, when the farmers put up there, and their tilted carts and gigs make a feeble show of liveliness in the place, or on Petty Sessions, when the magistrates attend in what used to be the old card-room.

On the south side of the market rises up the church, with its great grey towers, of which the sun illuminates the delicate carving; deepening the shadows of the huge buttresses, and gilding the glittering windows and flaming vanes. The image of the Patroness of the Church was wrenched out of the porch centuries ago: such of the statues of saints as were within reach of stones and hammer at that period of pious demolition, are maimed and headless, and of those who were out of fire, only Doctor Portman knows the names and history, for his curate, Smirke, is not much of an antiquarian, and Mr. Simcoe (husband of the Honourable Mrs. Simcoe), incumbent and architect of the Chapel of Ease in the lower town, thinks them the abomination of desolation.

The Rectory is a stout broad-shouldered brick house, of the reign of Anne. It communicates with the church and market by different gates, and stands at the opening of Yew-tree Lane, where the Grammar School (Rev. — Wapshot) is; Yew-tree Cottage (Miss Flather); the butchers' slaughtering-house, an old barn or brew-house of the Abbey times, and the Misses Finucane's establishment for young ladies. The two schools had their pews in the loft on each side of the organ, until the Abbey Church getting rather empty, through the falling-off of the congregation, who were inveigled to the Heresy-shop in the lower town, the Doctor induced the Misses Finucane to bring their pretty little flock downstairs; and the young ladies' bonnets make a tolerable show in the rather vacant aisles. Nobody is in the great pew of the Clavering family, except the statues of defunct baronets and their ladies: there is Sir Poyntz Clavering, Knight and Baronet, kneeling in a square beard opposite his wife in a ruff: a very fat lady, the Dame Rebecca Clavering, in alto-relievo, is borne up to Heaven by two little blue-veined angels, who seem to have a severe task — and so forth. How well in after life Pen remembered those effigies, and how often in youth he scanned them as the Doctor was grumbling the sermon from the pulpit, and Smirke's mild head and forehead curl peered over the great prayer-book in the desk!

The Fair Oaks folks were constant at the old church; their servants had a pew, so had the Doctor's, so had Wapshot's, and those of Misses Finucane's establishment, three maids and a very nice-looking young man in a livery. The Wapshot Family were numerous and faithful. Glanders and his children regularly came to church: so did one of the apothecaries. Mrs. Pybus went, turn and turn about, to the Low Town church, and to the Abbey: the Charity School and their families of course came; Wapshot's boys made a good cheerful noise, scuffling with their feet as they marched into church and up the organ-loft stair, and blowing their noses a good deal during the service. To be brief, the congregation looked as decent as might be in these bad times. The Abbey Church was furnished with a magnificent screen, and many hatchments and heraldic tombstones. The Doctor spent a great part of his income in beautifying his darling place; he had endowed it with a superb painted window, bought in the Netherlands, and an organ grand enough for a cathedral.

But in spite of organ and window, in consequence of the latter very likely, which had come out of a Papistical place of worship and was blazoned all over with idolatry, Clavering New Church prospered scandalously in the teeth of Orthodoxy; and many of the Doctor's congregation deserted to Mr. Simcoe and the honourable woman his wife. Their efforts had thinned the very Ebenezer hard by them, which building before Simcoe's advent used to be so full, that you could see the backs of the congregation squeezing out of the arched windows thereof. Mr. Simcoe's tracts fluttered into the doors of all the Doctor's cottages, and were taken as greedily as honest Mrs. Portman's soup, with the quality of which the graceless people found fault. With the folks at the Ribbon Factory situated by the weir on the Brawl side, and round which the Low Town had grown, Orthodoxy could make no way at all. Quiet Miss Myra was put out of court by impetuous Mrs. Simcoe and her female aides-de-camp. Ah, it was a hard burthen for the Doctor's lady to bear, to behold her husband's congregation dwindling away; to give the precedence on the few occasions when they met to a notorious low-churchman's wife who was the daughter of an Irish Peer; to know that there was a party in Clavering, their own town of Clavering, on which her Doctor spent a great deal more than his professional income, who held him up to odium because he played a rubber at whist; and pronounced him to be a Heathen because he went to the play. In her grief she besought him to give up the play and the rubber — indeed they could scarcely get a table now, so dreadful was the outcry against the sport — but the Doctor declared that he would do what he thought right, and what the great and good George the Third did (whose Chaplain he had been): and as for giving up whist because those silly folks cried out against it, he would play dummy to the end of his days with his wife and Myra, rather than yield to their despicable persecutions.

Of the two families, owners of the Factory (which had spoiled the Brawl as a trout-stream and brought all the mischief into the town), the senior partner, Mr. Rolt, went to Ebenezer; the junior, Mr. Barker, to the New Church. In a word, people quarrelled in this little place a great deal more than neighbours do in London; and in the Book Club, which the prudent and conciliating Pendennis had set up, and which ought to have been a neutral territory, they bickered so much that nobody scarcely was ever seen in the reading-room, except Smirke, who, though he kept up a faint amity with the Simcoe faction, had still a taste for magazines and light worldly literature; and old Glanders, whose white head and grizzly moustache might be seen at the window; and of course, little Mrs. Pybus, who looked at everybody's letters as the Post brought them (for the Clavering Reading-room, as every one knows, used to be held at Baker's Library, London Street, formerly Hog Lane), and read every advertisement in the paper.

It may be imagined how great a sensation was created in this amiable little community when the news reached it of Mr. Pen's love-passages at Chatteris. It was carried from house to house, and formed the subject of talk at high-church,

low-church, and no-church tables; it was canvassed by the Misses Finucane and their teachers, and very likely debated by the young ladies in the dormitories for what we know; Wapshot's big boys had their version of the story, and eyed Pen curiously as he sate in his pew at church, or raised the finger of scorn at him as he passed through Chatteris. They always hated him and called him Lord Pendennis, because he did not wear corduroys as they did, and rode a horse, and gave himself the airs of a buck.

And if the truth must be told, it was Mrs. Portman herself who was the chief narrator of the story of Pen's loves. Whatever tales this candid woman heard, she was sure to impart them to her neighbours; and after she had been put into possession of Pen's secret by the little scandal at Chatteris, poor Doctor Portman knew that it would next day be about the parish of which he was the Rector. And so indeed it was; the whole society there had the legend — at the news-room, at the milliner's, at the shoe-shop, and the general warehouse at the corner of the market; at Mrs. Pybus's, at the Glanders's, at the Honourable Mrs. Simcoe's soiree, at the Factory; nay, through the mill itself the tale was current in a few hours, and young Arthur Pendennis's madness was in every mouth.

All Dr. Portman's acquaintances barked out upon him when he walked the street the next day. The poor divine knew that his Betsy was the author of the rumour, and groaned in spirit. Well, well — it must have come in a day or two, and it was as well that the town should have the real story. What the Clavering folks thought of Mrs. Pendennis for spoiling her son, and of that precocious young rascal of an Arthur for daring to propose to a play-actress, need not be told here. If pride exists amongst any folks in our country, and assuredly we have enough of it, there is no pride more deep-seated than that of twopenny old gentlewomen in small towns. "Gracious goodness," the cry was, "how infatuated the mother is about that pert and headstrong boy who gives himself the airs of a lord on his blood-horse, and for whom our society is not good enough, and who would marry an odious painted actress off a booth, where very likely he wants to rant himself. If dear good Mr. Pendennis had been alive this scandal would never have happened."

No more it would, very likely, nor should we have been occupied in narrating Pen's history. It was true that he gave himself airs to the Clavering folks. Naturally haughty and frank, their cackle and small talk and small dignities bored him, and he showed a contempt which he could not conceal. The Doctor and the Curate were the only people Pen cared for in the place — even Mrs. Portman shared in the general distrust of him, and of his mother, the widow, who kept herself aloof from the village society, and was sneered at accordingly, because she tried, forsooth, to keep her head up with the great County families. She, indeed! Mrs. Barker at the Factory has four times the butcher's meat that goes up to Fair Oaks, with all their fine airs.

Etc. etc. etc.: let the reader fill up these details according to his liking and experience of village scandal. They will suffice to show how it was that a good woman occupied solely in doing her duty to her neighbour and her children, and an honest, brave lad, impetuous, and full of good, and wishing well to every mortal alive found enemies and detractors amongst people to whom they were superior, and to whom they had never done anything like harm. The Clavering curs were yelping all round the house of Fair Oaks, and delighted to pull Pen down.

Doctor Portman and Smirke were both cautious of informing the widow of the constant outbreak of calumny which was pursuing poor Pen, though Glanders, who was a friend of the house, kept him au courant. It may be imagined what his indignation was: was there any man in the village whom he could call to account? Presently some wags began to chalk up 'Fotheringay for ever!' and other sarcastic allusions to late transactions, at Fair Oaks' gate. Another brought a large playbill from Chatteris, and wafered it there one night. On one occasion Pen, riding through the Lower Town, fancied he heard the Factory boys jeer him; and finally going through the Doctor's gate into the churchyard, where some of Wapshot's boys were lounging, the biggest of them, a young gentleman about twenty years of age, son of a neighbouring small Squire, who lived in the doubtful capacity of parlour-boarder with Mr. Wapshot, flung himself into a theatrical attitude near a newly-made grave, and began repeating Hamlet's verses over Ophelia, with a hideous leer at Pen. The young fellow was so enraged that he rushed at Hobnell Major with a shriek very much resembling an oath, cut him furiously across the face with the riding-whip which he carried, flung it away, calling upon the cowardly villain to defend himself, and in another minute knocked the bewildered young ruffian into the grave which was just waiting for a different lodger.

Then with his fists clenched, and his face quivering with passion and indignation, he roared out to Mr. Hobnell's gaping companions, to know if any of the blackguards would come on? But they held back with a growl, and retreated as Doctor Portman came up to his wicket, and Mr. Hobnell, with his nose and lip bleeding piteously, emerged from the grave.

Pen, looking death and defiance at the lads, who retreated towards their side of the churchyard, walked back again

through the Doctor's wicket, and was interrogated by that gentleman. The young fellow was so agitated he could scarcely speak. His voice broke into a sob as he answered. "The — coward insulted me, sir," he said; and the Doctor passed over the oath, and respected the emotion of the honest suffering young heart.

Pendennis the elder, who like a real man of the world had a proper and constant dread of the opinion of his neighbour, was prodigiously annoyed by the absurd little tempest which was blowing in Chatteris, and tossing about Master Pen's reputation. Doctor Portman and Captain Glanders had to support the charges of the whole Chatteris society against the young reprobate, who was looked upon as a monster of crime. Pen did not say anything about the churchyard scuffle at home; but went over to Baymouth, and took counsel with his friend Harry Foker, Esq., who drove over his drag presently to the Clavering Arms, whence he sent Stoopid with a note to Thomas Hobnell, Esq., at the Rev. J. Wapshot's, and a civil message to ask when he should wait upon that gentleman.

Stoopid brought back word that the note had been opened by Mr. Hobnell, and read to half a dozen of the big boys, on whom it seemed to make a great impression; and that after consulting together, and laughing, Mr. Hobnell said he would send an answer "arter arternoon school, which the bell was a-ringing: and Mr. Wapshot he came out in his Master's gownd." Stoopid was learned in academical costume, having attended Mr. Foker at St. Boniface.

Mr. Foker went out to see the curiosities of Clavering meanwhile; but not having a taste for architecture, Doctor Portman's fine church did not engage his attention much and he pronounced the tower to be as mouldy as an old Stilton cheese. He walked down the street and looked at the few shops there; he saw Captain Glanders at the window of the Reading-room, and having taken a good stare at that gentleman, he wagged his head at him in token of satisfaction; he inquired the price of meat at the butcher's with an air of the greatest interest, and asked "when was next killing day?" he flattened his little nose against Madame Fribsby's window to see if haply there was a pretty workwoman in her premises; but there was no face more comely than the doll's or dummy's wearing the French cap in the window, only that of Madame Fribsby herself, dimly visible in the parlour, reading a novel. That object was not of sufficient interest to keep Mr. Foker very long in contemplation, and so having exhausted the town and the inn stables, in which there were no cattle, save the single old pair of posters that earned a scanty livelihood by transporting the gentry round about to the county dinners, Mr. Foker was giving himself up to ennui entirely, when a messenger from Mr. Hobnell was at length announced.

It was no other than Mr. Wapshot himself, who came with an air of great indignation, and holding Pen's missive in his hand, asked Mr. Foker "how dared he bring such an unchristian message as a challenge to a boy of his school?"

In fact Pen had written a note to his adversary of the day before, telling him that if after the chastisement which his insolence richly deserved, he felt inclined to ask the reparation which was usually given amongst gentlemen, Mr. Arthur Pendennis's friend, Mr. Henry Foker, was empowered to make any arrangements for the satisfaction of Mr. Hobnell.

"And so he sent you with the answer — did he, sir?" Mr. Foker said, surveying the Schoolmaster in his black coat and clerical costume.

"If he had accepted this wicked challenge, I should have flogged him," Mr. Wapshot said, and gave Mr. Foker a glance which seemed to say, "and I should like very much to flog you too."

"Uncommon kind of you, sir, I'm sure," said Pen's emissary. "I told my principal that I didn't think the other man would fight," he continued with a great air of dignity. "He prefers being flogged to fighting, sir, I dare say. May I offer you any refreshment, Mr.? I haven't the advantage of your name."

"My name is Wapshot, sir, and I am Master of the Grammar School of this town, sir," cried the other: "and I want no refreshment, sir, I thank you, and have no desire to make your acquaintance, sir."

"I didn't seek yours, sir, I'm sure," replied Mr. Foker. "In affairs of this sort, you see, I think it is a pity that the clergy should be called in, but there's no accounting for tastes, sir."

"I think it's a pity that boys should talk about committing murder, sir, as lightly as you do," roared the Schoolmaster; "and if I had you in my school —"

"I dare say you would teach me better, sir," Mr. Foker said, with a bow. "Thank you, sir. I've finished my education, sir, and ain't a-going back to school, sir — when I do, I'll remember your kind offer, sir. John, show this gentleman downstairs — and, of course, as Mr. Hobnell likes being thrashed, we can have no objection, sir, and we shall be very happy to accommodate him, whenever he comes our way." And with this, the young fellow bowed the elder gentleman out of the room, and sate down and wrote a note off to Pen, in which he informed the latter that Mr. Hobnell was not disposed to fight, and proposed to put up with the caning which Pen had administered to him.

CHAPTER XVI

MORE STORMS IN THE PUDDLE

Pen's conduct in this business of course was soon made public, and angered his friend Doctor Portman not a little: while it only amused Major Pendennis. As for the good Mrs. Pendennis, she was almost distracted when she heard of the squabble, and of Pen's unchristian behaviour. All sorts of wretchedness, discomfort, crime, annoyance, seemed to come out of this transaction in which the luckless boy had engaged; and she longed more than ever to see him out of Chatteris for a while — anywhere removed from the woman who had brought him into so much trouble.

Pen when remonstrated with by this fond parent, and angrily rebuked by the Doctor for his violence and ferocious intentions, took the matter au grand sérieux, with the happy conceit and gravity of youth: said that he himself was very sorry for the affair, that the insult had come upon him without the slightest provocation on his part; that he would permit no man to insult him upon this head without vindicating his own honour, and appealing with great dignity to his uncle, asked whether he could have acted otherwise as a gentleman, than as he did in resenting the outrage offered to him, and in offering satisfaction to the person chastised?

"Vous allez trop vite, my good sir," said the uncle, rather puzzled, for he had been indoctrinating his nephew with some of his own notions upon the point of honour — old-world notions savouring of the camp and pistol a great deal more than our soberer opinions of the present day — "between men of the world I don't say; but between two schoolboys, this sort of thing is ridiculous, my dear boy — perfectly ridiculous."

"It is extremely wicked, and unlike my son," said Mrs. Pendennis, with tears in her eyes, and bewildered with the obstinacy of the boy.

Pen kissed her, and said with great pomposity, "Women, dear mother, don't understand these matters — I put myself into Foker's hands — I had no other course to pursue."

Major Pendennis grinned and shrugged his shoulders. The young ones were certainly making great progress, he thought. Mrs. Pendennis declared that that Foker was a wicked horrid little wretch, and was sure that he would lead her dear boy into mischief, if Pen went to the same College with him. "I have a great mind not to let him go at all," she said: and only that she remembered that the lad's father had always destined him for the College in which he had had his own brief education, very likely the fond mother would have put a veto upon his going to the University.

That he was to go, and at the next October term, had been arranged between all the authorities who presided over the lad's welfare. Foker had promised to introduce him to the right set; and Major Pendennis laid great store upon Pen's introduction into College life and society by this admirable young gentleman. "Mr. Foker knows the very best young men now at the University," the Major said, "and Pen will form acquaintances there who will be of the greatest advantage through life to him. The young Marquis of Plinlimmon is there, eldest son of the Duke of Saint David's — Lord Magnus Charters is there, Lord Runnymede's son, and a first cousin of Mr. Foker (Lady Runnymede, my dear, was Lady Agatha Milton, you of course remember); Lady Agnes will certainly invite him to Logwood; and far from being alarmed at his intimacy with her son, who is a singular and humorous, but most prudent and amiable young man, to whom, I am sure, we are under every obligation for his admirable conduct in the affair of the Fotheringay marriage, I look upon it as one of the very luckiest things which could have happened to Pen, that he should have formed an intimacy with this most amusing young gentleman."

Helen sighed, she supposed the Major knew best. Mr. Foker had been very kind in the wretched business with Miss Costigan, certainly, and she was grateful to him. But she could not feel otherwise than a dim presentiment of evil; and all these quarrels, and riots, and worldliness, scared her about the fate of her boy.

Doctor Portman was decidedly of opinion that Pen should go to College. He hoped the lad would read, and have a moderate indulgence of the best society too. He was of opinion that Pen would distinguish himself: Smirke spoke very highly of his proficiency: the Doctor himself had heard him construe, and thought he acquitted himself remarkably well. That he should go out of Chatteris was a great point at any rate; and Pen, who was distracted from his private grief by the various rows and troubles which had risen round about him, gloomily said he would obey.

There were assizes, races, and the entertainments and the flux of company consequent upon them, at Chatteris, during a part of the months of August and September, and Miss Fotheringay still continued to act, and take farewell of the audiences at the Chatteris Theatre during that time. Nobody seemed to be particularly affected by her presence, or her announced departure, except those persons whom we have named; nor could the polite county folks, who had houses in London, and very likely admired the Fotheringay prodigiously in the capital, when they had been taught to do so by the Fashion which set in in her favour, find anything remarkable in the actress performing on the little Chatteris boards. Many genius and many a quack, for that matter, has met with a similar fate before and since Miss Costigan's time. This honest woman meanwhile bore up against the public neglect, and any other crosses or vexations which she might have in life, with her usual equanimity; and ate, drank, acted, slept, with that regularity and comfort which belongs to people of her temperament. What a deal of grief, care, and other harmful excitement does a healthy dulness and cheerful insensibility avoid! Nor do I mean to say that Virtue is not Virtue because it is never tempted to go astray; only that dulness is a much finer gift than we give it credit for being; and that some people are very lucky whom Nature has endowed with a good store of that great anodyne.

Pen used to go drearily in and out from the play at Chatteris during this season, and pretty much according to his fancy. His proceedings tortured his mother not a little, and her anxiety would have led her often to interfere, had not the Major constantly checked, and at the same time encouraged her; for the wily man of the world fancied he saw that a favourable turn had occurred in Pen's malady. It was the violent efflux of versification, among other symptoms, which gave Pen's guardian and physician satisfaction. He might be heard spouting verses in the shrubbery walks, or muttering them between his teeth as he sat with the home party of evenings. One day prowling about the house in Pen's absence, the Major found a great book full of verses in the lad's study. They were in English, and in Latin; quotations from the classic authors were given in the scholastic manner in the foot-notes. He can't be very bad, wisely thought the Pall-Mall Philosopher: and he made Pen's mother remark (not, perhaps, without a secret feeling of disappointment, for she loved romance like other soft women), that the young gentleman during the last fortnight came home quite hungry to dinner at night, and also showed a very decent appetite at the breakfast-table in the morning. "Gad, I wish I could," said the Major, thinking ruefully of his dinner pills. "The boy begins to sleep well, depend upon that." It was cruel, but it was true.

Having no other soul to confide in-for he could not speak to his mother of his loves and disappointments — his uncle treated them in a scornful and worldly tone, which, though carefully guarded and polite, yet jarred greatly on the feelings of Mr. Pen — and Foker was much too coarse to appreciate those refined sentimental secrets — the lad's friendship for the Curate redoubled, or rather, he was never tired of having Smirke for a listener on that one subject. What is a lovee without a confidant? Pen employed Mr. Smirke, as Corydon does the elm-tree, to cut out his mistress's name upon. He made him echo with the name of the beautiful Amaryllis. When men have left off playing the tune, they do not care much for the pipe: but Pen thought he had a great friendship for Smirke, because he could sigh out his loves and griefs into his tutor's ears; and Smirke had his own reasons for always being ready at the lad's call.

Pen's affection gushed out in a multitude of sonnets to the friend of his heart, as he styled the Curate, which the other received with great sympathy. He plied Smirke with Latin Sapphics and Alcaics. The love-songs multiplied under his fluent pen; and Smirke declared and believed that they were beautiful. On the other hand, Pen expressed a boundless gratitude to think that Heaven should have sent him such a friend at such a moment. He presented his tutor with his best-bound books, and his gold guard-chain, and wanted him to take his double-barrelled gun. He went into Chatteris and got a gold pencil-case on credit (for he had no money, and indeed was still in debt to Smirke for some of the Fotheringay presents), which he presented to Smirke, with an inscription indicative of his unalterable and eternal regard for the Curate; who of course was pleased with every mark of the boy's attachment.

The poor Curate was naturally very much dismayed at the contemplated departure of his pupil. When Arthur should go, Smirke's occupation and delight would go too. What pretext could he find for a daily visit to Fair Oaks and that kind word or glance from the lady there, which was as necessary to the Curate as the frugal dinner which Madame Fribbsby served him? Arthur gone, he would only be allowed to make visits like any other acquaintance: little Laura could not accommodate him by learning the Catechism more than once a week: he had curled himself like ivy round Fair Oaks: he pined at the thought that he must lose his hold of the place. Should he speak his mind and go down on his knees to the widow? He thought over any indications in her behaviour which flattered his hopes. She had praised his sermons three weeks before: she had thanked him exceedingly for his present of a melon, for a small dinner-party which Mrs. Pendennis

gave: she said she should always be grateful to him for his kindness to Arthur, and when he declared that there were no bounds to his love and affection for that dear boy, she had certainly replied in a romantic manner, indicating her own strong gratitude and regard to all her son's friends. Should he speak out? — or should he delay? If he spoke and she refused him, it was awful to think that the gate of Fair Oaks might be shut upon him for ever — and within that door lay all the world for Mr. Smirke.

Thus, oh friendly readers, we see how every man in the world has his own private griefs and business, by which he is more cast down or occupied than by the affairs or sorrows of any other person. While Mrs. Pendennis is disquieting herself about losing her son, and that anxious hold she has had of him, as long as he has remained in the mother's nest, whence he is about to take flight into the great world beyond — while the Major's great soul chafes and frets, inwardly vexed as he thinks what great parties are going on in London, and that he might be sunning himself in the glances of Dukes and Duchesses, but for those cursed affairs which keep him in a wretched little country hole — while Pen is tossing between his passion and a more agreeable sensation, unacknowledged yet, but swaying him considerably, namely, his longing to see the world — Mr. Smirke has a private care watching at his bedside, and sitting behind him on his pony; and is no more satisfied than the rest of us. How lonely we are in the world; how selfish and secret, everybody! You and your wife have pressed the same pillow for forty years and fancy yourselves united. Psha, does she cry out when you have the gout, or do you lie awake when she has the toothache? Your artless daughter, seemingly all innocence and devoted to her mamma and her piano-lesson, is thinking of neither, but of the young Lieutenant with whom she danced at the last ball — the honest frank boy just returned from school is secretly speculating upon the money you will give him, and the debts he owes the tart-man. The old grandmother crooning in the corner and bound to another world within a few months, has some business or cares which are quite private and her own — very likely she is thinking of fifty years back, and that night when she made such an impression, and danced a cotillon with the Captain before your father proposed for her: or, what a silly little overrated creature your wife is, and how absurdly you are infatuated about her — and, as for your wife — O philosophic reader, answer and say — Do you tell her all? Ah, sir — a distinct universe walks about under your hat and under mine — all things in nature are different to each — the woman we look at has not the same features, the dish we eat from has not the same taste to the one and the other — you and I are but a pair of infinite isolations, with some fellow-islands a little more or less near to us. Let us return, however, to the solitary Smirke.

Smirke had one confidante for his passion — that most injudicious woman, Madame Fribsby. How she became Madame Fribsby, nobody knows: she had left Clavering to go to a milliner's in London as Miss Fribsby — she pretended that she had got the rank in Paris during her residence in that city. But how could the French king, were he ever so much disposed, give her any such title? We shall not inquire into this mystery, however. Suffice to say, she went away from home a bouncing young lass; she returned a rather elderly character, with a Madonna front and a melancholy countenance — bought the late Mrs. Harbottle's business for a song — took her elderly mother to live with her; was very good to the poor, was constant at church, and had the best of characters. But there was no one in all Clavering, not Mrs. Portman herself, who read so many novels as Madame Fribsby. She had plenty of time for this amusement, for, in truth, very few people besides the folks at the Rectory and Fair Oaks employed her; and by a perpetual perusal of such works (which were by no means so moral or edifying in the days of which we write, as they are at present) she had got to be so absurdly sentimental, that in her eyes life was nothing but an immense love-match; and she never could see two people together, but she fancied they were dying for one another.

On the day after Mrs. Pendennis's visit to the Curate, which we have recorded many pages back, Madame Fribsby settled in her mind that Mr. Smirke must be in love with the widow, and did everything in her power to encourage this passion on both sides. Mrs. Pendennis she very seldom saw, indeed, except in public, and in her pew at church. That lady had very little need of millinery, or made most of her own dresses and caps; but on the rare occasions when Madame Fribsby received visits from Mrs. Pendennis or paid her respects at Fair Oaks, she never failed to entertain the widow with praises of the Curate, pointing out what an angelical man he was, how gentle, how studious, how lonely; and she would wonder that no lady would take pity upon him.

Helen laughed at these sentimental remarks, and wondered that Madame herself did not compassionate her lodger, and console him. Madame Fribsby shook her Madonna front, "*Mong cure a boco souffare*," she said, laying her hand on the part she designated as her cure. "*It est more en Espang, Madame*," she said with a sigh. She was proud of her intimacy with the French language, and spoke it with more volubility than correctness. Mrs. Pendennis did not care to penetrate the

secrets of this wounded heart: except to her few intimates she was a reserved and it may be a very proud woman; she looked upon her son's tutor merely as an attendant on that young Prince, to be treated with respect as a clergyman certainly, but with proper dignity as a dependant on the house of Pendennis. Nor were Madame's constant allusions to the Curate particularly agreeable to her. It required a very ingenious sentimental turn indeed to find out that the widow had a secret regard for Mr. Smirke, to which pernicious error however Madame Fribsby persisted in holding.

Her lodger was very much more willing to talk on this subject with his soft-hearted landlady. Every time after that she praised the Curate to Mrs. Pendennis, she came away from the latter with the notion that the widow herself had been praising him. "Etre soul au monde est bien ouneeyoung," she would say, glancing up at a print of a French carbineer in a green coat and brass cuirass which decorated her apartment — "Depend upon it when Master Pendennis goes to College, his Ma will find herself very lonely. She is quite young yet. — You wouldn't suppose her to be five-and-twenty. Monsieur le Cury, song cure est touchy — j'ang suis sure — Je conny cela biang — Ally Monsieur Smirke."

He softly blushed; he sighed; he hoped; he feared; he doubted; he sometimes yielded to the delightful idea — his pleasure was to sit in Madame Fribsby's apartment, and talk upon the subject, where, as the greater part of the conversation was carried on in French by the Milliner, and her old mother was deaf, that retired old individual (who had once been a housekeeper, wife and widow of a butler in the Clavering family) could understand scarce one syllable of their talk.

Thus it was, that when Major Pendennis announced to his nephew's tutor that the young fellow would go to College in October, and that Mr. Smirke's valuable services would no longer be needful to his pupil, for which services the Major, who spoke as grandly as a lord, professed himself exceedingly grateful, and besought Mr. Smirke to command his interests in any way — thus it was, that the Curate felt that the critical moment was come for him, and was racked and tortured by those severe pangs which the occasion warranted.

Madame Fribsby had, of course, taken the strongest interest in the progress of Mr. Pen's love affair with Miss Fotheringay. She had been over to Chatteris, and having seen that actress perform, had pronounced that she was old and overrated: and had talked over Master Pen's passion in her shop many and many a time to the half-dozen old maids, and old women in male clothes, who are to be found in little country towns, and who formed the genteel population of Clavering. Captain Glanders, H.P., had pronounced that Pen was going to be a devil of a fellow, and had begun early: Mrs. Glanders had told him to check his horrid observations, and to respect his own wife, if he pleased. She said it would be a lesson to Helen for her pride and absurd infatuation about that boy. Mrs. Pybus said many people were proud of very small things, and for her part, she didn't know why an apothecary's wife should give herself such airs. Mrs. Wapshot called her daughters away from that side of the street, one day when Pen, on Rebecca, was stopping at the saddler's, to get a new lash to his whip — one and all of these people had made visits of curiosity to Fair Oaks, and had tried to condole with the widow, or bring the subject of the Fotheringay affair on the tapis, and had been severally checked by the haughty reserve of Mrs. Pendennis, supported by the frigid politeness of the Major her brother.

These rebuffs, however, did not put an end to the gossip, and slander went on increasing about the unlucky Fair Oaks' family. Glanders (H.P.), a retired cavalry officer, whose half-pay and large family compelled him to fuddle himself with brandy-and-water instead of claret after he quitted the Dragoons, had the occasional entree at Fair Oaks, and kept his friend the Major there informed of all the stories which were current at Clavering. Mrs. Pybus had taken an inside place by the coach to Chatteris, and gone to the George on purpose to get the particulars. Mrs. Speers's man, had treated Mr. Foker's servant to drink at Baymouth for a similar purpose. It was said that Pen had hanged himself for despair in the orchard, and that his uncle had cut him down; that, on the contrary, it was Miss Costigan who was jilted, and not young Arthur; and that the affair had only been hushed up by the payment of a large sum of money, the exact amount of which there were several people in Clavering could testify — the sum of course varying according to the calculation of the individual narrator of the story.

Pen shook his mane and raged like a furious lion when these scandals, affecting Miss Costigan's honour and his own, came to his ears. Why was not Pybus a man (she had whiskers enough), that he might call her out and shoot her? Seeing Simcoe pass by, Pen glared at him so from his saddle on Rebecca, and clutched his whip in a manner so menacing, that that clergyman went home and wrote a sermon, or thought over a sermon (for he delivered oral testimony at great length), in which he spoke of Jezebel, theatrical entertainments (a double cut this — for Doctor Portman, the Rector of the old church, was known to frequent such), and of youth going to perdition, in a manner which made it clear to every capacity

that Pen was the individual meant, and on the road alluded to. What stories more were there not against young Pendennis, whilst he sate sulking, Achilles-like in his tent, for the loss of his ravished Briseis?

After the affair with Hobnell, Pen was pronounced to be a murderer as well as a profligate, and his name became a name of terror and a byword in Clavering. But this was not all; he was not the only one of the family about whom the village began to chatter, and his unlucky mother was the next to become a victim to their gossip.

"It is all settled," said Mrs. Pybus to Mrs. Speers, "the boy is to go to College, and then the widow is to console herself."

"He's been there every day, in the most open manner, my dear," continued Mrs. Speers.

"Enough to make poor Mr. Pendennis turn in his grave," said Mrs. Wapshot.

"She never liked him, that we know," says No. 1.

"Married him for his money. Everybody knows that: was a penniless hanger-on of Lady Pontypool's," says No. 2.

"It's rather too open, though, to encourage a lover under pretence of having a tutor for your son," cried No. 3.

"Hush! here comes Mrs. Portman," some one said, as the good Rector's wife entered Madame Fribbsy's shop, to inspect her monthly book of fashions just arrived from London. And the fact is that Madame Fribbsy had been able to hold out no longer; and one day, after she and her lodger had been talking of Pen's approaching departure, and the Curate had gone off to give one of his last lessons to that gentleman, Madame Fribbsy had communicated to Mrs. Pybus, who happened to step in with Mrs. Speers, her strong suspicion, her certainty almost, that there was an attachment between a certain clerical gentleman and a certain lady, whose naughty son was growing quite unmanageable, and that a certain marriage would take place pretty soon.

Mrs. Portman saw it all, of course, when the matter was mentioned. What a sly fox that Curate was! He was low-church, and she never liked him. And to think of Mrs. Pendennis taking a fancy to him after she had been married to such a man as Mr. Pendennis! She could hardly stay five minutes at Madame Fribbsy's, so eager was she to run to the Rectory and give Doctor Portman the news.

When Doctor Portman heard this piece of intelligence, he was in such a rage with his curate, that his first movement was to break with Mr. Smirke, and to beg him to transfer his services to some other parish. "That milksop of a creature pretend to be worthy of such a woman as Mrs. Pendennis," broke out the Doctor: "where will impudence stop next!"

"She is much too old for Mr. Smirke," Mrs. Portman remarked: "why, poor dear Mrs. Pendennis might be his mother almost."

"You always choose the most charitable reason, Betsy," cried the Rector. "A matron with a son grown up — she would never think of marrying again."

"You only think men should marry again, Doctor Portman, answered his lady, bristling up.

"You stupid old woman," said the Doctor, "when I am gone, you shall marry whomsoever you like. I will leave orders in my will, my dear, to that effect: and I'll bequeath a ring to my successor, and my Ghost shall come and dance at your wedding."

"It is cruel for a clergyman to talk so," the lady answered, with a ready whimper: but these little breezes used to pass very rapidly over the surface of the Doctor's domestic bliss; and were followed by a great calm and sunshine. The Doctor adopted a plan for soothing Mrs. Portman's ruffled countenance, which has a great effect when it is tried between a worthy couple who are sincerely fond of one another; and which, I think, becomes 'John Anderson' at three-score, just as much as it used to do when he was a black-haired young Jo of five-and-twenty.

"Hadn't you better speak to Mr. Smirke, John?" Mrs Portman asked.

"When Pen goes to College, cadit quaestio," replied the Rector, "Smirke's visits at Fair Oaks will cease of themselves, and there will be no need to bother the widow. She has trouble enough on her hands, with the affairs of that silly young scapegrace, without being pestered by the tittle-tattle of this place. It is all an invention of that fool, Fribbsy."

"Against whom I always warned you — you know I did, my dear John," interposed Mrs. Portman.

"That you did; you very often do, my love," the Doctor answered with a laugh. "It is not for want of warning on your part, I am sure, that I have formed my opinion of most women with whom we are acquainted. Madame Fribbsy is a fool, and fond of gossip, and so are some other folks. But she is good to the poor: she takes care of her mother, and she comes to church twice every Sunday. And as for Smirke, my dear ——" here the Doctor's face assumed for one moment a comical

expression, which Mrs. Portman did not perceive (for she was looking out of the drawing-room window, and wondering what Mrs. Pybus could want cheapening fowls again in the market, when she had bad poultry from Livermore's two days before)—“and as for Mr. Smirke, my dear Betsy, will you promise me that you will never breathe to any mortal what I am going to tell you as a profound secret?”

“What is it, my dear John! — of course I won't,” answered the Rector's lady.

“Well, then — I cannot say it is a fact, mind — but if you find that Smirke is at this moment — ay, and has been for years — engaged to a young lady, a Miss — a Miss Thompson, if you will have the name, who lives on Clapham Common — yes, on Clapham Common, not far from Mrs. Smirke's house, what becomes of your story then about Smirke and Mrs. Pendennis?”

“Why did you not tell me this before?” asked the Doctor's wife. — “How long have you known it? — How we all of us have been deceived in that man!”

“Why should I meddle in other folks' business, my dear?” the Doctor answered. “I know how to keep a secret — and perhaps this is only an invention like that other absurd story; at least, Madame Portman, I should never have told you this but for the other, which I beg you to contradict whenever you hear it.” And so saying the Doctor went away to his study, and Mrs. Portman seeing that the day was a remarkably fine one, thought she would take advantage of the weather and pay a few visits.

The Doctor looking out of his study window saw the wife of his bosom presently issue forth, attired in her best. She crossed the Market-place, saluting the market-women right and left, and giving a glance at the grocery and general emporium at the corner: then entering London Street (formerly Hog Lane), she stopped for a minute at Madame Fribsby's window, and looking at the fashions which hung up there — seemed hesitating whether she should enter; but she passed on and never stopped again until she came to Mrs. Pybus's little green gate and garden, through which she went to that lady's cottage.

There, of course, her husband lost sight of Mrs. Portman. “Oh, what a long bow I have pulled,” he said inwardly — “Goodness forgive me! and shot my own flesh and blood. There must be no more tattling and scandal about that house. I must stop it, and speak to Smirke. I'll ask him to dinner this very day.”

Having a sermon to compose, the Doctor sat down to that work, and was so engaged in the composition, that he had not concluded it until near five o'clock in the afternoon: when he stepped over to Mr. Smirke's lodgings, to put his hospitable intentions, regarding that gentleman, into effect. He reached Madame Fribsby's door, just as the Curate issued from it.

Mr. Smirke was magnificently dressed, and as he turned out his toes, he showed a pair of elegant open-worked silk stockings and glossy pumps. His white cravat was arranged in a splendid stiff tie, and his gold shirt studs shone on his spotless linen. His hair was curled round his fair temples. Had he borrowed Madame Fribsby's irons to give that curly grace? His white cambric pocket-handkerchief was scented with the most delicious eau-de-Cologne.

“O gracilis puer,” — cried the Doctor. — “Whither are you bound? I wanted you to come home to dinner.”

“I am engaged to dine at — at Fair Oaks,” said Mr. Smirke, blushing faintly and whisking the scented pocket-handkerchief, and his pony being in waiting, he mounted and rode away simpering down the street. No accident befell him that day, and he arrived with his tie in the very best order at Mrs. Pendennis's house.



CHAPTER XVII

WHICH CONCLUDES THE FIRST PART OF THIS HISTORY

The Curate had gone on his daily errand to Fair Oaks, and was upstairs in Pens study pretending to read with his pupil, in the early part of that very afternoon when Mrs. Portman, after transacting business with Mrs. Pybus, had found the weather so exceedingly fine that she pursued her walk as far as Fair Oaks, in order to pay a visit to her dear friend there. In the course of their conversation, the Rector's lady told Mrs. Pendennis and the Major a very great secret about the Curate, Mr. Smirke, which was no less than that he had an attachment, a very old attachment, which he had long kept quite private.

"And on whom is it that Mr. Smirke has bestowed his heart?" asked Mrs. Pendennis, with a superb air but rather an inward alarm.

"Why, my dear," the other lady answered, "when he first came and used to dine at the Rectory, people said we wanted him for Myra, and we were forced to give up asking him. Then they used to say he was smitten in another quarter; but I always contradicted it for my part, and said that you ——"

"That I," cried Mrs. Pendennis; "people are very impertinent, I am sure. Mr. Smirke came here as Arthur's tutor, and I am surprised that anybody should dare to speak so ——"

"Pon my soul, it is a little too much," the Major said, laying down the newspaper and the double eye-glass.

"I've no patience with that Mrs. Pybus," Helen continued indignantly.

"I told her there was no truth in it," Mrs. Portman said. "I always said so, my dear: and now it comes out that my demure gentleman has been engaged to a young lady — Miss Thompson, of Clapham Common, ever so long: and I am delighted for my part, and on Myra's account, too, for an unmarried curate is always objectionable about one's house: and of course it is strictly private, but I thought I would tell you, as it might remove unpleasantnesses. But mind: not one word, if you please, about the story."

Mrs. Pendennis said, with perfect sincerity, that she was exceedingly glad to hear the news: and hoped Mr. Smirke, who was a very kind and amiable man, would have a deserving wife: and when her visitor went away, Helen and her brother talked of the matter with great satisfaction, the kind lady rebuking herself for her haughty behaviour to Mr. Smirke, whom she had avoided of late, instead of being grateful to him for his constant attention to Arthur.

"Gratitude to this kind of people," the Major said, "is very well; but familiarity is out of the question. This gentleman gives his lessons and receives his money like any other master. You are too humble, my good soul. There must be distinctions in ranks, and that sort of thing. I told you before, you were too kind to Mr. Smirke."

But Helen did not think so: and now that Arthur was going away, and she bethought her how very polite Mr. Smirke had been; how he had gone on messages for her; how he had brought books and copied music; how he had taught Laura so many things, and given her so many kind presents, her heart smote her on account of her ingratitude towards the Curate; — so much so, that when he came down from study with Pen, and was hankering about the hall previous to his departure, she went out and shook hands with him with rather a blushing face, and begged him to come into her drawing-room, where she said they now never saw him. And as there was to be rather a good dinner that day, she invited Mr. Smirke to partake of it; and we may be sure that he was too happy to accept such a delightful summons.

Eased, by the above report, of all her former doubts and misgivings regarding the Curate, Helen was exceedingly kind and gracious to Mr. Smirke during dinner, redoubling her attentions, perhaps, because Major Pendennis was very high and reserved with his nephew's tutor. When Pendennis asked Smirke to drink wine, he addressed him as if he was a Sovereign speaking to a petty retainer, in a manner so condescending, that even Pen laughed at it, although quite ready, for his part, to be as conceited as most young men are.

But Smirke did not care for the impertinences of the Major so long as he had his hostess's kind behaviour; and he passed a delightful time by her side at table, exerting all his powers of conversation to please her, talking in a manner both clerical and worldly, about the Fancy Bazaar, and the Great Missionary Meeting, about the last new novel, and the Bishop's excellent sermon about the fashionable parties in London, an account of which he read in the newspapers — in fine, he

neglected no art, by which a College divine who has both sprightly and serious talents, a taste for the genteel, an irreproachable conduct, and a susceptible heart, will try and make himself agreeable to the person on whom he has fixed his affections.

Major Pendennis came yawning out of the dining-room very soon after his sister and little Laura had left the apartment. "What an unsufferable bore that man is, and how he did talk!" the Major said.

"He has been very good to Arthur, who is very fond of him," Mrs. Pendennis said — "I wonder who the Miss Thompson is whom he is going to marry?"

"I always thought the fellow was looking in another direction," said the Major.

"And in what?" asked Mrs. Pendennis quite innocently — "towards Myra Portman?"

"Towards Helen Pendennis, if you must know," answered her brother-in-law.

"Towards me! impossible!" Helen said, who knew perfectly well that such had been the case. "His marriage will be a very happy thing. I hope Arthur will not take too much wine."

Now Arthur, flushed with a good deal of pride at the privilege of having the keys of the cellar, and remembering that a very few more dinners would probably take place which he and his dear friend Smirke could share, had brought up a liberal supply of claret for the company's drinking, and when the elders with little Laura left him, he and the Curate began to pass the wine very freely.

One bottle speedily yielded up the ghost, another shed more than half its blood, before the two toppers had been much more than half an hour together — Pen, with a hollow laugh and voice, had drunk off one bumper to the falsehood of women, and had said sardonically, that wine at any rate was a mistress who never deceived, and was sure to give a man a welcome.

Smirke gently said that he knew for his part some women who were all truth and tenderness; and casting up his eyes towards the ceiling, and heaving a sigh as if evoking some being dear and unmentionable, he took up his glass and drained it, and the rosy liquor began to suffuse his face.

Pen trolled over some verses he had been making that morning, in which he informed himself that the woman who had slighted his passion could not be worthy to win it: that he was awaking from love's mad fever, and, of course, under these circumstances, proceeded to leave her, and to quit a heartless deceiver: that a name which had one day been famous in the land, might again be heard in it: and, that though he never should be the happy and careless boy he was but a few months since, or his heart be what it had been ere passion had filled it and grief had well-nigh killed it; that though to him personally death was as welcome as life, and that he would not hesitate to part with the latter, but for the love of one kind being whose happiness depended on his own — yet he hoped to show he was a man worthy of his race, and that one day the false one should be brought to know how great was the treasure and noble the heart which she had flung away.

Pen, we say, who was a very excitable person, rolled out these verses in his rich sweet voice, which trembled with emotion whilst our young poet spoke. He had a trick of blushing when in this excited state, and his large and honest grey eyes also exhibited proofs of a sensibility so genuine, hearty, and manly, that Miss Costigan, if she had a heart, must needs have softened towards him; and very likely she was, as he said, altogether unworthy of the affection which he lavished upon her.

The sentimental Smirke was caught by the emotion which agitated his young friend. He grasped Pen's hand over the dessert dishes and wine-glasses. He said the verses were beautiful: that Pen was a poet, a great poet, and likely by Heaven's permission to run a great career in the world. "Go on and prosper, dear Arthur," he cried; "the wounds under which at present you suffer are only temporary, and the very grief you endure will cleanse and strengthen your heart. I have always prophesied the greatest and brightest things of you, as soon as you have corrected some failings and weaknesses of character, which at present belong to you. But you will get over these, my boy; you will get over these; and when you are famous and celebrated, as I know you will be, will you remember your old tutor and the happy early days of your youth?"

Pen swore he would: with another shake of the hand across the glasses and apricots. "I shall never forget how kind you have been to me, Smirke," he said. "I don't know what I should have done without you. You are my best friend."

"Am I, really, Arthur?" said Smirke, looking through his spectacles; and his heart began to beat so that he thought Pen must almost hear it throbbing.

"My best friend, my friend for ever," Pen said. "God bless you, old boy," and he drank up the last glass of the second

bottle of the famous wine which his father had laid in, which his uncle had bought, which Lord Levant had imported, and which now, like a slave indifferent, was ministering pleasure to its present owner, and giving its young master delectation.

"We'll have another bottle, old boy," Pen said, "by Jove we will. Hurray! — claret goes for nothing. My uncle was telling me that he saw Sheridan drink five bottles at Brookes's, besides a bottle of Maraschino. This is some of the finest wine in England, he says. So it is, by Jove. There's nothing like it. Nunc vino pellite curas — cras ingens iterabimus aeq — fill your glass, Old Smirke, a hogshead of it won't do you any harm." And Mr. Pen began to sing the drinking song out of Der Freischuetz. The dining-room windows were open, and his mother was softly pacing on the lawn outside, while little Laura was looking at the sunset. The sweet fresh notes of the boy's voice came to the widow. It cheered her kind heart to hear him sing.

"You — you are taking too much wine, Arthur," Mr. Smirke said softly — "you are exciting yourself."

"No," said Pen, "women give headaches, but this don't. Fill your glass, old fellow, and let's drink — I say, Smirke, my boy — let's drink to her — your her, I mean, not mine, for whom I swear I'll care no more — no, not a penny — no, not a fig — no, not a glass of wine. Tell us about the lady, Smirke; I've often seen you sighing about her."

"Oh!" said Smirke — and his beautiful cambric shirt front and glistening studs heaved with the emotion which agitated his gentle and suffering bosom.

"Oh — what a sigh!" Pen cried, growing very hilarious; "fill, my boy, and drink the toast, you can't refuse a toast, no gentleman refuses a toast. Here's her health, and good luck to you, and may she soon be Mrs. Smirke."

"Do you say so?" Smirke said, all of a tremble. "Do you really say so, Arthur?"

"Say so; of course, I say so. Down with it. Here's Mrs. Smirke's good health: Hip, hip, hurray!"

Smirke convulsively gulped down his glass of wine, and Pen waved his over his head, cheering so as to make his mother and Laura wonder on the lawn, and his uncle, who was dozing over the paper in the drawing-room, start, and say to himself, "That boy's drinking too much." Smirke put down the glass.

"I accept the omen," gasped out the blushing Curate. "Oh my dear Arthur, you — you know her —"

"What — Myra Portman? I wish you joy; she's got a devilish large waist; but I wish you joy, old fellow."

"Oh, Arthur!" groaned the Curate again, and nodded his head, speechless.

"Beg your pardon — sorry I offended you — but she has got a large waist, you know — devilish large waist," Pen continued — the third bottle evidently beginning to act upon the young gentleman.

"It's not Miss Portman," the other said, in a voice of agony.

"Is it anybody at Chatteris or at Clapham? Somebody here? No — it ain't old Pybus? it can't be Miss Rolt at the Factory — she's only fourteen."

"It's somebody rather older than I am, Pen," the Curate cried, looking up at his friend, and then guiltily casting his eyes down into his plate.

Pen burst out laughing. "It's Madame Fribsby; by Jove, it's Madame Fribsby. Madame Frib. by the immortal Gods!"

The Curate could contain no more. "O Pen," he cried, "how can you suppose that any of those — of those more than ordinary beings you have named could have an influence upon this heart, when I have been daily in the habit of contemplating perfection! I may be insane, I may be madly ambitious, I may be presumptuous — but for two years my heart has been filled by one image, and has known no other idol. Haven't I loved you as a son, Arthur? — say, hasn't Charles Smirke loved you as a son?"

"Yes, old boy, you've been very good to me," Pen said, whose liking, however, for his tutor was not by any means of the filial kind.

"My means," rushed on Smirke, "are at present limited, I own, and my mother is not so liberal as might be desired; but what she has will be mine at her death. Were she to hear of my marrying a lady of rank and good fortune, my mother would be liberal, I am sure she would be liberal. Whatever I have or subsequently inherit — and it's five hundred a year at the very least — would be settled upon her and — and — and you at my death — that is"

"What the deuce do you mean? — and what have I to do with your money?" cried out Pen, in a puzzle.

"Arthur, Arthur!" exclaimed the other wildly; "you say I am your dearest friend — Let me be more. Oh, can't you see that the angelic being I love — the purest, the best of women — is no other than your dear, dear angel of a — mother."

"My mother!" cried out Arthur, jumping up and sober in a minute. "Pooh! damn it, Smirke, you must be mad — she's seven or eight years older than you are."

"Did you find that any objection?" cried Smirke piteously, and alluding, of course, to the elderly subject of Pen's own passion.

The lad felt the hint, and blushed quite red. "The cases are not similar, Smirke," he said, "and the allusion might have been spared. A man may forget his own rank and elevate any woman to it: but allow me to say our positions are very different."

"How do you mean, dear Arthur?" the Curate interposed sadly, cowering as he felt that his sentence was about to be read.

"Mean?" said Arthur. "I mean what I say. My tutor, I say my tutor, has no right to ask a lady of my mother's rank of life to marry him. It's a breach of confidence. I say it's a liberty you take, Smirke — it's a liberty. Mean, indeed!"

"O Arthur!" the Curate began to cry with clasped hands, and a scared face, but Arthur gave another stamp with his foot and began to pull at the bell. "Don't let's have any more of this. We'll have some coffee, if you please," he said with a majestic air; and the old butler entering at the summons, Arthur bade him to serve that refreshment.

John said he had just carried coffee into the drawing-room, where his uncle was asking for Master Arthur, and the old man gave a glance of wonder at the three empty claret-bottles. Smirke said he thought he'd — he'd rather not go into the drawing-room, on which Arthur haughtily said, "As you please," and called for Mr. Smirke's horse to be brought round. The poor fellow said he knew the way to the stable and would get his pony himself, and he went into the hall and sadly put on his coat and hat.

Pen followed him out uncovered. Helen was still walking up and down the soft lawn as the sun was setting, and the Curate took off his hat and bowed by way of farewell, and passed on to the door leading to the stable court, by which the pair disappeared. Smirke knew the way to the stable, as he said, well enough. He fumbled at the girths of the saddle, which Pen fastened for him, and put on the bridle and led the pony into the yard. The boy was touched by the grief which appeared in the other's face as he mounted. Pen held out his hand, and Smirke wrung it silently,

"I say, Smirke," he said in an agitated voice, "forgive me if I have said anything harsh — for you have always been very, very kind to me. But it can't be, old fellow, it can't be. Be a man. God bless you."

Smirke nodded his head silently, and rode out of the lodge-gate: and Pen looked after him for a couple of minutes, until he disappeared down the road, and the clatter of the pony's hoofs died away. Helen was still lingering on the lawn waiting until the boy came back — she put his hair off his forehead and kissed it fondly. She was afraid he had been drinking too much wine. Why had Mr. Smirke gone away without any tea?

He looked at her with a kind humour beaming in his eyes "Smirke is unwell," he said with a laugh. For a long while Hele had not seen the boy looking so cheerful. He put his arm round her waist, and walked her up and down the walk in front of the house. Laura began to drub on the drawing-room window and nod and laugh from it. "Come along, you two people," cried on Major Pendennis, "your coffee is getting quite cold."

When Laura was gone to bed, Pen, who was big with his secret, burst out with it, and described the dismal but ludicrous scene which had occurred. Helen heard of it with many blushes, which became her pale face very well, and a perplexity which Arthur roguishly enjoyed.

"Confound the fellow's impudence," Major Pendennis said as he took his candle, "where will the assurance of these people stop?" Pen and his mother had a long talk that night, full of love, confidence, and laughter, and the boy somehow slept more soundly and woke up more easily than he had done for many months before.

Before the great Mr. Dolphin quitted Chatteris, he not only made an advantageous engagement with Miss Fotheringay, but he liberally left with her a sum of money to pay off any debts which the little family might have contracted during their stay in the place, and which, mainly through the lady's own economy and management, were not considerable. The small account with the spirit merchant, which Major Pendennis had settled, was the chief of Captain Costigan's debts, and though the Captain at one time talked about repaying every farthing of the money, it never appears that he executed his menace, nor did the laws of honour in the least call upon him to accomplish that threat.

When Miss Costigan had seen all the outstanding bills paid to the uttermost shilling, she handed over the balance to her father, who broke out into hospitalities to all his friends, gave the little Creeds more apples and gingerbread than he

had ever bestowed upon them, so that the widow Creed ever after held the memory of her lodger in veneration, and the young ones wept bitterly when he went away; and in a word managed the money so cleverly that it was entirely expended before many days, and that he was compelled to draw upon Mr. Dolphin for a sum to pay for travelling expenses when the time of their departure arrived.

There was held at an inn in that county town a weekly meeting of a festive, almost a riotous character, of a society of gentlemen who called themselves the Buccaneers. Some of the choice spirits of Chatteris belonged to this cheerful club. Graves, the apothecary (than whom a better fellow never put a pipe in his mouth and smoked it), Smart, the talented and humorous portrait-painter of High Street, Croker, an excellent auctioneer, and the uncompromising Hicks, the able Editor for twenty-three years of the County Chronicle and Chatteris Champion, were amongst the crew of the Buccaneers, whom also Bingley, the manager, liked to join of a Saturday evening, whenever he received permission from his lady.

Costigan had been also an occasional Buccaneer. But a want of punctuality of payments had of late somewhat excluded him from the Society, where he was subject to disagreeable remarks from the landlord, who said that a Buccaneer who didn't pay his shot was utterly unworthy to be a Marine Bandit. But when it became known to the 'Ears, as the Clubbists called themselves familiarly, that Miss Fotheringay had made a splendid engagement, a great revolution of feeling took place in the Club regarding Captain Costigan. Solly, mine host of the Grapes (and I need not say, as worthy a fellow as ever stood behind a bar), told the gents in the Buccaneers' room one night how noble the Captain had behaved; having been round and paid off all his ticks in Chatteris, including his score of three pound fourteen here — and pronounced that Cos was a good feller, a gentleman at bottom, and he, Solly, had always said so, and finally worked upon the feelings of the Buccaneers to give the Captain a dinner.

The banquet took place on the last night of Costigan's stay at Chatteris, and was served in Solly's accustomed manner. As good a plain dinner of old English fare as ever smoked on a table was prepared by Mrs. Solly; and about eighteen gentlemen sate down to the festive board. Mr. Jubber (the eminent draper of High Street) was in the Chair, having the distinguished guest of the Club on his right. The able and consistent Hicks officiated as croupier on the occasion; most of the gentlemen of the Club were present, and H. Foker, Esq., and Spavin, Esq., friends of Captain Costigan, were also participators in the entertainment. The cloth having been drawn, the Chairman said, "Costigan, there is wine, if you like," but the Captain preferring punch, that liquor was voted by acclamation: and 'Non Nobis' having been sung in admirable style by Messrs. Bingley, Hicks, and Bullby (of the Cathedral choir, than whom a more jovial spirit "ne'er tossed off a bumper or emptied a bowl"), the Chairman gave the health of the 'King!' which was drunk with the loyalty of Chatteris men, and then without further circumlocution proposed their friend 'Captain Costigan.'

After the enthusiastic cheering which rang through old Chatteris had subsided, Captain Costigan rose in reply, and made a speech of twenty minutes, in which he was repeatedly overcome by his emotions.

The gallant Captain said he must be pardoned for incoherence, if his heart was too full to speak. He was quitting a city celebrated for its antiquities, its hospitalities, the beauty of its women, the manly fidelity, generosity, and joviality of its men. (Cheers.) He was going from that ancient and venerable city, of which while Mimoree held her sway, he should never think without the fondest emotion, to a methrawpolis where the talents of his daughter were about to have full play, and where he would watch over her like a guardian angel. He should never forget that it was at Chatteris she had acquired the skill which she was about to exercise in another sphere, and in her name and his own Jack Costigan thanked and blessed them. The gallant officer's speech was received with tremendous cheers.

Mr. Hicks, Croupier, in a brilliant and energetic manner, proposed Miss Fotheringay's health.

Captain Costigan returned thanks in a speech full of feeling and eloquence.

Mr. Jubber proposed the Drama and the Chatteris Theatre, and Mr. Bingley was about to rise but was prevented by Captain Costigan, who, as long connected with the Chatteris Theatre and on behalf of his daughter, thanked the company. He informed them that he had been in garrison, at Gibraltar, and at Malta, and had been at the taking of Flushing. The Duke of York was a patron of the Drama; he had the honour of dining with His Royal Highness and the Duke of Kent many times; and the former had justly been named the friend of the soldier. (Cheers.)

The Army was then proposed, and Captain Costigan returned thanks. In the course of the night he sang his well-known songs, 'The Deserter,' 'The Shan Van Voght,' 'The Little Pig under the Bed,' and 'The Vale of Avoca.' The evening was a great triumph for him — it ended. All triumphs and all evenings end. And the next day, Miss Costigan having taken

leave of all her friends, having been reconciled to Miss Rouncy, to whom she left a necklace and a white satin gown — the next day, he and Miss Costigan had places in the Competitor coach rolling by the gates of Fair Oaks Lodge — and Pendennis never saw them.

Tom Smith, the coachman, pointed out Fair Oaks to Mr. Costigan, who sat on the box smelling of rum-and-water — and the Captain said it was a poor place — and added, “Ye should see Castle Costigan, County Mayo, me boy,” — which Tom said he should like very much to see.

They were gone and Pen had never seen them! He only knew of their departure by its announcement in the county paper the next day: and straight galloped over to Chatteris to hear the truth of this news. They were gone indeed. A card of ‘Lodgings to let’ was placed in the dear little familiar window. He rushed up into the room and viewed it over. He sat ever so long in the old window-seat looking into the Dean’s garden: whence he and Emily had so often looked out together. He walked, with a sort of terror, into her little empty bedroom. It was swept out and prepared for new-comers. The glass which had reflected her fair face was shining ready for her successor. The curtains lay square folded on the little bed: he flung himself down and buried his head on the vacant pillow.

Laura had netted a purse into which his mother had put some sovereigns, and Pen had found it on his dressing-table that very morning. He gave one to the little servant who had been used to wait upon the Costigans, and another to the children, because they said they were very fond of her. It was but a few months back, yet what years ago it seemed since he had first entered that room! He felt that it was all done. The very missing her at the coach had something fatal in it. Blank, weary, utterly wretched and lonely the poor lad felt.

His mother saw she was gone by his look when he came home. He was eager to fly too now, as were other folks round about Chatteris. Poor Smirke wanted to go away from the sight of the syren widow. Foker began to think he had had enough of Baymouth, and that a few supper-parties at Saint Boniface would not be unpleasant. And Major Pendennis longed to be off, and have a little pheasant-shooting at Stillbrook, and get rid of all annoyances and tracasseries of the village. The widow and Laura nervously set about the preparation for Pen’s kit, and filled trunks with his books and linen. Helen wrote cards with the name of Arthur Pendennis, Esq., which were duly nailed on the boxes; and at which both she and Laura looked with tearful wistful eyes. It was not until long, long after he was gone, that Pen remembered how constant and tender the affection of these women had been, and how selfish his own conduct was.

A night soon comes, when the mail, with echoing horn and blazing lamps, stops at the lodge-gate of Fair Oaks, and Pen’s trunks and his uncle’s are placed on the roof of the carriage, into which the pair presently afterwards enter. Helen and Laura are standing by the evergreens of the shrubbery, their figures lighted up by the coach lamps; the guard cries all right: in another instant the carriage whirls onward; the lights disappear, and Helen’s heart and prayers go with them. Her sainted benedictions follow the departing boy. He has left the home-nest in which he has been chafing, and whither, after his very first flight, he returned bleeding and wounded; he is eager to go forth again, and try his restless wings.

How lonely the house looks without him! The corded trunks and book-boxes are there in his empty study. Laura asks leave to come and sleep in Helen’s room: and when she has cried herself to sleep there, the mother goes softly into Pen’s vacant chamber, and kneels down by the bed on which the moon is shining, and there prays for her boy, as mothers only know how to plead. He knows that her pure blessings are following him, as he is carried miles away.



CHAPTER XVIII

ALMA MATER

Every man, however brief or inglorious may have been his academical career, must remember with kindness and tenderness the old university comrades and days. The young man's life is just beginning: the boy's leading-strings are cut, and he has all the novel delights and dignities of freedom. He has no idea of cares yet, or of bad health, or of roguery, or poverty, or tomorrow's disappointment. The play has not been acted so often as to make him tired. Though the after drink, as we mechanically go on repeating it, is stale and bitter, how pure and brilliant was that first sparkling draught of pleasure! — How the boy rushes at the cup, and with what a wild eagerness he drains it! But old epicures who are cut off from the delights of the table, and are restricted to a poached egg and a glass of water, like to see people with good appetites; and, as the next best thing to being amused at a pantomime one's-self is to see one's children enjoy it, I hope there may be no degree of age or experience to which mortal may attain, when he shall become such a glum philosopher as not to be pleased by the sight of happy youth. Coming back a few weeks since from a brief visit to the University of Oxbridge, where my friend Mr. Arthur Pendennis passed some period of his life, I made the journey in the railroad by the side of a young fellow at present a student of Saint Boniface. He had got an exeat somehow, and was bent on a day's lark in London: he never stopped rattling and talking from the commencement of the journey until its close (which was a great deal too soon for me, for I never was tired of listening to the honest young fellow's jokes and cheery laughter); and when we arrived at the terminus nothing would satisfy him but a hansom cab, so that he might get into town the quicker, and plunge into the pleasures awaiting him there. Away the young lad went whirling, with joy lighting up his honest face; and as for the reader's humble servant, having but a small carpet-bag, I got up on the outside of the omnibus, and sate there very contentedly between a Jew-pedlar smoking bad cigars, and a gentleman's servant taking care of a poodle-dog, until we got our fated complement of passengers and boxes, when the coachman drove leisurely away. We weren't in a hurry to get to town. Neither one of us was particularly eager about rushing into that near smoking Babylon, or thought of dining at the Club that night, or dancing at the Casino. Yet a few years more, and my young friend of the railroad will be not a whit more eager.

There were no railroads made when Arthur Pendennis went to the famous University of Oxbridge; but he drove thither in a well-appointed coach, filled inside and out with dons, gownsmen, young freshmen about to enter, and their guardians, who were conducting them to the university. A fat old gentleman, in grey stockings, from the City, who sate by Major Pendennis inside the coach, having his pale-faced son opposite, was frightened beyond measure when he heard that the coach had been driven for a couple of stages by young Mr. Foker, of Saint Boniface College, who was the friend of all men, including coachmen, and could drive as well as Tom Hicks himself. Pen sate on the roof, examining coach, passengers, and country with great delight and curiosity. His heart jumped with pleasure as the famous university came in view, and the magnificent prospect of venerable towers and pinnacles, tall elms and shining river, spread before him.

Pen had passed a few days with his uncle at the Major's lodgings, in Bury Street, before they set out for Oxbridge. Major Pendennis thought that the lad's wardrobe wanted renewal; and Arthur was by no means averse to any plan which was to bring him new coats and waistcoats. There was no end to the sacrifices which the self-denying uncle made in the youth's behalf. London was awfully lonely. The Pall Mall pavement was deserted; the very red jackets had gone out of town. There was scarce a face to be seen in the bow-windows of the clubs. The Major conducted his nephew into one or two of those desert mansions, and wrote down the lad's name on the candidate-list of one of them; and Arthur's pleasure at this compliment on his guardian's part was excessive. He read in the parchment volume his name and titles, as 'Arthur Pendennis, Esquire, of Fair Oaks Lodge, — shire and Saint Boniface College, Oxbridge; proposed by Major Pendennis, and seconded by Viscount Colchicum,' with a thrill of intense gratification. "You will come in for ballot in about three years, by which time you will have taken your degree," the guardian said. Pen longed for the three years to be over, and surveyed the stucco-halls, and vast libraries, and drawing-rooms as already his own property. The Major laughed slyly to see the pompous airs of the simple young fellow as he strutted out of the building. He and Foker drove down in the latter's cab one day to the Grey Friars, and renewed acquaintance with some of their old comrades there. The boys came crowding up to the cab as it stood by the Grey Friars gates, where they were entering, and admired the chestnut horse, and the tights and

livery and gravity of Stoopid, the tiger. The bell for afternoon-school rang as they were swaggering about the play-ground talking to their old cronies. The awful Doctor passed into school with his grammar in his hand. Foker slunk away uneasily at his presence, but Pen went up blushing, and shook the dignitary by the hand. He laughed as he thought that well-remembered Latin Grammar had boxed his ears many a time. He was generous, good-natured, and, in a word, perfectly conceited and satisfied with himself.

Then they drove to the parental brew-house. Foker's Entire is composed in an enormous pile of buildings, not far from the Grey Friars, and the name of that well-known firm is gilded upon innumerable public-house signs, tenanted by its vassals in the neighbourhood; and the venerable junior partner and manager did honour to the young lord of the vats and his friend, and served them with silver flagons of brown-stout, so strong, that you would have thought, not only the young men, but the very horse Mr. Harry Foker drove, was affected by the potency of the drink, for he rushed home to the west-end of the town at a rapid pace, which endangered the pie-stalls and the women on the crossings, and brought the cab-steps into collision with the posts at the street corners, and caused Stoopid to swing fearfully on his board behind.

The Major was quite pleased when Pen was with his young acquaintance; listened to Mr. Foker's artless stories with the greatest interest; gave the two boys a fine dinner at a Covent Garden Coffee-house, whence they proceeded to the play; but was above all happy when Mr. and Lady Agnes Foker, who happened to be in London, requested the pleasure of Major Pendennis and Mr. Arthur Pendennis's company at dinner in Grosvenor Street. "Having obtained the entree into Lady Agnes Foker's house," he said to Pen with an affectionate solemnity which befitted the importance of the occasion, "it behoves you, my dear boy, to keep it. You must mind and never neglect to call in Grosvenor Street when you come to London. I recommend you to read up carefully, in Debrett, the alliances and genealogy of the Earls of Rosherville, and if you can, to make some trifling allusions to the family, something historical, neat, and complimentary, and that sort of thing, which you, who have a poetic fancy, can do pretty well. Mr. Foker himself is a worthy man, though not of high extraction or indeed much education. He always makes a point of having some of the family porter served round after dinner, which you will on no account refuse, and which I shall drink myself, though all beer disagrees with me confoundedly." And the heroic martyr did actually sacrifice himself, as he said he would, on the day when the dinner took place, and old Mr. Foker, at the head of his table, made his usual joke about Foker's Entire. We should all of us, I am sure, have liked to see the Major's grin, when the worthy old gentleman made his time-honoured joke.

Lady Agnes, who, wrapped up in Harry, was the fondest of mothers, and one of the most good-natured though not the wisest of women, received her son's friend with great cordiality: and astonished Pen by accounts of the severe course of studies which her darling boy was pursuing, and which she feared might injure his dear health. Foker the elder burst into a horse-laugh at some of these speeches, and the heir of the house winked his eye very knowingly at his friend. And Lady Agnes then going through her son's history from the earliest time, and recounting his miraculous sufferings in the measles and hooping-cough, his escape from drowning, the shocking tyrannies practised upon him at that horrid school, whither Mr. Foker would send him because he had been brought up there himself, and she never would forgive that disagreeable Doctor, no never — Lady Agnes, we say, having prattled away for an hour incessantly about her son, voted the two Messieurs Pendennis most agreeable men; and when pheasants came with the second course, which the Major praised as the very finest birds he ever saw, her ladyship said they came from Logwood (as the Major knew perfectly well), and hoped that they would both pay her a visit there — at Christmas, or when dear Harry was at home for the vacations.

"God bless you, my dear boy," Pendennis said to Arthur, as they were lighting their candles in Bury Street afterwards to go to bed. "You made that little allusion to Agincourt, where one of the Roshervilles distinguished himself, very neatly and well, although Lady Agnes did not quite understand it: but it was exceedingly well for a beginner — though you oughtn't to blush so, by the way — and I beseech you, my dear Arthur, to remember through life, that with an entree — with a good entree, mind — it is just as easy for you to have good society as bad, and that it costs a man, when properly introduced, no more trouble or soins to keep a good footing in the best houses in London than to dine with a lawyer in Bedford Square. Mind this when you are at Oxbridge pursuing your studies, and for Heaven's sake be very particular in the acquaintances which you make. The premier pas in life is the most important of all — did you write to your mother today? — No? — well, do, before you go, and call and ask Mr. Foker for a frank — They like it — Good night. God bless you."

Pen wrote a droll account of his doings in London, and the play, and the visit to the old Friars, and the brewery, and the party at Mr. Foker's, to his dearest mother, who was saying her prayers at home in the lonely house at Fair Oaks, her heart full of love and tenderness unutterable for the boy: and she and Laura read that letter and those which followed,

many, many times, and brooded over them as women do. It was the first step in life that Pen was making — Ah! what a dangerous journey it is, and how the bravest may stumble and the strongest fail. Brother wayfarer! may you have a kind arm to support yours on the path, and a friendly hand to succour those who fall beside you. May truth guide, mercy forgive at the end, and love accompany always. Without that lamp how blind the traveller would be, and how black and cheerless the journey!

So the coach drove up to that ancient and comfortable inn the Trencher, which stands in Main Street, Oxbridge, and Pen with delight and eagerness remarked, for the first time, gownsmen going about, chapel bells clinking (bells in Oxbridge are ringing from morning-tide till even-song)— towers and pinnacles rising calm and stately over the gables and antique house-roofs of the homely busy city. Previous communications had taken place between Dr. Portman on Pen's part, and Mr. Buck, Tutor of Boniface, on whose side Pen was entered; and as soon as Major Pendennis had arranged his personal appearance, so that it should make a satisfactory impression upon Pen's tutor, the pair walked down Main Street, and passed the great gate and belfry-tower of Saint George's College, and so came, as they were directed, to Saint Boniface: where again Pen's heart began to beat as they entered at the wicket of the venerable ivy-mantled gate of the College. It is surmounted with an ancient dome almost covered with creepers, and adorned with the effigy of the Saint from whom the House takes its name, and many coats-of-arms of its royal and noble benefactors.

The porter pointed out a queer old tower at the corner of the quadrangle, by which Mr. Buck's rooms were approached, and the two gentlemen walked across the square, the main features of which were at once and for ever stamped in Pen's mind — the pretty fountain playing in the centre of the fair grass plats; the tall chapel windows and buttresses rising to the right; the hall with its tapering lantern and oriel window; the lodge, from the doors of which the Master issued with rustling silks; the lines of the surrounding rooms pleasantly broken by carved chimneys, grey turrets, and quaint gables — all these Mr. Pen's eyes drank in with an eagerness which belongs to first impressions; and Major Pendennis surveyed with that calmness which belongs to a gentleman who does not care for the picturesque, and whose eyes have been somewhat dimmed by the constant glare of the pavement of Pall Mall.

Saint George's is the great College of the University of Oxbridge, with its four vast quadrangles, and its beautiful hall and gardens, and the Georgians, as the men are called, wear gowns of a peculiar cut, and give themselves no small airs of superiority over all other young men. Little Saint Boniface is but a petty hermitage in comparison of the huge consecrated pile alongside of which it lies. But considering its size it has always kept an excellent name in the university. Its tone is very good: the best families of certain counties have time out of mind sent up their young men to Saint Boniface: the college livings are remarkably good: the fellowships easy; the Boniface men had had more than their fair share of university honours; their boat was third upon the river; their chapel-choir is not inferior to Saint George's itself; and the Boniface ale the best in Oxbridge. In the comfortable old wainscoted College-Hall, and round about Roubilliac's statue of Saint Boniface (who stands in an attitude of seraphic benediction over the uncommonly good cheer of the fellows' table) there are portraits of many most eminent Bonifacians. There is the learned Doctor Griddle, who suffered in Henry VIII.'s time, and Archbishop Bush who roasted him — there is Lord Chief Justice Hicks — the Duke of St. David's, K.G., Chancellor of the University and Member of this College — Sprott the Poet, of whose fame the college is justly proud — Doctor Blogg, the late master, and friend of Doctor Johnson, who visited him at Saint Boniface — and other lawyers, scholars, and divines, whose portraiture looks from the walls, or whose coats-of-arms shine in emerald and ruby, gold and azure, in the tall windows of the refectory. The venerable cook of the college is one of the best artists in Oxbridge (his son took the highest honours in the other University of Camford), and the wine in the fellows' room has long been famed for its excellence and abundance.

Into this certainly not the least snugly sheltered arbour amongst the groves of Academe, Pen now found his way, leaning on his uncle's arm, and they speedily reached Mr. Buck's rooms, and were conducted into the apartment of that courteous gentleman.

He had received previous information from Dr. Portman regarding Pen, with respect to whose family, fortune, and personal merits the honest Doctor had spoken with no small enthusiasm. Indeed Portman had described Arthur to the tutor as "a young gentleman of some fortune and landed estate, of one of the most ancient families in the kingdom, and possessing such a character and genius as were sure, under the proper guidance, to make him a credit to the college and the university." Under such recommendations the tutor was, of course, most cordial to the young freshman and his guardian, invited the latter to dine in hall, where he would have the satisfaction of seeing his nephew wear his gown and eat his dinner for the first time, and requested the pair to take wine at his rooms after hall, and in consequence of the

highly favourable report he had received of Mr. Arthur Pendennis, said, he should be happy to give him the best set of rooms to be had in college — a gentleman-pensioner's set, indeed, which were just luckily vacant. So they parted until dinner-time, which was very near at hand, and Major Pendennis pronounced Mr. Buck to be uncommonly civil indeed. Indeed when a College Magnate takes the trouble to be polite, there is no man more splendidly courteous. Immersed in their books and excluded from the world by the gravity of their occupations, these reverend men assume a solemn magnificence of compliment in which they rustle and swell as in their grand robes of state. Those silks and brocades are not put on for all comers or every day.

When the two gentlemen had taken leave of the tutor in his study, and had returned to Mr. Buck's ante-room, or lecture-room, a very handsome apartment, turkey-carpeted, and hung with excellent prints and richly framed pictures, they found the tutor's servant already in waiting there, accompanied by a man with a bag full of caps and a number of gowns, from which Pen might select a cap and gown for himself, and the servant, no doubt, would get a commission proportionable to the service done by him. Mr. Pen was all in a tremor of pleasure as the bustling tailor tried on a gown and pronounced that it was an excellent fit; and then he put the pretty college cap on, in rather a dandified manner and somewhat on one side, as he had seen Fiddicombe, the youngest master at Grey Friars, wear it. And he inspected the entire costume with a great deal of satisfaction in one of the great gilt mirrors which ornamented Mr. Buck's lecture-room: for some of these college divines are no more above looking — glasses than a lady is, and look to the set of their gowns and caps quite as anxiously as folks do of the lovelier sex. The Major smiled as he saw the boy dandifying himself in the glass: the old gentleman was not displeased with the appearance of the comely lad.

Then Davis, the skip or attendant, led the way, keys in hand, across the quadrangle, the Major and Pen following him, the latter blushing, and pleased with his new academical habiliments, across the quadrangle to the rooms which were destined for the freshman; and which were vacated by the retreat of the gentleman-pensioner, Mr. Spicer. The rooms were very comfortable, with large cross beams, high wainscots, and small windows in deep embrasures. Mr. Spicer's furniture was there, and to be sold at a valuation, and Major Pendennis agreed on his nephew's behalf to take the available part of it, laughingly however declining (as, indeed, Pen did for his own part) six sporting prints, and four groups of opera-dancers with gauze draperies, which formed the late occupant's pictorial collection.

Then they went to hall, where Pen sate down and ate his commons with his brother freshmen, and the Major took his place at the high-table along with the college dignitaries and other fathers or guardians of youth, who had come up with their sons to Oxbridge; and after hall they went to Mr. Buck's to take wine; and after wine to chapel, where the Major sate with great gravity in the upper place, having a fine view of the Master in his carved throne or stall under the organ-loft, where that gentleman, the learned Doctor Donne, sate magnificent, with his great prayer-book before him, an image of statuesque piety and rigid devotion. All the young freshmen behaved with gravity and decorum, but Pen was shocked to see that atrocious little Foker, who came in very late, and half a dozen of his comrades in the gentlemen-pensioners' seats, giggling and talking as if they had been in so many stalls at the Opera. But these circumstances, it must be remembered, took place some years back, when William the Fourth was king. Young men are much better behaved now, and besides, Saint Boniface was rather a fast college.

Pen could hardly sleep at night in his bedroom at the Trencher: so anxious was he to begin his college life, and to get into his own apartments. What did he think about, as he lay tossing and awake? Was it about his mother at home; the pious soul whose life was bound up in his? Yes, let us hope he thought of her a little. Was it about Miss Fotheringay, and his eternal passion, which had kept him awake so many nights, and created such wretchedness and such longing? He had a trick of blushing, and if you had been in the room, and the candle had not been out, you might have seen the youth's countenance redden more than once, as he broke out into passionate incoherent exclamations regarding that luckless event of his life. His uncle's lessons had not been thrown away upon him; the mist of passion had passed from his eyes now, and he saw her as she was. To think that he, Pendennis, had been enslaved by such a woman, and then jilted by her! that he should have stooped so low, to be trampled on the mire! that there was a time in his life, and that but a few months back, when he was willing to take Costigan for his father-inlaw!

"Poor old Smirke!" Pen presently laughed out — "well, I'll write and try and console the poor old boy. He won't die of his passion, ha, ha!" The Major, had he been awake, might have heard a score of such ejaculations uttered by Pen as he lay awake and restless through the first night of his residence at Oxbridge.

It would, perhaps, have been better for a youth, the battle of whose life was going to begin on the morrow, to have

passed the eve in a fferent sort of vigil: but the world had got hold of Pen in the shape of his selfish old Mentor: and those who have any interest in his character must have perceived ere now, that this lad was very weak as well as very impetuous, very vain as well as very frank, and if of a generous disposition, not a little selfish in the midst of his profuseness, and also rather fickle, as all eager pursuers of self-gratification are.

The six months' passion had aged him very considerably. There was an immense gulf between Pen the victim of love, and Pen the innocent boy of eighteen, sighing after it: and so Arthur Pendennis had all the experience and superiority, besides that command which afterwards conceit and imperiousness of disposition gave him over the young men with whom he now began to live.

He and his uncle passed the morning with great satisfaction in making purchases for the better comfort of the apartments which the lad was about to occupy. Mr. Spicer's china and glass was in a dreadfully dismantled condition, his lamps smashed, and his bookcases by no means so spacious as those shelves which would be requisite to receive the contents of the boxes which were lying in the hall at Fair Oaks, and which were addressed to Arthur in the hand of poor Helen.

The boxes arrived in a few days, that his mother had packed with so much care. Pen was touched as he read the superscriptions in the dear well-known hand, and he arranged in their proper places all the books, his old friends, and all the linen and table-cloths which Helen had selected from the family stock, and all the jam-pots which little Laura had bound in straw, and the hundred simple gifts of home. Pen had another Alma Mater now. But it is not all children who take to her kindly.



CHAPTER XIX

PENDENNIS OF BONIFACE

Our friend Pen was not sorry when his Mentor took leave of the young gentleman on the second day after the arrival of the pair in Oxbridge, and we may be sure that the Major on his part was very glad to have discharged his duty, and to have the duty over. More than three months of precious time had that martyr of a Major given up to his nephew — Was ever selfish man called upon to make a greater sacrifice? Do you know many men or Majors who would do as much? A man will lay down his head, or peril his life for his honour, but let us be shy how we ask him to give up his ease or his heart's desire. Very few of us can bear that trial. Say, worthy reader, if thou hast peradventure a beard, wouldst thou do as much? I will not say that a woman will not. They are used to it: we take care to accustom them to sacrifices but, my good sir, the amount of self-denial which you have probably exerted through life, when put down to your account elsewhere, will not probably swell the balance on the credit side much. Well, well, there is no use in speaking of such ugly matters, and you are too polite to use a vulgar to quoque. But I wish to state once for all that I greatly admire the Major for his conduct during the past quarter, and think that he has quite a right to be pleased at getting a holiday. Foker and Pen saw him off in the coach, and the former young gentleman gave particular orders to the coachman to take care of that gentleman inside. It pleased the elder Pendennis to have his nephew in the company of a young fellow who would introduce him to the best set of the university. The Major rushed off to London and thence to Cheltenham, from which Watering-place he descended upon some neighbouring great houses, whereof the families were not gone abroad, and where good shooting and company was to be had.

A quarter of the space which custom has awarded to works styled the Serial Nature, has been assigned to the account of one passage in Pen's career, and it is manifest that the whole of his adventures cannot be treated at a similar length, unless some descendant of the chronicler of Pen's history should take up the pen at his decease, and continue the narrative for the successors of the present generation of readers. We are not about to go through the young fellow's academical career with, by any means, a similar minuteness. Alas, the life of such boys does not bear telling altogether. I wish it did. I ask you, does yours? As long as what we call our honour is clear, I suppose your mind is pretty easy. Women are pure, but not men. Women are unselfish, but not men. And I would not wish to say of poor Arthur Pendennis that he was worse than his neighbours, only that his neighbours are bad for the most part. Let us have the candour to own as much at least. Can you point out ten spotless men of your acquaintance? Mine is pretty large, but I can't find ten saints in the list.

During the first term of Mr. Pen's academical life, he attended classical and mathematical lectures with tolerable assiduity; but discovering before very long time that he had little taste or genius for the pursuing of the exact sciences, and being perhaps rather annoyed that one or two very vulgar young men, who did not even use straps to their trousers so as to cover the abominably thick and coarse shoes and stockings which they wore, beat him completely in the lecture-room, he gave up his attendance at that course, and announced to his fond parent that he proposed to devote himself exclusively to the cultivation of Greek and Roman Literature.

Mrs. Pendennis was, for her part, quite satisfied that her darling boy should pursue that branch of learning for which he had the greatest inclination; and only besought him not to ruin his health by too much study, for she had heard the most melancholy stories of young students who, by over-fatigue, had brought on brain-fevers and perished untimely in the midst of their university career. And Pen's health, which was always delicate, was to be regarded, as she justly said, beyond all considerations or vain honours. Pen, although not aware of any lurking disease which was likely to end his life, yet kindly promised his mamma not to sit up reading too late of nights, and stuck to his word in this respect with a great deal more tenacity of resolution than he exhibited upon some other occasions, when perhaps he was a little remiss.

Presently he began too to find that he learned little good in the classical lecture. His fellow-students there were too dull, as in mathematics they were too learned for him. Mr. Buck, the tutor, was no better a scholar than many a fifth-form boy at Grey Friars; might have some stupid humdrum notions about the metre and grammatical construction of a passage of Aeschylus or Aristophanes, but had no more notion of the poetry than Mrs. Binge, his bed-maker; and Pen grew weary of hearing the dull students and tutor blunder through a few lines of a play, which he could read in a tenth part of the time which they gave to it. After all, private reading, as he began to perceive, was the only study which was really profitable to a

man; and he announced to his mamma that he should read by himself a great deal more, and in public a great deal less. That excellent woman knew no more about Homer than she did about Algebra, but she was quite contented with Pen's arrangements regarding his course of studies, and felt perfectly confident that her dear boy would get the place which he merited.

Pen did not come home until after Christmas, a little to the fond mother's disappointment, and Laura's, who was longing for him to make a fine snow fortification, such as he had made three winters before. But he was invited to Logwood, Lady Agnes Foker's, where there were private theatricals, and a gay Christmas party of very fine folks, some of them whom Major Pendennis would on no account have his nephew neglect. However, he stayed at home for the last three weeks of the vacation, and Laura had the opportunity of remarking what a quantity of fine new clothes he brought with him, and his mother admired his improved appearance and manly and decided tone.

He did not come home at Easter; but when he arrived for the long vacation, he brought more smart clothes; appearing in the morning in wonderful shooting jackets, with remarkable buttons; and in the evening in gorgeous velvet waistcoats, with richly-embroidered cravats, and curious linen. And as she pried about his room, she saw, oh, such a beautiful dressing-case, with silver mountings, and a quantity of lovely rings and jewellery. And he had a new French watch and gold chain, in place of the big old chronometer, with its bunch of jingling seals, which had hung from the fob of John Pendennis, and by the second-hand of which the defunct doctor had felt many a patient's pulse in his time. It was but a few months back Pen had longed for this watch, which he thought the most splendid and august timepiece in the world; and just before he went to college, Helen had taken it out of her trinket-box (where it had remained unwound since the death of her husband) and given it to Pen with a solemn and appropriate little speech respecting his father's virtues and the proper use of time. This portly and valuable chronometer Pen now pronounced to be out of date, and, indeed, made some comparisons between it and a warming-pan, which Laura thought disrespectful, and he left the watch in a drawer, in the company of soiled primrose gloves, cravats which had gone out of favour, and of that other school watch which has once before been mentioned in this history. Our old friend, Rebecca, Pen pronounced to be no long up to his weight, and swapped her away for another and more powerful horse, for which he had to pay rather a heavy figure. Mr. Pendennis gave the boy the money for the new horse; and Laura cried when Rebecca was fetched away.

Also Pen brought a large box of cigars branded Colorados, Afrancesados, Telescopios, Fudson Oxford Street, or by some such strange titles, and began to consume these not only about the stables and green-houses, where they were very good for Helen's plants, but in his own study, of which practice his mother did not at first approve. But he was at work upon a prize-poem, he said, and could not compose without his cigar, and quoted the late lamented Lord Byron's lines in favour of the custom of smoking. As he was smoking to such good purpose, his mother could not of course refuse permission: in fact, the good soul coming into the room one day in the midst of Pen's labours (he was consulting a novel which had recently appeared, for the cultivation of the light literature of his own country as well as of foreign nations became every student)—Helen, we say, coming into the room and finding Pen on the sofa at this work, rather than disturb him went for a light-box and his cigar-case to his bedroom which was adjacent, and actually put the cigar into his mouth and lighted the match at which he kindled it. Pen laughed, and kissed his mother's hand as it hung fondly over the back of the sofa. "Dear old mother," he said, "if I were to tell you to burn the house down, I think you would do it." And it is very likely that Mr. Pen was right, and that the foolish woman would have done almost as much for him as he said.

Besides the works of English "light literature" which this diligent student devoured, he brought down boxes of the light literature of the neighbouring country of France: into the leaves of which when Helen dipped, she read such things as caused her to open her eyes with wonder. But Pen showed her that it was not he who made the books, though it was absolutely necessary that he should keep up his French by an acquaintance with the most celebrated writers of the day, and that it was as clearly his duty to read the eminent Paul de Kock, as to study Swift or Moliere. And Mrs. Pendennis yielded with a sigh of perplexity. But Miss Laura was warned off the books, both by his anxious mother, and that rigid moralist Mr. Arthur Pendennis himself, who, however he might be called upon to study every branch of literature in order to form his mind and to perfect his style, would by no means prescribe such a course of reading to a young lady whose business in life was very different.

In the course of this long vacation Mr. Pen drank up the bin of claret which his father had laid in, and of which we have heard the son remark that there was not a headache in a hogshead; and this wine being exhausted, he wrote for a further supply to "his wine merchants," Messrs. Binney and Latham of Mark Lane, London: from whom, indeed, old

Doctor Portman had recommended Pen to get a supply of port and sherry on going to college. "You will have, no doubt, to entertain your young friends at Boniface with wine-parties," the honest rector had remarked to the lad. "They used to be customary at college in my time, and I would advise you to employ an honest and respectable house in London for your small stock of wine, rather than to have recourse to the Oxbridge tradesmen, whose liquor, if I remember rightly, was both deleterious in quality and exorbitant in price." And the obedient young gentleman took the Doctor's advice, and patronised Messrs. Binney and Latham at the rector's suggestion.

So when he wrote orders for a stock of wine to be sent down to the cellars at Fair Oaks, he hinted that Messrs. B. and L. might send in his university account for wine at the same time with the Fair Oaks bill. The poor widow was frightened at the amount. But Pen laughed at her old-fashioned views, said that the bill was moderate, that everybody drank claret and champagne now, and, finally, the widow paid, feeling dimly that the expenses of her household were increasing considerably, and that her narrow income would scarce suffice to meet them. But they were only occasional. Pen merely came home for a few weeks at the vacation. Laura and she might pinch when he was gone. In the brief time he was with them, ought they not to make him happy?

Arthur's own allowances were liberal all this time; indeed, much more so than those of the sons of far more wealthy men. Years before, the thrifty and affectionate John Pendennis, whose darling project it had ever been to give his son a university education, and those advantages of which his own father's extravagance had deprived him, had begun laying by a store of money which he called Arthur's Education Fund. Year after year in his book his executors found entries of sums vested as A. E. F., and during the period subsequent to her husband's decease, and before Pen's entry at college, the widow had added sundry sums to this fund, so that when Arthur went up to Oxbridge it reached no inconsiderable amount. Let him be liberally allowanced, was Major Pendennis's maxim. Let him make his first entree into the world as a gentleman, and take his place with men of good rank and station: after giving it to him, it will be his own duty to hold it. There is no such bad policy as stinting a boy — or putting him on a lower allowance than his fellows. Arthur will have to face the world and fight for himself presently. Meanwhile we shall have procured for him good friends, gentlemanly habits, and have him well backed and well trained against the time when the real struggle comes. And these liberal opinions the Major probably advanced both because they were just, and because he was not dealing with his own money.

Thus young Pen, the only son of an estated country gentleman, with a good allowance, and a gentlemanlike bearing and person, looked to be a lad of much more consequence than he was really; and was held by the Oxbridge authorities, tradesmen, and undergraduates, as quite a young buck and member of the aristocracy. His manner was frank, brave, and perhaps a little impertinent, as becomes a high-spirited youth. He was perfectly generous and free-handed with his money, which seemed pretty plentiful. He loved joviality, and had a good voice for a song. Boat-racing had not risen in Pen's time to the fureur which, as we are given to understand, it has since attained in the university; and riding and tandem-driving were the fashions of the ingenuous youth. Pen rode well to hounds, appeared in pink, as became a young buck, and, not particularly extravagant in equestrian or any other amusement, yet managed to run up a fine bill at Nile's, the livery-stable keeper, and in a number of other quarters. In fact, this lucky young gentleman had almost every taste to a considerable degree. He was very fond of books of all sorts: Doctor Portman had taught him to like rare editions, and his own taste led him to like beautiful bindings. It was marvellous what tall copies, and gilding, and marbling, and blind-tooling, the booksellers and binders put upon Pen's bookshelves. He had a very fair taste in matters of art, and a keen relish for prints of a high school — none of your French Opera Dancers, or tawdry Racing Prints, such as had delighted the simple eyes of Mr. Spicer, his predecessor — but your Stranges, and Rembrandt etchings, and Wilkies before the letter, with which his apartments were furnished presently in the most perfect good taste, as was allowed in the university, where this young fellow got no small reputation. We have mentioned that he exhibited a certain partiality for rings, jewellery, and fine raiment of all sorts; and it must be owned that Mr. Pen, during his time at the university, was rather a dressy man, and loved to array himself in splendour. He and his polite friends would dress themselves out with as much care in order to go and dine at each other's rooms, as other folks would who were going to enslave a mistress. They said he used to wear rings over his kid gloves, which he always denies; but what follies will not youth perpetrate with its own admirable gravity and simplicity? That he took perfumed baths is a truth; and he used to say that he took them after meeting certain men of a very low set in hall.

In Pen's second year, when Miss Fotheringay made her chief hit in London, and scores of prints were published of her, Pen had one of these hung in his bedroom, and confided to the men of his set how awfully, how wildly, how madly, how

passionately, he had loved that woman. He showed them in confidence the verses that he had written to her, and his brow would darken, his eyes roll, his chest heave with emotion as he recalled that fatal period of his life, and described the woes and agonies which he had suffered. The verses were copied out, handed about, sneered at, admired, passed from coterie to coterie. There are few things which elevate a lad in the estimation of his brother boys, more than to have a character for a great and romantic passion. Perhaps there is something noble in it at all times — among very young men it is considered heroic — Pen was pronounced a tremendous fellow. They said he had almost committed suicide: that he had fought a duel with a baronet about her. Freshmen pointed him out to each other. As at the promenade time at two o'clock he swaggered out of college, surrounded by his cronies, he was famous to behold. He was elaborately attired. He would ogle the ladies who came to lionise the university, and passed before him on the arms of happy gownsmen, and give his opinion upon their personal charms, or their toilettes, with the gravity of a critic whose experience entitled him to speak with authority. Men used to say that they had been walking with Pendennis, and were as pleased to be seen in his company as some of us would be if we walked with a duke down Pall Mall. He and the Proctor capped each other as they met, as if they were rival powers, and the men hardly knew which was the greater.

In fact, in the course of his second year, Arthur Pendennis had become one of the men of fashion in the university. It is curious to watch that facile admiration, and simple fidelity of youth. They hang round a leader; and wonder at him, and love him, and imitate him. No generous boy ever lived, I suppose, that has not had some wonderment of admiration for another boy; and Monsieur Pen at Oxbridge had his school, his faithful band of friends and his rivals. When the young men heard at the haberdashers' shops that Mr. Pendennis, of Boniface, had just ordered a crimson satin-cravat, you would see a couple of dozen crimson satin cravats in Main Street in the course of the week — and Simon, the Jeweller, was known to sell no less than two gross of Pendennis pins, from a pattern which the young gentleman had selected in his shop.

Now if any person with an arithmetical turn of mind will take the trouble to calculate what a sum of money it would cost a young man to indulge freely in all the above propensities which we have said Mr. Pen possessed, it will be seen that a young fellow, with such liberal tastes and amusements, must needs in the course of two or three years spend or owe a very handsome sum of money. We have said our friend Pen had not a calculating turn. No one propensity of his was outrageously extravagant; and it is certain that Paddington's tailor's account; Guttlebury's cook's bill for dinners; Dillon Tandy's bill with Finn, the print seller, for Raphael-Morgheus and Landseer proofs, and Wormall's dealings with Parkton, the great bookseller, for Aldine editions, black-letter folios, and richly illuminated Missals of the XVI. Century; and Snaffle's or Foker's score with Nile the horsedealer, were, each and all of them, incomparably greater than any little bills which Mr. Pen might run up with the above-mentioned tradesmen. But Pendennis of Boniface had the advantage over all these young gentlemen, his friends and associates, of a universality of taste: and whereas young Lord Paddington did not care twopence for the most beautiful print, or to look into any gilt frame that had not a mirror within it; and Guttlebury did not mind in the least how he was dressed, and had an aversion for horse exercise, nay a terror of it; and Snaffle never read any printed works but the 'Racing Calendar' or 'Bell's Life,' or cared for any manuscript except his greasy little scrawl of a betting-book:— our Catholic-minded young friend occupied himself in every one of the branches of science or pleasure above-mentioned, and distinguished himself tolerably in each.

Hence young Pen got a prodigious reputation in the university, and was hailed as a sort of Crichton; and as for the English verse prize, in competition for which we have seen him busily engaged at Fair Oaks, Jones of Jesus carried it that year certainly, but the undergraduates thought Pen's a much finer poem, and he had his verses printed at his own expense, and distributed in gilt morocco covers amongst his acquaintance. I found a copy of it lately in a dusty corner of Mr. Pen's bookcases, and have it before me this minute, bound up in a collection of old Oxbridge tracts, university statutes, prize-poems by successful and unsuccessful candidates, declamations recited in the college chapel, speeches delivered at the Union Debating Society, and inscribed by Arthur with his name and college, Pendennis — Boniface; or presented to him by his affectionate friend Thompson or Jackson, the author. How strange the epigraphs look in those half-boyish hands, and what a thrill the sight of the documents gives one after the lapse of a few lustres! How fate, since that time, has removed some, estranged others, dealt awfully with all! Many a hand is cold that wrote those kindly memorials, and that we pressed in the confident and generous grasp of youthful friendship. What passions our friendships were in those old days, how artless and void of doubt! How the arm you were never tired of having linked in yours under the fair college avenues or by the river side, where it washes Magdalen Gardens, or Christ Church Meadows, or winds by Trinity and King's, was withdrawn of necessity, when you entered presently the world, and each parted to push and struggle for himself through

the great mob on the way through life! Are we the same men now that wrote those inscriptions — that read those poems? that delivered or heard those essays and speeches so simple, so pompous, so ludicrously solemn; parodied so artlessly from books, and spoken with smug chubby faces, and such an admirable aping of wisdom and gravity? Here is the book before me: it is scarcely fifteen years old. Here is Jack moaning with despair and Byronic misanthropy, whose career at the university was one of unmixed milk-punch. Here is Tom's daring Essay in defence of suicide and of republicanism in general, apropos of the death of Roland and the Girondins — Tom's, who wears the starchiest tie in all the diocese, and would go to Smithfield rather than eat a beefsteak on a Friday in Lent. Here is Bob of the — Circuit, who has made a fortune in Railroad Committees, and whose dinners are so good — bellowing out with Tancred and Godfrey, "On to the breach, ye soldiers of the cross, Scale the red wall and swim the choking foss. Ye dauntless archers, twang your cross-bows well; On, bill and battle-axe and mangonel! Ply battering-ram and hurtling catapult, Jerusalem is ours — id Deus vult." After which comes a mellifluous description of the gardens of Sharon and the maids of Salem, and a prophecy that roses shall deck the entire country of Syria, and a speedy reign of peace be established — all in undeniably decasyllabic lines, and the queerest aping of sense and sentiment and poetry. And there are Essays and Poems along with these grave parodies, and boyish exercises (which are at once so frank and false and mirthful, yet, somehow, so mournful) by youthful hands, that shall never write more. Fate has interposed darkly, and the young voices are silent, and the eager brains have ceased to work. This one had genius and a great descent, and seemed to be destined for honours which now are of little worth to him: that had virtue, learning, genius — every faculty and endowment which might secure love, admiration, and worldly fame: an obscure and solitary churchyard contains the grave of many fond hopes, and the pathetic stone which bids them farewell — I saw the sun shining on it in the fall of last year, and heard the sweet village choir raising anthems round about. What boots whether it be Westminster or a little country spire which covers your ashes, or if, a few days sooner or later, the world forgets you?

Amidst these friends, then, and a host more, Pen passed more than two brilliant and happy years of his life. He had his fill of pleasure and popularity. No dinner — or supper-party was complete without him; and Pen's jovial wit, and Pen's songs, and dashing courage and frank and manly bearing, charmed all the undergraduates, and even disarmed the tutors who cried out at his idleness, and murmured about his extravagant way of life. Though he became the favourite and leader of young men who were much his superiors in wealth and station, he was much too generous to endeavour to propitiate them by any meanness or cringing on his own part, and would not neglect the humblest man of his acquaintance in order to curry favour with the richest young grandee in the university. His name is still remembered at the Union Debating Club, as one of the brilliant orators of his day. By the way, from having been an ardent Tory in his freshman's year, his principles took a sudden turn afterwards, and he became a liberal of the most violent order. He avowed himself a Dantonist, and asserted that Louis the Sixteenth was served right. And as for Charles the First, he vowed that he would chop off that monarch's head with his own right hand were he then in the room at the Union Debating Club, and had Cromwell no other executioner for the traitor. He and Lord Magnus Charters, the Marquis of Runnymede's son, before-mentioned, were the most truculent republicans of their day.

There are reputations of this sort made, quite independent of the collegiate hierarchy, in the republic of gownsmen. A man may be famous in the Honour-lists and entirely unknown to the undergraduates: who elect kings and chieftains of their own, whom they admire and obey, as negro-gangs have private black sovereigns in their own body, to whom they pay an occult obedience, besides that which they publicly profess for their owners and drivers. Among the young ones Pen became famous and popular: not that he did much, but there was a general determination that he could do a great deal if he chose. "Ah, if Pendennis of Boniface would but try," the men said, "he might do anything." He was backed for the Greek Ode won by Smith of Trinity; everybody was sure he would have the Latin hexameter prize which Brown of St. John's, however, carried off, and in this way one university honour after another was lost by him, until, after two or three failures, Mr. Pen ceased to compete. But he got a declamation prize in his own college, and brought home to his mother and Laura at Fair Oaks a set of prize-books begilt with the college arms, and so big, well-bound, and magnificent, that these ladies thought there had been no such prize ever given in a college before as this of Pen's, and that he had won the very largest honour which Oxbridge was capable of awarding.

As vacation after vacation and term after term passed away without the desired news that Pen had sate for any scholarship or won any honour, Doctor Portman grew mightily gloomy in his behaviour towards Arthur, and adopted a sulky grandeur of deportment towards him, which the lad returned by a similar haughtiness. One vacation he did not call

upon the Doctor at all, much to his mother's annoyance, who thought that it was a privilege to enter the Rectory-house at Clavering, and listened to Dr. Portman's antique jokes and stories, though ever so often repeated, with unflinching veneration. "I cannot stand the Doctor's patronising air", Pen said. "He's too kind to me, a great deal fatherly. I have seen in the world better men than him, and am not going to bore myself by listening to his dull old stories and drinking his stupid old port wine." The tacit feud between Pen and the Doctor made the widow nervous, so that she too avoided Portman, and was afraid to go to the Rectory when Arthur was at home.

One Sunday in the last long vacation, the wretched boy pushed his rebellious spirit so far as not to go to church, and he was seen at the gate of the Clavering Arms smoking a cigar, in the face of the congregation as it issued from St. Mary's. There was an awful sensation in the village society, Portman prophesied Pen's ruin after that, and groaned in spirit over the rebellious young prodigal.

So did Helen tremble in her heart, and little Laura — Laura had grown to be a fine young stripling by this time, graceful and fair, clinging round Helen and worshipping her, with a passionate affection. Both of these women felt that their boy was changed. He was no longer the artless Pen of old days, so brave, so artless, so impetuous, and tender. His face looked careworn and haggard, his voice had a deeper sound, and tones more sarcastic. Care seemed to be pursuing him; but he only laughed when his mother questioned him, and parried her anxious queries with some scornful jest. Nor did he spend much of his vacations at home; he went on visits to one great friend or another, and scared the quiet pair at Fair Oaks by stories of great houses whither he had been invited; and by talking of lords without their titles.

Honest Harry Foker, who had been the means of introducing Arthur Pendennis to that set of young men at the university, from whose society and connexions Arthur's uncle expected that the lad would get so much benefit; who had called for Arthur's first song at his first supper-party; and who had presented him at the Barmecide Club, where none but the very best men of Oxbridge were admitted (it consisted in Pen's time of six noblemen, eight gentlemen-pensioners, and twelve of the most select commoners of the university), soon found himself left far behind by the young freshman in the fashionable world of Oxbridge, and being a generous and worthy fellow, without a spark of envy in his composition, was exceedingly pleased at the success of his young protegee, and admired Pen quite as much as any of the other youth did. I was he who followed Pen now, and quoted his sayings; learned his songs, and retailed them at minor supper-parties, and was never weary of hearing them from the gifted young poet's own mouth — for a good deal of the time which Mr. Pen might have employed much more advantageously in the pursuit of the regular scholastic studies, was given up to the composition of secular ballads, which he sang about at parties according to university wont.

It had been as well for Arthur if the honest Foker had remained for some time at college, for, with all his vivacity, he was a prudent young man, and often curbed Pen's propensity to extravagance: but Foker's collegiate career did not last very long after Arthur's entrance at Boniface. Repeated differences with the university authorities caused Mr. Foker to quit Oxbridge in an untimely manner. He would persist in attending races on the neighbouring Hungerford Heath, in spite of the injunctions of his academic superiors. He never could be got to frequent the chapel of the college with that regularity of piety which Alma Mater demands from her children; tandems, which are abominations in the eyes of the heads and tutors, were Foker's greatest delight, and so reckless was his driving and frequent the accidents and upsets out of his drag, that Pen called taking a drive with him taking the "Diversions of Purley;" finally, having a dinner-party at his rooms to entertain some friends from London, nothing would satisfy Mr. Foker but painting Mr. Buck's door vermilion, in which freak he was caught by the proctors; and although young Black Strap, the celebrated negro fighter, who was one of Mr. Foker's distinguished guests, and was holding the can of paint while the young artist operated on the door, knocked down two of the proctor's attendants and performed prodigies of valour, yet these feats rather injured than served Foker, whom the proctor knew very well and who was taken with the brush in his hand, and who was summarily convened and sent down from the university.

The tutor wrote a very kind and feeling letter to Lady Agnes on the subject, stating that everybody was fond of the youth; that he never meant harm to any mortal creature; that he for his own part would have been delighted to pardon the harmless little boyish frolic, had not its unhappy publicity rendered it impossible to look the freak over, and breathing the most fervent wishes for the young fellow's welfare — wishes no doubt sincere, for Foker, as we know, came of a noble family on his mother's side, and on the other was heir to a great number of thousand pounds a year.

"It don't matter," said Foker, talking over the matter with Pen — "a little sooner or a little later, what is the odds? I should have been plucked for my little-go again, I know I should — that Latin I cannot screw into my head, and my

mamma's anguish would have broke out next term. The Governor will blow like an old grampus, I know he will — well, we must stop till he gets his wind again. I shall probably go abroad and improve my mind with foreign travel. Yes, parly-voo's the ticket. It'll, and that sort of thing. I'll go to Paris and learn to dance and complete my education. But it's not me I'm anxious about, Pen. As long as people drink beer I don't care — it's about you I'm doubtful, my boy. You're going too fast, and can't keep up the pace, I tell you. It's not the fifty you owe me — pay it or not when you like — but it's the every-day pace, and I tell you it will kill you. You're livin' as if there was no end to the money in the stockin' at home. You oughtn't to give dinners, you ought to eat 'em. Fellows are glad to have you. You oughtn't to owe horse bills, you ought to ride other chaps' nags. You know no more about betting than I do about Algebra: the chaps will win your money as sure as you sport it. Hang me if you are not trying everything. I saw you sit down to ecarte last week at Trumpington's, and taking your turn with the bones after Ringwood's supper. They'll beat you at it, Pen, my boy, even if they play on the square, which. I don't say they don't, nor which I don't say they do, mind. But I won't play with 'em. You're no match for 'em. You ain't up to their weight. It's like little Black Strap standing up to Tom Spring — the Black's a pretty fighter but, Law bless you, his arm ain't long enough to touch Tom — and I tell you, you're going it with fellers beyond your weight. Look here — If you'll promise me never to bet nor touch a box nor a card, I'll let you off the two ponies."

But Pen, laughingly, said, "that though it wasn't convenient to him to pay the two ponies at that moment, he by no means wished to be let off any just debts he owed;" and he and Foker parted, not without many dark forebodings on the latter's part with regard to his friend, who Harry thought was travelling speedily on the road to ruin.

"One must do at Rome as Rome does," Pen said, in a dandified manner, jingling some sovereigns in his waistcoat-pocket. "A little quiet play at ecarte can't hurt a man who plays pretty well — I came away fourteen sovereigns richer from Ringwood's supper, and, gad! I wanted the money." — And he walked off, after having taken leave of poor Foker, who went away without any beat of drum, or offer to drive the coach out of Oxbridge, to superintend a little dinner which he was going to give at his own rooms in Boniface, about which dinners, the cook of the college, who had a great respect for Mr. Pendennis, always took especial pains for his young favourite.



CHAPTER XX

RAKE'S PROGRESS

Some short time before Mr. Foker's departure from Oxbridge, there had come up to Boniface a gentleman who had once, as it turned out, belonged to the other University of Camford, which he had quitted on account of some differences with the tutors and authorities there. This gentleman, whose name was Horace Bloundell, was of the ancient Suffolk family of Bloundell-Bloundell, of Bloundell-Bloundell Hall, Bloundell-Bloundellshire, as the young wags used to call it; and no doubt it was on account of his descent, and because Dr. Donne, the Master of Boniface, was a Suffolk man, and related perhaps to the family, that Mr. Horace Bloundell was taken in at Boniface, after St. George's and one or two other Colleges had refused to receive him. There was a living in the family, which it was important for Mr. Bloundell to hold; and, being in a dragoon regiment at the time when his third brother, for whom the living was originally intended, sickened and died, Mr. Bloundell determined upon quitting crimson pantaloons and sable shakos, for the black coat and white neckcloth of the English divine. The misfortunes which occurred at Camford, occasioned some slight disturbance to Mr. Bloundell's plans; but although defeated upon one occasion, the resolute ex-draagoon was not dismayed, and set to work to win a victory elsewhere.

In Pen's second year Major Pendennis paid a brief visit to his nephew, and was introduced to several of Pen's university friends — the gentle and polite Lord Plinlimmon, the gallant and open-hearted Magnus Charters, the sly and witty Harland; the intrepid Ringwood, who was called Rupert in the Union Debating Club, from his opinions and the bravery of his blunders; Broadbent, styled Barebones Broadbent from the republican nature of his opinions (he was of a dissenting family from Bristol and a perfect Boanerges of debate); Mr. Bloundell-Bloundell finally, who had at once taken his place among the select of the university.

Major Pendennis, though he did not understand Harland's Greek quotations, or quite appreciate Broadbent's thick shoes and dingy hands, was nevertheless delighted with the company assembled round his nephew, and highly approved of all the young men with the exception of that one who gave himself the greatest airs in the society, and affected most to have the manners of a man of the world.

As he and Pen sate at breakfast on the morning after the party in the rooms of the latter, the Major gave his opinions regarding the young men, with whom he was in the greatest good-humour. He had regaled them with some of his stories, which, though not quite so fresh in London (where people have a diseased appetite for novelty in the way of anecdotes), were entirely new at Oxbridge, and the lads heard them with that honest sympathy, that eager pleasure, that boisterous laughter, or that profound respect, so rare in the metropolis, and which must be so delightful to the professed raconteur. Only once or twice during the telling of the anecdote Mr. Bloundell's face wore a look of scorn, or betrayed by its expression that he was acquainted with the tales narrated. Once he had the audacity to question the accuracy of one of the particulars of a tale as given by Major Pendennis, and gave his own version of the anecdote, about which he knew he was right, for he heard it openly talked of at the Club by So-and-so and T'other who were present at the business. The youngsters present looked up with wonder at their associate, who dared to interrupt the Major — few of them could appreciate that melancholy grace and politeness with which Major Pendennis at once acceded to Mr. Bloundell's version of the story, and thanked him for correcting his own error. They stared on the next occasion of meeting, when Bloundell spoke in contemptuous terms of old Pen; said everybody knew old Pen, regular old trencherman at Gaunt House, notorious old bore, regular old fogey.

Major Pendennis on his side liked Mr. Bloundell not a whit. These sympathies are pretty sure to be mutual amongst men and women, and if, for my part, some kind friend tells me that such and such a man has been abusing me, I am almost sure, on my own side, that I have a misliking to such and such a man. We like or dislike each other, as folks like or dislike the odour of certain flowers, or the taste of certain dishes or wines, or certain books. We can't tell why — but as a general rule, all the reasons in the world will not make us love Dr. Fell, and as sure as we dislike him, we may be sure that he dislikes us.

So the Major said, "Pen, my boy, your dinner went off a merveille; you did the honours very nicely — you carved well — I am glad you learned to carve — it is done on the sideboard now in most good houses, but is still an important point, and

may aid you in middle-life — young Lord Plinlimmon is a very amiable young man, quite the image of his dear mother (whom I knew as Lady Aquila Brownbill); and Lord Magnus's republicanism will wear off — it sits prettily enough on a young patrician in early life, though nothing is so loathsome among persons of our rank — Mr. Broadbent seems to have much eloquence and considerable reading your friend Foker is always delightful: but your acquaintance, Mr. Bloundell, struck me as in all respects a most ineligible young man."

"Bless my soul, sir, Bloundell-Bloundell!" cried Pen, laughing; "why, sir, he's the most popular man of the university. We elected him of the Barmecides the first week he came up — had a special meeting on purpose — he's of an excellent family — Suffolk Bloundells, descended from Richard's Blondel, bear a harp in chief — and motto O Mong Roy."

"A man may have a very good coat-of-arms, and be a tiger, my boy," the Major said, chipping his egg; "that man is a tiger, mark my word — a low man. I will lay a wager that he left his regiment, which was a good one (for a more respectable man than my friend Lord Martingale never sate in a saddle), in bad odour. There is the unmistakable look of slang and bad habits about this Mr. Bloundell. He frequents low gambling-houses and billiard-hells, sir — he haunts third-rate clubs — I know he does. I know by his style. I never was mistaken in my man yet. Did you remark the quantity of rings and jewellery he wore? That person has Scamp written on his countenance, if any man ever had. Mark my words and avoid him. Let us turn the conversation. The dinner was a leetle too fine, but I don't object to your making a few extra frais when you receive friends. Of course, you don't do it often, and only those whom it is your interest to feter. The cutlets were excellent, and the soufflé uncommonly light and good. The third bottle of champagne was not necessary; but you have a good income, and as long as you keep within it, I shall not quarrel with you, my dear boy."

Poor Pen! the worthy uncle little knew how often those dinners took place, while the reckless young Amphitryon delighted to show his hospitality and skill in gourmandise. There is no art than that (so long to learn, so difficult to acquire, so impossible and beyond the means of many unhappy people!) about which boys are more anxious to have an air of knowingness. A taste and knowledge of wines and cookery appears to them to be the sign of an accomplished roué and manly gentleman. I like to see them wink at a glass of claret, as if they had an intimate acquaintance with it, and discuss a salmi — poor boys — it is only when they grow old that they know they know nothing of the science, when perhaps their conscience whispers them that the science is in itself little worth, and that a leg of mutton and content is as good as the dinners of pontiffs. But little Pen, in his character of Admirable Crichton, thought it necessary to be a great judge and practitioner of dinners; we have just said how the college cook respected him, and shall soon have to deplore that that worthy man so blindly trusted our Pen. In the third year of the lad's residence at Oxbridge, his staircase was by no means encumbered with dish-covers and desserts, and waiters carrying in dishes, and skips opening iced champagne; crowds of different sorts of attendants, with faces sulky or piteous, hung about the outer oak, and assailed the unfortunate lad as he issued out of his den.

Nor did his guardian's advice take any effect, or induce Mr. Pen to avoid the society of the disreputable Mr. Bloundell. What young men like in their companions is, what had got Pen a great part of his own repute and popularity, a real or supposed knowledge of life. A man who has seen the world, or can speak of it with a knowing air — a roué, or Lovelace, who has his adventures to relate, is sure of an admiring audience among boys. It is hard to confess, but so it is. We respect that sort of prowess. From our school-days we have been taught to admire it. Are there five in the hundred, out of the hundreds and hundreds of English school-boys, brought up at our great schools and colleges, that must not own at one time of their lives to having read and liked Don Juan? Awful propagation of evil! — The idea of it should make the man tremble who holds the pen, lest untruth, or impurity, or unjust anger, or unjust praise escape it.

One such diseased creature as this is enough to infect a whole colony, and the tutors of Boniface began to find the moral tone of their college lowered and their young men growing unruly, and almost ungentleman-like, soon after Mr. Bloundell's arrival at Oxbridge. The young magnates of the neighbouring great College of St. George's, who regarded Pen, and in whose society he lived, were not taken in by Bloundell's flashy graces, and rakish airs of fashion. Broadbent called him Captain Macheath, and said he would live to be hanged. Foker, during his brief stay at the university with Macheath, with characteristic caution declined to say anything in the Captain's disfavour, but hinted to Pen that he had better have him for a partner at whist than play against him, and better back him at ecarte than bet on the other side. "You see, he plays better than you do, Pen," was the astute young gentleman's remark: "he plays uncommon well, the Captain does; — and Pen, I wouldn't take the odds too freely from him, if I was you. I don't think he's too flush of money, the Captain ain't." But beyond these dark suggestions and generalities, the cautious Foker could not be got to speak.

Not that his advice would have had more weight with a headstrong young man, than advice commonly has with a lad who is determined on pursuing his own way. Pen's appetite for pleasure was insatiable, and he rushed at it wherever it presented itself, with an eagerness which bespoke his fiery constitution and youthful health. He called taking pleasure "Seeing life," and quoted well-known maxims from Terence, from Horace, from Shakspeare, to show that one should do all that might become a man. He bade fair to be utterly used up and a roue, in a few years, if he were to continue at the pace at which he was going.

One night after a supper-party in college, at which Pen and Macheath had been present, and at which a little quiet vingt-et-un had been played (an amusement much pleasanter to men in their second and third year than the boisterous custom of singing songs, which bring the proctors about the rooms, and which have grown quite stale by this time, every man having expended his budget)—as the men had taken their caps and were going away, after no great losses or winnings on any side, Mr. Bloundell playfully took up a green wine-glass from the supper-table, which had been destined to contain iced cup, but into which he inserted something still more pernicious, namely a pair of dice, which the gentleman took out of his waistcoat-pocket, and put into the glass. Then giving the glass a graceful wave which showed that his hand was quite experienced in the throwing of dice, he called sevens the main, and whisking the ivory cubes gently on the table, swept them up lightly again from the cloth, and repeated this process two or three times. The other men looked on, Pen, of course, among the number, who had never used the dice as yet, except to play a humdrum game of backgammon at home.

Mr. Bloundell, who had a good voice, began to troll out the chorus from Robert the Devil, an Opera then in great vogue, in which chorus many of the men joined, especially Pen, who was in very high spirits, having won a good number of shillings and half-crowns at the vingt-et-un—and presently, instead of going home, most of the party were seated round the table playing at dice, the green glass going round from hand to hand until Pen finally shivered it, after throwing six mains.

From that night Pen plunged into the delights of the game of hazard, as eagerly as it was his custom to pursue any new pleasure. Dice can be played of mornings as well as after dinner or supper. Bloundell would come into Pen's rooms after breakfast, and it was astonishing how quick the time passed as the bones were rattling. They had little quiet parties with closed doors, and Bloundell devised a box lined with felt, so that the dice should make no noise, and their tell-tale rattle not bring the sharp-eared tutors up to the rooms. Bloundell, Ringwood, and Pen were once very nearly caught by Mr. Buck, who, passing in the Quadrangle, thought he heard the words "Two to one on the caster," through Pen's open window; but when the tutor got into Arthur's rooms he found the lads with three Homers before them, and Pen said he was trying to coach the two other men, and asked Mr. Buck with great gravity what was the present condition of the River Scamander, and whether it was navigable or no?

Mr. Arthur Pendennis did not win much money in these transactions with Mr. Bloundell, or indeed gain good of any kind except a knowledge of the odds at hazard, which he might have learned out of books.

Captain Macheath had other accomplishments which he exercised for Pen's benefit. The Captain's stories had a great and unfortunate charm for Arthur, who was never tired of hearing Bloundell's histories of garrison conquests, and of his feats in country-quarters. — He had been at Paris, and had plenty of legends about the Palais Royal, and the Salon, and Frascati's. He had gone to the Salon one night, after a dinner at the Cafe de Paris, "when we were all devilishly cut, by Jove; and on waking in the morning in my own rooms, I found myself with twelve thousand francs under my pillow, and a hundred and forty-nine Napoleons in one of my boots. Wasn't that a coup, hay?" the Captain said. Pen's eyes glistened with excitement as he heard this story. He respected the man who could win such a sum of money. He sighed, and said it would set him all right. Macheath laughed, and told him to drink another drop of Maraschino. "I could tell you stories much more wonderful than that," he added; and so indeed the Captain could have done, without any further trouble than that of invention, with which portion of the poetic faculty Nature had copiously endowed him.

He laughed to scorn Pen's love for Miss Fotheringay, when he came to hear of that amour from Arthur, as he pretty soon did, for, we have said, Pen was not averse to telling the story now to his confidential friends, and he and they were rather proud of the transaction. But Macheath took away all Pen's conceit on this head, not by demonstrating the folly of the lad's passion for an uneducated woman much his senior in years, but by exposing his absurd desire of gratifying his passion in a legitimate way. "Marry her," said he, "you might as well marry — " and he named one of the most notorious actresses on the stage.

"She hadn't a shred of a character." He knew twenty men who were openly admirers of her, and named them, and the sums each had spent upon her. I know no kind of calumny more frightful or frequent than this which takes away the

character of women, no men more reckless and mischievous than those who lightly use it, and no kind of cowards more despicable than the people who invent these slanders.

Is it, or not, a misfortune that a man, himself of a candid disposition, and disposed, like our friend Pen, to blurt out the truth on all occasions, begins life by believing all that is said to him? Would it be better for a lad to be less trustful, and so less honest? It requires no small experience of the world to know that a man, who has no especial reason thereto, is telling you lies. I am not sure whether it is not best to go on being duped for a certain time. At all events, our honest Pen had a natural credulity, which enabled him to accept all statements which were made to him, and he took every one of Captain Macheath's figments as if they had been the most unquestioned facts of history.

So Bloundell's account about Miss Fotheringay pained and mortified Pen exceedingly. If he had been ashamed of his passion before — what were his feelings regarding it now, when the object of so much pure flame and adoration turned out to be only a worthless impostor, an impostor detected by all but him? It never occurred to Pen to doubt the fact, or to question whether the stories of a man who, like his new friend, never spoke well of any woman, were likely to be true.

One Easter vacation, when Pen had announced to his mother and uncle his intention not to go down, but stay at Oxbridge and read, Mr. Pen was nevertheless induced to take a brief visit to London in company with his friend Mr. Bloundell. They put up at a hotel in Covent Garden, where Bloundell had a tick, as he called it, and took the pleasures of the town very freely after the wont of young university men. Bloundell still belonged to a military club, whither he took Pen to dine once or twice (the young men would drive thither in a cab, trembling lest they should meet Major Pendennis on his beat in Pall Mall), and here Pen was introduced to a number of gallant young fellows with spurs and mustachios, with whom he drank pale-ale of mornings and beat the town of a night. Here he saw a deal of life, indeed: nor in his career about the theatres and singing-houses which these roaring young blades frequented, was he very likely to meet his guardian. One night, nevertheless, they were very near to each other: a plank only separating Pen, who was in the boxes of the Museum Theatre, from the Major, who was in Lord Steyne's box, along with that venerated nobleman. The Fotheringay was in the pride of her glory. Shad made a hit: that is, she had drawn very good houses for nearly a year, had starred the provinces with great eclat, had come back to shine in London with somewhat diminished lustre, and now was acting with "ever increasing attraction; etc.," "triumph of the good old British drama," as the play-bills avowed, to houses in which there was plenty of room for anybody who wanted to see her.

It was not the first time Pen had seen her, since that memorable day when the two had parted in Chatteris. In the previous year, when the town was making much of her, and the press lauded her beauty, Pen had found a pretext for coming to London in term-time, and had rushed off to the theatre to see his old flame. He recollected it rather than renewed it. He remembered how ardently he used to be on the look-out at Chatteris, when the speech before Ophelia's or Mrs. Haller's entrance on the stage was made by the proper actor. Now, as the actor spoke, he had a sort of feeble thrill: as the house began to thunder with applause, and Ophelia entered with her old bow and sweeping curtsy, Pen felt a slight shock and blushed very much as he looked at her, and could not help thinking that all the house was regarding him. He hardly heard her for the first part of the play: and he thought with such rage of the humiliation to which she had subjected him, that he began to fancy he was jealous and in love with her still. But that illusion did not last very long. He ran round to the stage-door of the theatre to see her if possible, but he did not succeed. She passed indeed under his nose with a female companion, but he did not know her — nor did she recognise him. The next night he came in late, and stayed very quietly for the afterpiece, and on the third and last night of his stay in London — why, Taglioni was going to dance at the Opera — Taglioni! and there was to be Don Giovanni, which he admired of all things in the world: so Mr. Pen went to Don Giovanni and Taglioni.

This time the illusion about her was quite gone. She was not less handsome, but she was not the same, somehow. The light was gone out of her eyes which used to flash there, or Pen's no longer were dazzled by it. The rich voice spoke as of old, yet it did not make Pen's bosom thrill as formerly. He thought he could recognise the brogue underneath: the accents seemed to him coarse and false. It annoyed him to hear the same emphasis on the same words, only uttered a little louder: worse than this, it annoyed him to think that he should ever have mistaken that loud imitation for genius, or melted at those mechanical sobs and sighs. He felt that it was in another life almost, that it was another man who had so madly loved her. He was ashamed and bitterly humiliated, and very lonely. Ah, poor Pen! the delusion is better than the truth sometimes, and fine dreams than dismal waking.

They went and had an uproarious supper that night, and Mr. Pen had a fine headache the next morning, with which he

went back to Oxbridge, having spent all his ready money.

As all this narrative is taken from Pen's own confessions, so that the reader may be assured of the truth of every word of it, and as Pen himself never had any accurate notion of the manner in which he spent his money, and plunged himself in much deeper pecuniary difficulties, during his luckless residence at Oxbridge University, it is, of course, impossible for me to give any accurate account of his involvements, beyond that general notion of his way of life, which has been sketched a few pages back. He does not speak too hardly of the roguery of the university tradesmen, or of those in London whom he honoured with his patronage at the outset of his career. Even Finch, the money-lender, to whom Bloundell introduced him, and with whom he had various transactions, in which the young rascal's signature appeared upon stamped paper, treated him, according to Pen's own account, with forbearance, and never mulcted him of more than a hundred per cent. The old college-cook, his fervent admirer, made him a private bill, offered to send him in dinners up to the very last, and never would have pressed his account to his dying day. There was that kindness and frankness about Arthur Pendennis, which won most people who came in contact with him, and which, if it rendered him an easy prey to rogues, got him, perhaps, more goodwill than he merited from many honest men. It was impossible to resist his good-nature, or, in his worst moments, not to hope for his rescue from utter ruin.

At the time of his full career of university pleasure, he would leave the gayest party to go and sit with a sick friend. He never knew the difference between small and great in the treatment of his acquaintances, however much the unlucky lad's tastes, which were of the sumptuous order, led him to prefer good society; he was only too ready to share his guinea with a poor friend, and when he got money had an irresistible propensity for paying, which he never could conquer through life.

In his third year at college, the duns began to gather awfully round about him, and there was a levee at his oak which scandalised the tutors, and would have scared many a stouter heart. With some of these he used to battle, some he would bully (under Mr. Bloundell's directions, who was a master in this art, though he took a degree in no other), and some deprecate. And it is reported of him that little Mary Frodsham, the daughter of a certain poor gilder and frame-maker, whom Mr. Pen had thought fit to employ, and who had made a number of beautiful frames for his fine prints, coming to Pendennis with a piteous tale that her father was ill with ague, and that there was an execution in their house, Pen in an anguish of remorse rushed away, pawned his grand watch and every single article of jewellery except two old gold sleeve-buttons, which had belonged to his father, and rushed with the proceeds to Frodsham's shop, where, with tears in his eyes, and the deepest repentance and humility, he asked the poor tradesman's pardon.

This, young gentlemen, is not told as an instance of Pen's virtue, but rather of his weakness. It would have been much more virtuous to have had no prints at all. He still stood for the baubles which he sold in order to pay Frodsham's bill, and his mother had cruelly to pinch herself in order to discharge the jeweller's account, so that she was in the end the sufferer by the lad's impertinent fancies and follies. We are not presenting Pen to you as a hero or a model, only as a lad, who, in the midst of a thousand vanities and weaknesses, has as yet some generous impulses, and is not altogether dishonest.

We have said it was to the scandal of Mr. Buck the tutor that Pen's extravagances became known: from the manner in which he entered college, the associates he kept, and the introductions of Doctor Portman and the Major, Buck for a long time thought that his pupil was a man of large property, and wondered rather that he only wore a plain gown. Once on going up to London to the levee with an address from his Majesty's Loyal University of Oxbridge, Buck had seen Major Pendennis at St. James's in conversation with two knights of the garter, in the carriage of one of whom the dazzled tutor saw the Major whisked away after the levee. He asked Pen to wine the instant he came back, let him off from chapels and lectures more than ever, and felt perfectly sure that he was a young gentleman of large estate.

Thus, he was thunderstruck when he heard the truth, and received a dismal confession from Pen. His university debts were large, and the tutor had nothing to do, and of course Pen did not acquaint him, with his London debts. What man ever does tell all when pressed by his friends about his liabilities? The tutor learned enough to know that Pen was poor, that he had spent a handsome, almost a magnificent allowance, and had raised around him such a fine crop of debts, as it would be very hard work for any man to mow down; for there is no plant that grows so rapidly when once it has taken root.

Perhaps it was because she was so tender and good that Pen was terrified lest his mother should know of his sins. "I can't bear to break it to her," he said to the tutor in an agony of grief. "O! sir, I've been a villain to her"—and he repented, and he wished he had the time to come over again, and he asked himself, "Why, why did his uncle insist upon the necessity of living with great people, and in how much did all his grand acquaintance profit him?"

They were not shy, but Pen thought they were, and slunk from them during his last terms at college. He was as gloomy as a death's-head at parties, which he avoided of his own part, or to which his young friends soon ceased to invite him. Everybody knew that Pendennis was "hard up." That man Bloundell, who could pay nobody, and who was obliged to go down after three terms, was his ruin, the men said. His melancholy figure might be seen shirking about the lonely quadrangles in his battered old cap and torn gown, and he who had been the pride of the university but a year before, the man whom all the young ones loved to look at, was now the object of conversation at freshmen's wine-parties, and they spoke of him with wonder and awe.

At last came the Degree Examinations. Many a young man of his year whose hob-nailed shoes Pen had derided, and whose face or coat he had caricatured — many a man whom he had treated with scorn in the lecture-room or crushed with his eloquence in the debating-club — many of his own set who had not half his brains, but a little regularity and constancy of occupation, took high places in the honours or passed with decent credit. And where in the list was Pen the superb, Pen the wit and dandy, Pen the poet and orator? Ah, where was Pen the widow's darling and sole pride? Let us hide our heads, and shut up the page. The lists came out; and a dreadful rumour rushed through the university, that Pendennis of Boniface was plucked.



CHAPTER XXI

FLIGHT AFTER DEFEAT

Everybody who has the least knowledge of Heraldry and the Peerage must be aware that the noble family of which, as we know, Helen Pendennis was a member, bears for a crest, a nest full of little pelicans pecking at the ensanguined bosom of a big maternal bird, which plentifully supplies the little wretches with the nutriment on which, according to the heraldic legend, they are supposed to be brought up. Very likely female pelicans like so to bleed under the selfish little beaks of their young ones: it is certain that women do. There must be some sort of pleasure, which we men don't understand, which accompanies the pain of being scarified, and indeed I believe some women would rather actually so suffer than not. They like sacrificing themselves in behalf of the object which their instinct teaches them to love. Be it for a reckless husband, a dissipated son, a darling scapegrace of a brother, how ready their hearts are to pour out their best treasures for the benefit of the cherished person; and what a deal of this sort of enjoyment are we, on one side, ready to give the soft creatures! There is scarce a man that reads this, but has administered pleasure in this fashion to his womankind, and has treated them to the luxury of forgiving him. They don't mind how they live themselves; but when the prodigal comes home they make a rejoicing, and kill the fatted calf for him: and at the very first hint that the sinner is returning, the kind angels prepare their festival, and Mercy and Forgiveness go smiling out to welcome him. I hope it may be so always for all: if we have only Justice to look to, Heaven help us!

During the latter part of Pen's residence at the University of Oxbridge, his uncle's partiality had greatly increased for the lad. The Major was proud of Arthur, who had high spirits, frank manners, a good person, and high gentleman-like bearing. It pleased the old London bachelor to see Pen walking with the young patricians of his university, and he (who was never known to entertain his friends, and whose stinginess had passed into a sort of byword among some wags at the Club, who envied his many engagements, and did not choose to consider his poverty) was charmed to give his nephew and the young lords snug little dinners at his lodgings, and to regale them with good claret, and his very best bons mots and stories: some of which would be injured by the repetition, for the Major's manner of telling them was incomparably neat and careful; and others, whereof the repetition would do good to nobody. He paid his court to their parents through the young men, and to himself as it were by their company. He made more than one visit to Oxbridge, where the young fellows were amused by entertaining the old gentleman, and gave parties and breakfasts and fetes, partly to joke him and partly to do him honour. He plied them with his stories. He made himself juvenile and hilarious in the company of the young lords. He went to hear Pen at a grand debate at the Union, crowed and cheered, and rapped his stick in chorus with the cheers of the men, and was astounded at the boy's eloquence and fire. He thought he had got a young Pitt for a nephew. He had an almost paternal fondness for Pen. He wrote to the lad letters with playful advice and the news of the town. He bragged about Arthur at his Clubs, and introduced him with pleasure into his conversation; saying, that, Egad, the young fellows were putting the old ones to the wall; that the lads who were coming up, young Lord Plinlimmon, a friend of my boy, young Lord Magnus Charters, a chum of my scapegrace, etc., would make a greater figure in the world than even their fathers had done before them. He asked permission to bring Arthur to a grand fete at Gaunt House; saw him with ineffable satisfaction dancing with the sisters of the young noblemen before mentioned; and gave himself as much trouble to procure cards of invitation for the lad to some good houses, as if he had been a mamma with a daughter to marry, and not an old half-pay officer in a wig. And he boasted everywhere of the boy's great talents, and remarkable oratorical powers; and of the brilliant degree he was going to take. Lord Runnymede would take him on his embassy, or the Duke would bring him in for one of his boroughs, he wrote over and over again to Helen; who, for her part, was too ready to believe anything that anybody chose to say in favour of her son.

And all this pride and affection of uncle and mother had been trampled down by Pen's wicked extravagance and idleness! I don't envy Pen's feelings (as the phrase is), as he thought of what he had done. He had slept, and the tortoise had won the race. He had marred at its outset what might have been a brilliant career. He had dipped ungenerously into a generous mother's purse; basely and recklessly spilt her little cruse. O! it was a coward hand that could strike and rob a creature so tender. And if Pen felt the wrong which he had done to others, are we to suppose that a young gentleman of his vanity did not feel still more keenly the shame he had brought upon himself? Let us be assured that there is no more cruel

remorse than that; and no groans more piteous than those of wounded self-love. Like Joel Miller's friend, the Senior Wrangler, who bowed to the audience from his box at the play, because he and the king happened to enter the theatre at the same time, only with a fatuity by no means so agreeable to himself, poor Arthur Pendennis felt perfectly convinced that all England would remark the absence of his name from the examination-lists, and talk about his misfortune. His wounded tutor, his many duns, the skip and bed-maker who waited upon him, the undergraduates of his own time and the years below him, whom he had patronised or scorned — how could he bear to look any of them in the face now? He rushed to his rooms, into which he shut himself, and there he penned a letter to his tutor, full of thanks, regards, remorse, and despair, requesting that his name might be taken off the college books, and intimating a wish and expectation that death would speedily end the woes of the disgraced Arthur Pendennis.

Then he slunk out, scarcely knowing whither he went, but mechanically taking the unfrequented little lanes by the backs of the colleges, until he cleared the university precincts, and got down to the banks of the Camisis river, now deserted, but so often alive with the boat-races, and the crowds of cheering gowmsmen, he wandered on and on, until he found himself at some miles' distance from Oxbridge, or rather was found by some acquaintances leaving that city.

As Pen went up a hill, a drizzling January rain beating in his face, and his ragged gown flying behind him — for he had not divested himself of his academical garments since the morning — a postchaise came rattling up the road, on the box of which a servant was seated, whilst within, or rather half out of the carriage window, sate a young gentleman smoking a cigar, and loudly encouraging the postboy. It was our young acquaintance of Baymouth Mr. Spavin, who had got his degree, and was driving homewards in triumph in his yellow postchaise. He caught a sight of the figure, madly gesticulating as he worked up the hill, and of poor Pen's pale and ghastly face as the chaise whirled by him.

"Wo!" roared Mr. Spavin to the postboy, and the horses stopped in their mad career, and the carriage pulled up some fifty yards before Pen. He presently heard his own name shouted, and beheld the upper half of the body of Mr. Spavin thrust out of the side-window of the vehicle, and beckoning Pen vehemently towards it.

Pen stopped, hesitated — nodded his head fiercely, and pointed onwards, as if desirous that the postillion should proceed. He did not speak: but his countenance must have looked very desperate, for young Spavin, having stared at him with an expression of blank alarm, jumped out of the carriage presently, ran towards Pen holding out his hand, and grasping Pen's, said, "I say — hullo, old boy, where are you going, and what's the row now?"

"I'm going where I deserve to go," said Pen, with an imprecation.

"This ain't the way," said Mr. Spavin, smiling. "This is the Fenbury road. I say, Pen, don't take on because you are plucked. It's nothing when you are used to it. I've been plucked three times, old boy — and after the first time I didn't care. Glad it's over, though. You'll have better luck next time."

Pen looked at his early acquaintance — who had been plucked, who had been rusticated, who had only, after repeated failures, learned to read and write correctly, and who, in spite of all these drawbacks, had attained the honour of a degree. "This man has passed," he thought, "and I have failed!" It was almost too much for him to bear.

"Good-bye, Spavin," said he; "I'm very glad you are through. Don't let me keep you; I'm in a hurry — I'm going to town to-night."

"Gammon," said Mr. Spavin. "This ain't the way to town; this is the Fenbury road, I tell you."

"I was just going to turn back," Pen said.

"All the coaches are full with the men going down," Spavin said. Pen winced. "You'd not get a place for a ten-pound note. Get into my yellow; I'll drop you at Mudford, where you have a chance of the Fenbury mail. I'll lend you a hat and a coat; I've got lots. Come along; jump in, old boy — go it, leathers!" — and in this way Pen found himself in Mr. Spavin's postchaise, and rode with that gentleman as far as the Ram Inn at Mudford, fifteen miles from Oxbridge; where the Fenbury mail changed horses, and where Pen got a place on to London.

The next day there was an immense excitement in Boniface College, Oxbridge, where, for some time, a rumour prevailed, to the terror of Pen's tutor and tradesmen, that Pendennis, maddened at losing his degree, had made away with himself — a battered cap, in which his name was almost discernible, together with a seal bearing his crest of an eagle looking at a now extinct sun, had been found three miles on the Fenbury road, near a mill-stream, and, for four-and-twenty hours, it was supposed that poor Pen had flung himself into the stream, until letters arrived from him, bearing the London post-mark.

The mail reached London at the dreary hour of five; and he hastened to the inn at Covent Garden, at which he was accustomed to put up, where the ever-wakeful porter admitted him, and showed him to a bed. Pen looked hard at the man, and wondered whether Boots knew he was plucked? When in bed he could not sleep there. He tossed about until the appearance of the dismal London daylight, when he sprang up desperately, and walked off to his uncle's lodgings in Bury Street; where the maid, who was scouring the steps, looked up suspiciously at him, as he came with an unshaven face, and yesterday's linen. He thought she knew of his mishap, too.

"Good evens! Mr. Harthur, what as appened, sir?" Mr. Morgan, the valet, asked, who had just arranged the well-brushed clothes and shiny boots at the door of his master's bedroom, and was carrying in his wig to the Major.

"I want to see my uncle," he cried, in a ghastly voice, and flung himself down on a chair.

Morgan backed before the pale and desperate-looking young man, with terrified and wondering glances, and disappeared in his master's apartment.

The Major put his head out of the bedroom door, as soon as he had his wig on.

"What? examination over? Senior Wrangler, double First Class, hay? said the old gentleman — I'll come directly;" and the head disappeared.

"They don't know what has happened," groaned Pen; "what will they say when they know all?"

Pen had been standing with his back to the window, and to such a dubious light as Bury Street enjoys of a foggy January morning, so that his uncle could not see the expression of the young man's countenance, or the looks of gloom and despair which even Mr. Morgan had remarked.

But when the Major came out of his dressing-room neat and radiant, and preceded by faint odours from Delcroix's shop, from which emporium Major Pendennis's wig and his pocket-handkerchief got their perfume, he held out one of his hands to Pen, and was about addressing him in his cheery high-toned voice, when he caught sight of the boy's face at length, and dropping his hand, said, "Good God! Pen, what's the matter?"

"You'll see it in the papers at breakfast, sir," Pen said.

"See what?"

"My name isn't there, sir."

"Hang it, why should it be?" asked the Major, more perplexed.

"I have lost everything, sir," Pen groaned out; "my honour's gone; I'm ruined irretrievably; I can't go back to Oxbridge."

"Lost your honour?" screamed out the Major. "Heaven alive! you don't mean to say you have shown the white feather?"

Pen laughed bitterly at the word feather, and repeated it. "No, it isn't that, sir. I'm not afraid of being shot; I wish to God anybody would. I have not got my degree. I— I'm plucked, sir."

The Major had heard of plucking, but in a very vague and cursory way, and concluded that it was some ceremony performed corporally upon rebellious university youth. "I wonder you can look me in the face after such a disgrace, sir," he said; "I wonder you submitted to it as a gentleman."

"I couldn't help it, sir. I did my classical papers well enough it was those infernal mathematics, which I have always neglected."

"Was it — was it done in public, sir?" the Major said.

"What?"

"The — the plucking?" asked the guardian, looking Pen anxiously in the face.

Pen perceived the error under which his guardian was labouring, and in the midst of his misery the blunder caused the poor wretch a faint smile, and served to bring down the conversation from the tragedy-key, in which Pen had been disposed to carry it on. He explained to his uncle that he had gone in to pass his examination, and failed. On which the Major said, that though he had expected far better things of his nephew, there was no great misfortune in this, and no dishonour as far as he saw, and that Pen must try again.

"Me again at Oxbridge," Pen thought, "after such a humiliation as that!" He felt that, except he went down to burn the place, he could not enter it.

But it was when he came to tell his uncle of his debts that the other felt surprise and anger most keenly, and broke out in speeches most severe upon Pen, which the lad bore, as best might, without flinching. He had determined to make a clean breast, and had formed a full, true, and complete list of all his bills and liabilities at the university, and in London. They consisted of various items, such as:

London Tailor. Oxbridge do.
Oxbridge do. Bill for horses.
Haberdasher, for shirts and gloves. Printseller.
Jeweller. Books.
College Cook. Binding.
Grump, for desserts. Hairdresser and Perfumery.
Bootmaker. Hotel bill in London.
Wine Merchant in London. Sundries.

All which items the reader may fill in at his pleasure — such accounts have been inspected by the parents of many university youth — and it appeared that Mr. Pen's bills in all amounted to about seven hundred pounds; and, furthermore, it was calculated that he had had more than twice that sum of ready money during his stay at Oxbridge. This sum he had spent, and for it had to show — what?

"You need not press a man who is down, sir," Pen said to his uncle, gloomily. "I know very well, sir, how wicked and idle I have been. My mother won't like to see me dishonoured, sir," he continued, with his voice failing; "and I know she will pay these accounts. But I shall ask her for no more money."

"As you like, sir," the Major said. "You are of age, and my hands are washed of your affairs. But you can't live without money, and have no means of making it that I see, though you have a fine talent in spending it, and it is my belief that you will proceed as you have begun, and ruin your mother before you are five years older. — Good morning; it is time for me to go to breakfast. My engagements won't permit me to see you much during the time that you stay in London. I presume that you will acquaint your mother with the news which you have just conveyed to me."

And pulling on his hat, and trembling in his limbs somewhat, Major Pendennis walked out of his lodgings before his nephew, and went ruefully off to take his accustomed corner at the Club. He saw the Oxbridge examination-lists in the morning papers, and read over the names, not understanding the business, with mournful accuracy. He consulted various old fogies of his acquaintance, in the course of the day, at his Clubs; Wenham, a Dean, various Civilians; and, as it is called, "took their opinion," showing to some of them the amount of his nephew's debts, which he had dotted down on the back of a card, and asking what was to be done, and whether such debts were not monstrous, preposterous? What was to be done? — There was nothing for it but to pay. Wenham and the others told the Major of young men who owed twice as much — five times as much — as Arthur, and with no means at all to pay. The consultations, and calculations, and opinions, comforted the Major somewhat. After all, he was not to pay.

But he thought bitterly of the many plans he had formed to make a man of his nephew, of the sacrifices which he had made, and of the manner in which he was disappointed. And he wrote off a letter to Doctor Portman, informing him of the direful events which had taken place, and begging the Doctor to break them to Helen. For the orthodox old gentleman preserved the regular routine in all things, and was of opinion that it was more correct to "break" a piece of bad news to a person by means of a (possibly maladroit and unfeeling) messenger, than to convey it simply to its destination by a note. So the Major wrote to Doctor Portman, and then went out to dinner, one of the saddest men in any London dining-room that day.

Pen, too, wrote his letter, and skulked about London streets for the rest of the day, fancying that everybody was looking at him and whispering to his neighbour, "That is Pendennis of Boniface, who was plucked yesterday." His letter to his mother was full of tenderness and remorse: he wept the bitterest tears over it — and the repentance and passion soothed him to some degree.

He saw a party of roaring young blades from Oxbridge in the coffee-room of his hotel, and slunk away from them, and paced the streets. He remembers, he says, the prints which he saw hanging up at Ackermann's window in the rain, and a book which he read at a stall near the Temple: at night he went to the pit of the play, and saw Miss Fotheringay, but he doesn't in the least recollect in what piece.

On the second day there came a kind letter from his tutor, containing many grave and appropriate remarks upon the event which had befallen him, but strongly urging Pen not to take his name off the university books, and to retrieve a

disaster which, everybody knew, was owing to his own carelessness alone, and which he might repair by a month's application. He said he had ordered Pen's skip to pack up some trunks of the young gentleman's wardrobe, which duly arrived with fresh copies of all Pen's bills laid on the top.

On the third day there arrived a letter from home; which Pen read in his bedroom, and the result of which was that he fell down on his knees with his head in the bedclothes, and then prayed out his heart and humbled himself; and having gone downstairs and eaten an immense breakfast he sallied forth and took his place at the Bull and Mouth, Piccadilly, by the Chatteris coach for that evening.



CHAPTER XXII

PRODIGAL'S RETURN

Such a letter as the Major wrote of course, sent Doctor Portman to Fair Oaks, and he went off with that alacrity which a good man shows when he has disagreeable news to commit. He wishes the deed were done, and done quickly. He is sorry, but *que voulez-vous?* the tooth must be taken out, and he has you in the chair, and it is surprising with what courage and vigour of wrist he applies the forceps. Perhaps he would not be quite so active or eager if it were his tooth; but, in fine, it is your duty to have it out. So the doctor, having read the epistle out to Myra and Mrs. Portman, with many damnatory comments upon the young scapegrace who was going deeper and deeper into perdition, left those ladies to spread the news through the Clavering society, which they did with their accustomed accuracy and despatch, and strode over to Fair Oaks to break the intelligence to the widow.

She had the news already. She had read Pen's letter, and it had relieved her somehow. A gloomy presentiment of evil had been hanging over her for many, many months past. She knew the worst now, and her darling boy was come back to her repentant and tender-hearted. Did she want more? All that the Rector could say (and his remarks were both dictated by common-sense, and made respectable by antiquity) could not bring Helen to feel any indignation or particular unhappiness, except that the boy should be unhappy. What was this degree that they made such an outcry about, and what good would it do Pen? Why did Doctor Portman and his uncle insist upon sending the boy to a place where there was so much temptation to be risked, and so little good to be won? Why didn't they leave him at home with his mother? As for his debts, of course they must be paid; — his debts! — wasn't his father's money all his, and hadn't he a right to spend it? In this way the widow met the virtuous Doctor, and all the arrows of his indignation somehow took no effect upon her gentle bosom.

For some time past, an agreeable practice, known since times ever so ancient, by which brothers and sisters are wont to exhibit their affection towards one another, and in which Pen and his little sister Laura had been accustomed to indulge pretty frequently in their childish days, had been given up by the mutual consent of those two individuals. Coming back from college after an absence from home of some months, in place of the simple girl whom he had left behind him, Mr. Arthur found a tall, slim, handsome young lady, to whom he could not somehow proffer the kiss which he had been in the habit of administering previously, and who received him with a gracious curtsy and a proffered hand, and with a great blush which rose up to the cheek, just upon the very spot which young Pen had been used to salute.

I am not good at descriptions of female beauty; and, indeed, do not care for it in the least (thinking that goodness and virtue are, of course, far more advantageous to a young lady than any mere fleeting charms of person and face), and so shall not attempt any particular delineation of Miss Laura Bell at the age of sixteen years. At that age she had attained her present altitude of five feet four inches, so that she was called tall and gawky by some, and a Maypole by others, of her own sex, who prefer littler women. But if she was a Maypole, she had beautiful roses about her head, and it is a fact that many swains were disposed to dance round her. She was ordinarily pale, with a faint rose tinge in her cheeks; but they flushed up in a minute when occasion called, and continued so blushing ever so long, the roses remaining after the emotion had passed away which had summoned those pretty flowers into existence. Her eyes have been described as very large from her earliest childhood, and retained that characteristic in later life. Good-natured critics (always females) said that she was in the habit of making play with those eyes, and ogling the gentlemen and ladies in her company; but the fact is, that Nature had made them so to shine and to look, and they could no more help so looking and shining than one star can help being brighter than another. It was doubtless to mitigate their brightness that Miss Laura's eyes were provided with two pairs of veils in the shape of the longest and finest black eyelashes, so that, when she closed her eyes, the same people who found fault with those orbs, said that she wanted to show her eyelashes off; and, indeed, I daresay that to see her asleep would have been a pretty sight.

As for her complexion, that was nearly as brilliant as Lady Mantrap's, and without the powder which her ladyship uses. Her nose must be left to the reader's imagination: if her mouth was rather large (as Miss Piminy avers, who, but for her known appetite, one would think could not swallow anything larger than a button) everybody allowed that her smile was charming, and showed off a set of pearly teeth, whilst her voice was so low and sweet, that to hear it was like listening

to sweet music. Because she is in the habit of wearing very long dresses, people of course say that her feet are not small: but it may be that they are of the size becoming her figure, and it does not follow, because Mrs. Pincher is always putting her foot out, that all other ladies should be perpetually bringing theirs on the tapis. In fine, Miss Laura Bell at the age of sixteen, was a sweet young lady. Many thousands of such are to be found, let us hope, in this country where there is no lack of goodness, and modesty, and purity, and beauty.

Now Miss Laura, since she had learned to think for herself (and in the past two years her mind and her person had both developed themselves considerably) had only been half pleased with Pen's general conduct and bearing. His letters to his mother at home had become of late very rare and short. It was in vain that the fond widow urged how constant Arthur's occupations and studies were and how many his engagements. "It is better that he should lose a prize" Laura said "than forget his mother; and indeed, mamma, I don't see that he gets many prizes. Why doesn't he come home and stay with you, instead of passing his vacations at his great friends' fine houses? There is nobody there will love him half so much as — as you do." "As I do only, Laura?" sighed out Mrs. Pendennis. Laura declared stoutly that she did not love Pen a bit, when he did not do his duty to his mother nor would she be convinced by any of Helen's fond arguments, that the boy must make his way in the world; that his uncle was most desirous that Pen should cultivate the acquaintance of persons who were likely to befriend him in life; that men had a thousand ties and calls which women could not understand, and so forth. Perhaps Helen no more believed in these excuses than her adopted daughter did; but she tried to believe that she believed them, and comforted herself with the maternal infatuation. And that is a point whereon I suppose many a gentleman has reflected, that, do what we will, we are pretty sure of the woman's love that once has been ours; and that that untiring tenderness and forgiveness never fail us.

Also, there had been that freedom, not to say audacity, in Arthur's latter talk and ways, which had shocked and displeased Laura. Not that he ever offended her by rudeness, or addressed to her a word which she ought not to hear, for Mr. Pen was a gentleman, and by nature and education polite to every woman high and low; but he spoke lightly and laxly of women in general; was less courteous in his actions than in his words — neglectful in sundry ways, and in many of the little offices of life. It offended Miss Laura that he should smoke his horrid pipes in the house; that he should refuse to go to church with his mother, or on walks or visits with her, and be found yawning over his novel in his dressing-gown, when the gentle widow returned from those duties. The hero of Laura's early infancy, about whom she had passed so many, many nights talking with Helen (who recited endless stories of the boy's virtues, and love, and bravery, when he was away at school), was a very different person from the young man whom now she knew; bold and brilliant, sarcastic and defiant, seeming to scorn the simple occupations or pleasures, or even devotions, of the women with whom he lived, and whom he quitted on such light pretexts.

The Fotheringay affair, too, when Laura came to hear of it (which she did first by some sarcastic allusions of Major Pendennis, when on a visit to Fairoaks, and then from their neighbours at Clavering, who had plenty of information to give her on this head), vastly shocked and outraged Miss Laura. A Pendennis fling himself away on such a woman as that! Helen's boy galloping away from home, day after day, to fall on his knees to an actress, and drink with her horrid father! A good son want to bring such a man and such a woman into his house, and set her over his mother! "I would have run away, mamma; I would, if I had had to walk barefoot through the snow," Laura said.

"And you would have left me too, then?" Helen answered; on which, of course, Laura withdrew her previous observation, and the two women rushed into each other's embraces with that warmth which belonged to both their natures, and which characterises not a few of their sex. Whence came all Whence came all the indignation of Miss Laura about Arthur's passion? Perhaps she did not know, that, if men throw themselves away upon women, women throw themselves away upon men, too; and that there is no more accounting for love, than for any other physical liking or antipathy: perhaps she had been misinformed by the Clavering people and old Mrs. Portman, who was vastly bitter against Pen, especially since his impertinent behaviour to the Doctor and since the wretch had smoked cigars in church-time: perhaps, finally, she was jealous; but this is a vice in which it is said the ladies very seldom indulge.

Albeit she was angry with Pen, against his mother she had no such feeling; but devoted herself to Helen with the utmost force of her girlish affection — such affection as women, whose hearts are disengaged, are apt to bestow upon the near female friend. It was devotion — it was passion — it was all sorts of fondness and folly; it was a profusion of caresses, tender epithets and endearments, such as it does not become sober historians with beards to narrate. Do not let us men despise these instincts because we cannot feel them. These women were made for our comfort and delectation, gentlemen

— with all the rest of the minor animals.

But as soon as Miss Laura heard that Pen was unfortunate and unhappy, all her wrath against him straightway vanished, and gave place to the most tender and unreasonable compassion. He was the Pen of old days once more restored to her, the frank and affectionate, the generous and tender-hearted. She at once took side with Helen against Doctor Portman, when he outcried at the enormity of Pen's transgressions. Debts? what were his debts? they were a trifle; he had been thrown into expensive society by his uncle's order, and of course was obliged to live in the same manner as the young gentlemen whose company he frequented. Disgraced by not getting his degree? the poor boy was ill when he went in for the examinations: he couldn't think of his mathematics and stuff on account of those very debts which oppressed him; very likely some of the odious tutors and masters were jealous of him, and had favourites of their own whom they wanted to put over his head. Other people disliked him, and were cruel to him, and were unfair to him, she was very sure. And so, with flushing cheeks and eyes bright with anger, this young creature reasoned; and she went up and seized Helen's hand, and kissed her in the Doctor's presence, and her looks braved the Doctor, and seemed to ask how he dared to say a word against her darling mother's Pen?

When that divine took his leave, not a little discomfited and amazed at the pertinacious obstinacy of the women, Laura repeated her embraces and arguments with tenfold fervour to Helen, who felt that there was a great deal of cogency in most of the latter. There must be some jealousy against Pen. She felt quite sure that he had offended some of the examiners, who had taken a mean revenge of him — nothing more likely. Altogether, the announcement of the misfortune vexed these two ladies very little indeed. Pen, who was plunged in his shame and grief in London, and torn with great remorse for thinking of his mother's sorrow, would have wondered, had he seen how easily she bore the calamity. Indeed, calamity is welcome to women if they think it will bring truant affection home again: and if you have reduced your mistress to a crust, depend upon it that she won't repine, and only take a very little bit of it for herself, provided you will eat the remainder in her company.

And directly the Doctor was gone, Laura ordered fires to be lighted in Mr. Arthur's rooms, and his bedding to be aired; and had these preparations completed by the time Helen had finished a most tender and affectionate letter to Pen: when the girl, smiling fondly, took her mamma by the hand, and led her into those apartments where the fires were blazing so cheerfully, and there the two kind creatures sat down on the bed, and talked about Pen ever so long. Laura added a postscript to Helen's letter, in which she called him her dearest Pen, and bade him come home instantly, with two of the handsomest dashes under the word, and be happy with his mother and his affectionate sister Laura.

In the middle of the night — as these two ladies, after reading their bibles a great deal during the evening, and after taking just a look into Pen's room as they passed to their own — in the middle of the night, I say, Laura, whose head not unfrequently chose to occupy that pillow which the nightcap of the late Pendennis had been accustomed to press, cried out suddenly, "Mamma, are you awake?"

Helen stirred and said, "Yes, I'm awake." The truth is, though she had been lying quite still and silent, she had not been asleep one instant, but had been looking at the night-lamp in the chimney, and had been thinking of Pen for hours and hours.

Then Miss Laura (who had been acting with similar hypocrisy, and lying, occupied with her own thoughts, as motionless as Helen's brooch, with Pen's and Laura's hair in it, on the frilled white pincushion on the dressing-table) began to tell Mrs. Pendennis of a notable plan which she had been forming in her busy little brains; and by which all Pen's embarrassments would be made to vanish in a moment, and without the least trouble to anybody.

"You know, mamma," this young lady said, "that I have been living with you for ten years, during which time you have never taken any of my money, and have been treating me just as if I was a charity girl. Now, this obligation has offended me very much, because I am proud and do not like to be beholden to people. And as, if I had gone to school — only I wouldn't — it must have cost me at least fifty pounds a year, it is clear that I owe you fifty times ten pounds, which I know you have put in the bank at Chatteris for me, and which doesn't belong to me a bit. Now, tomorrow we will go to Chatteris, and see that nice old Mr. Rowdy, with the bald head, and ask him for it — not for his head, but for the five hundred pounds: and I dare say he will send you two more, which we will save and pay back; and we will send the money to Pen, who can pay all his debts without hurting anybody and then we will live happy ever after."

What Helen replied to this speech need not be repeated, as the widow's answer was made up of a great number of

incoherent ejaculations, embraces, and other irrelative matter. But the two women slept well after that talk; and when the night-lamp went out with a splutter, and the sun rose gloriously over the purple hills, and the birds began to sing and pipe cheerfully amidst the leafless trees and glistening evergreens on Fair Oaks lawn, Helen woke too, and as she looked at the sweet face of the girl sleeping beside her, her lips parted with a smile, blushes on her cheeks, her spotless bosom heaving and falling with gentle undulations, as if happy dreams were sweeping over it — Pen's mother felt happy and grateful beyond all power of words, save such as pious women offer up to the Beneficent Dispenser of love and mercy — in Whose honour a chorus of such praises is constantly rising up all round the world.

Although it was January and rather cold weather, so sincere was Mr. Pen's remorse, and so determined his plans of economy, that he would not take an inside place in the coach, but sat up behind with his friend the Guard, who remembered his former liberality, and lent him plenty of great-coats. Perhaps it was the cold that made his knees tremble as he got down at the lodge-gate, or it may be that he was agitated at the notion of seeing the kind creature for whose love he had made so selfish a return. Old John was in waiting to receive his master's baggage, but he appeared in a fustian jacket, and no longer wore his livery of drab and blue. "I'se garner and stable man, and lives in the ladge now," this worthy man remarked, with a grin of welcome to Pen, and something of a blush; but instantly as Pen turned the corner of the shrubbery and was out of eye-shot of the coach, Helen made her appearance, her face beaming with love and forgiveness — for forgiving is what some women love best of all.

We may be sure that the widow, having a certain other object in view, had lost no time in writing off to Pen an account of the noble, the magnanimous, the magnificent offer of Laura, filling up her letter with a profusion of benedictions upon both her children. It was probably the knowledge of this money-obligation which caused Pen to blush very much when he saw Laura, who was in waiting in the hall, and who this time, and for this time only, broke through the little arrangement of which we have spoken, as having subsisted between her and Arthur for the last few years; but the truth is, there has been a great deal too much said about kissing in the present chapter.

So the Prodigal came home, and the fatted calf was killed for him, and he was made as happy as two simple women could make him. No allusions were made to the Oxbridge mishap, or questions asked as to his farther proceedings, for some time. But Pen debated these anxiously in his own mind, and up in his own room, where he passed much time in cogitation.

A few days after he came home, he rode to Chatteris on his horse, and came back on the top of the coach. He then informed his mother that he had left the horse to be sold; and when that operation was effected, he handed her over the cheque, which she, and possibly Pen himself, thought was an act of uncommon virtue and self-denial, but which Laura pronounced to be only strict justice.

He rarely mentioned the loan which she had made, and which, indeed, had been accepted by the widow with certain modifications; but once or twice, and with great hesitation and stammering, he alluded to it, and thanked her; but it evidently pained his vanity to be beholden to the orphan for succour. He was wild to find some means of repaying her.

He left off drinking wine, and betook himself, but with great moderation, to the refreshment of whisky-and-water. He gave up cigar-smoking; but it must be confessed that of late years he had liked pipes and tobacco as well or even better, so that this sacrifice was not a very severe one.

He fell asleep a great deal after dinner when he joined the ladies in the drawing-room, and was certainly very moody and melancholy. He watched the coaches with great interest, walked in to read the papers at Clavering assiduously, dined with anybody who would ask him (and the widow was glad that he should have any entertainment in their solitary place), and played a good deal at cribbage with Captain Glanders.

He avoided Dr. Portman, who, in his turn, whenever Pen passed, gave him very severe looks from under his shovel-hat. He went to church with his mother, however, very regularly, and read prayers for her at home to the little household. Always humble, it was greatly diminished now: a couple of maids did the work of the house of Fair Oaks: the silver dish-covers never saw the light at all.

John put on his livery to go to church, and assert his dignity on Sundays, but it was only for form's sake. He was gardener and out-door man, vice Upton, resigned. There was but little fire in Fair Oaks kitchen, and John and the maids drank their evening beer there by the light, of a single candle. All this was Mr. Pen's doing, and the state of things did not increase his cheerfulness.

For some time Pen said no power on earth could induce him to go back to Oxbridge again, after his failure there; but one day Laura said to him, with many blushes, that she thought, as some sort of reparation, of punishment on himself for his — for his idleness, he ought to go back and get his degree, if he could fetch it by doing so; and so back Mr. Pen went.

A plucked man is a dismal being in a university; belonging to no set of men there, and owned by no one. Pen felt himself plucked indeed of all the fine feathers which he had won during his brilliant years, and rarely appeared out of his college; regularly going to morning chapel, and shutting himself up in his rooms of nights, away from the noise and suppers of the undergraduates. There were no duns about his door, they were all paid — scarcely any cards were left there. The men of his year had taken their degrees, and were gone. He went into a second examination, and passed with perfect ease. He was somewhat more easy in his mind when he appeared in his bachelor's gown.

On his way back from Oxbridge he paid a visit to his uncle in London; but the old gentleman received him with very cold looks, and would scarcely give him his forefinger to shake. He called a second time, but Morgan, the valet, said his master was from home.

Pen came back to Fairoaks, and to his books and to his idleness, and loneliness and despair. He commenced several tragedies, and wrote many copies of verses of a gloomy cast. He formed plans of reading and broke them. He thought about enlisting — about the Spanish legion — about a profession. He chafed against his captivity, and cursed the idleness which had caused it. Helen said he was breaking his heart, and was sad to see his prostration. As soon as they could afford it, he should go abroad — he should go to London — he should be freed from the dull society of two poor women. It was dull — very, certainly. The tender widow's habitual melancholy seemed to deepen into a sadder gloom; and Laura saw with alarm that the dear friend became every year more languid and weary, and that her pale cheek grew more wan.



CHAPTER XXIII

NEW FACES

The inmates of Fair Oaks were drowsily pursuing this humdrum existence, while the great house upon the hill, on the other side of the River Brawl, was shaking off the slumber in which it had lain during the lives of two generations of masters, and giving extraordinary signs of renewed liveliness.

Just about the time of Pen's little mishap, and when he was so absorbed in the grief occasioned by that calamity as to take no notice of events which befell persons less interesting to himself than Arthur Pendennis, an announcement appeared in the provincial journals which caused no small sensation in the county at least, and in all the towns, villages, halls and mansions, and parsonages for many miles round Clavering Park. At Clavering Market; at Cackleby Fair; at Chatteris Sessions; on Gooseberry Green, as the squire's carriage met the vicar's one-horse contrivance, and the inmates of both vehicles stopped on the road to talk; at Tinkleton Church gate, as the bell was tolling in the sunshine, and the white smocks and scarlet cloaks came trooping over the green common, to Sunday worship; in a hundred societies round about — the word was, that Clavering Park was to be inhabited again.

Some five years before, the county papers had advertised the marriage at Florence, at the British Legation, of Francis Clavering, Esq., only son of Sir Francis Clavering, Bart., of Clavering Park, with Jemima Augusta, daughter of Samuel Snell, of Calcutta, Esq., and widow of the late J. Amory, Esq. At that time the legend in the county was that Clavering, who had been ruined for many a year, had married a widow from India with some money. Some of the county folks caught a sight of the newly-married pair. The Kickleburys, travelling in Italy, had seen them. Clavering occupied the Poggi Palace at Florence, gave parties, and lived comfortably — but could never come to England. Another year — young Peregrine, of Cackleby, making a Long Vacation tour, had fallen in with the Claverings occupying Schloss Schinkenstein, on the Mummel See. At Rome, at Lucca, at Nice, at the baths and gambling places of the Rhine and Belgium, this worthy couple might occasionally be heard of by the curious, and rumours of them came, as it were by gusts, to Clavering's ancestral place.

Their last place of abode was Paris, where they appear to have lived in great fashion and splendour after the news of the death of Samuel Snell, Esq., of Calcutta, reached his orphan daughter in Europe.

Of Sir Francis Clavering's antecedents little can be said that would be advantageous to that respected baronet. The son of an outlaw, living in a dismal old chateau near Bruges, this gentleman had made a feeble attempt to start in life with a commission in a dragoon regiment, and had broken down almost at the outset. Transactions at the gambling-table had speedily effected his ruin; after a couple of years in the army he had been forced to sell out, had passed some time in Her Majesty's prison of the Fleet, and had then shipped over to Ostend to join the gouty exile, his father. And in Belgium, France and Germany, for some years, this decayed and abortive prodigal might be seen lurking about billiard-rooms and watering-places, punting at gambling-houses, dancing at boarding-house balls, and riding steeple-chases on other folks' horses.

It was at a boarding-house at Lausanne that Francis Clavering made what he called the lucky coup of marrying the widow Amory, very lately returned from Calcutta. His father died soon after, by consequence of whose demise his wife became Lady Clavering. The title so delighted Mr. Snell of Calcutta, that he doubled his daughter's allowance; and dying himself soon after, left a fortune to her and her children the amount of which was, if not magnified by rumour, something very splendid indeed.

Before this time there had been, not rumours unfavourable to Lady Clavering's reputation, but unpleasant impressions regarding her ladyship. The best English people abroad were shy of making her acquaintance; her manners were not the most refined; her origin was lamentably low and doubtful. The retired East Indians, who are to be found in considerable force in most of the continental towns frequented by English, spoke with much scorn of the disreputable old lawyer and indigo-smuggler her father, and of Amory, her first husband, who had been mate of the Indiaman in which Miss Snell came out to join her father at Calcutta. Neither father nor daughter were in society at Calcutta, or had ever been heard of at Government House. Old Sir Jasper Rogers, who had been Chief Justice of Calcutta, had once said to his wife, that he could

tell a queer story about Lady Clavering's first husband; but greatly to Lady Rogers's disappointment, and that of the young ladies his daughters, the old Judge could never be got to reveal that mystery.

They were all, however, glad enough to go to Lady Clavering's parties, when her ladyship took the Hotel Bouilli in the Rue Grenelle at Paris, and blazed out in the polite world there in the winter of 183 —. The Faubourg St. Germain took her up. Viscount Bagwig, our excellent ambassador, paid her marked attention. The princes of the family frequented her salons. The most rigid and noted of the English ladies resident in the French capital acknowledged and countenanced her; the virtuous Lady Elderbury, the severe Lady Rockminster, the venerable Countess of Southdown — people, in a word, renowned for austerity, and of quite a dazzling moral purity:— so great and beneficent an influence had the possession of ten (some said twenty) thousand a year exercised upon Lady Clavering's character and reputation. And her munificence and good-will were unbounded. Anybody (in society) who had a scheme of charity was sure to find her purse open. The French ladies of piety got money from her to support their schools and convents; she subscribed indifferently for the Armenian patriarch; for Father Barbarossa, who came to Europe to collect funds for his monastery on Mount Athos; for the Baptist Mission to Quashyboo, and the Orthodox Settlement in Feefawfoo, the largest and most savage of the Cannibal Islands. And it is on record of her, that, on the same day on which Madame de Cricri got five Napoleons from her in support of the poor persecuted Jesuits, who were at that time in very bad odour in France, Lady Budelight put her down in her subscription-list for the Rev. J. Ramshorn, who had had a vision which ordered him to convert the Pope of Rome. And more than this, and for the benefit of the worldly, her ladyship gave the best dinners, and the grandest balls and suppers, which were known at Paris during that season.

And it was during this time, that the good-natured lady must have arranged matters with her husband's creditors in England, for Sir Francis reappeared in his native country, without fear of arrest; was announced in the Morning Post, and the county paper, as having taken up his residence at Mivart's Hotel; and one day the anxious old housekeeper at Clavering House beheld a carriage and four horses drive up the long avenue, and stop before the moss-grown steps in front of the vast melancholy portico.

Three gentlemen were in the carriage — an open one. On the back seat was our old acquaintance, Mr. Tatham of Chatteris, whilst in the places of honour sate a handsome and portly gentleman enveloped in mustachios, whiskers, fur collars, and braiding, and by him a pale languid man who descended feebly from the carriage, when the little lawyer, and the gentleman in fur, nimbly jumped out of it.

They walked up the great moss-grown steps to the hall-door, and a foreign attendant, with earrings and a gold-laced cap, pulled strenuously at the great bell-handle at the cracked and sculptured gate. The bell was heard clanging loudly through the vast gloomy mansion. Steps resounded presently upon the marble pavement of the hall within; and the doors opened, and finally Mrs. Blenkinsop, the housekeeper, Polly, her aide-de-camp, and Smart, the keeper, appeared bowing humbly.

Smart, the keeper, pulled the wisp of hay-coloured hair which adorned his sunburnt forehead, kicked out his left heel as if there were a dog biting at his calves, and brought down his head to a bow. Old Mrs Blenkinsop dropped a curtsey. Little Polly, her aide-de-camp, made a curtsey and several rapid bows likewise; and Mrs. Blenkinsop, with a great deal of emotion, quavered out, "Welcome to Clavering, Sir Francis. It du my poor eyes good to see one of the family once more."

The speech and the greetings were all addressed to the grand gentleman in fur and braiding, who wore his hat so magnificently on one side, and twirled his mustachios so royally. But he burst out laughing, and said, "You've saddled the wrong horse, old lady — I'm not Sir Francis Clavering what's come to revisit the halls of my ancestors. Friends and vassals! behold your rightful lord!"

And he pointed his hand towards the pale, languid gentleman who said, "Don't be an ass, Ned"

"Yes, Mrs. Blenkinsop, I'm Sir Francis Clavering; I recollect you quite well. Forgot me, I suppose? — How dy do?" and he took the old lady's trembling hand; and nodded in her astonished face, in a not unkind manner.

Mrs. Blenkinsop declared upon her conscience that she would have known Sir Francis anywhere, that he was the very image of Sir Francis, his father, and of Sir John who had gone before.

"O yes — thanky — of course — very much obliged — and that sort of thing," Sir Francis said, looking vacantly about the hall "Dismal old place, ain't it, Ned? Never saw it but once, when my governor quarrelled with gwandfather in the year twenty-thwee.

“Dismal? — beautiful! — the Castle of Otranto! — the Mysteries of Udolpho, by Jove!” said the individual addressed as Ned. “What a fireplace! You might roast an elephant in it. Splendid carved gallery! Inigo Jones, by Jove! I’d lay five to two it’s Inigo Jones.”

“The upper part by Inigo Jones; the lower was altered by the eminent Dutch architect, Vanderputty, in George the First his time, by Sir Richard, fourth baronet,” said the housekeeper.

“O indeed,” said the Baronet “Gad, Ned, you know everything.”

“I know a few things, Frank,” Ned answered. “I know that’s not a Snyders over the mantelpiece — bet you three to one it’s a copy. We’ll restore it, my boy. A lick of varnish, and it will come out wonderfully, sir. That old fellow in the red gown, I suppose, is Sir Richard.”

“Sheriff of the county, and sate in parliament in the reign of Queen Anne,” said the housekeeper, wondering at the stranger’s knowledge; “that on the right is Theodosia, wife of Harbottle, second baronet, by Lely, represented in the character of Venus, the Goddess of Beauty — her son Gregory, the third baronet, by her side, as Cupid, God of Love, with a bow and arrows; that on the next panel is Sir Rupert, made a knight banneret by Charles the First, and whose property was confiscated by Oliver Cromwell.”

“Thank you — needn’t go on, Mrs. Blenkinsop,” said the Baronet, “We’ll walk about the place ourselves. Frosch, give me a cigar. Have a cigar, Mr. Tatham?”

Little Mr. Tatham tried a cigar which Sir Francis’s courier handed to him, and over which the lawyer spluttered fearfully. “Needn’t come with us, Mrs. Blenkinsop. What’s — his — name — you — Smart — feed the horses and wash their mouths. Shan’t stay long. Come along, Strong — I know the way: I was here in twenty-thwee, at the end of my gwandfather’s time.” And Sir Francis and Captain Strong, for such was the style and title of Sir Francis’s friend, passed out of the hall into the reception-rooms, leaving the discomfited Mrs. Blenkinsop to disappear by a side-door which led to her apartments, now the only habitable rooms in the long-uninhabited mansion.

It was a place so big that no tenant could afford to live in it; and Sir Francis and his friend walked through room after room, admiring their vastness and dreary and deserted grandeur. On the right of the hall-door were the saloons and drawing-rooms, and on the other side the oak room, the parlour, the grand dining-room, the library, where Pen had found books in old days. Round three sides of the hall ran a gallery, by which, and corresponding passages, the chief bedrooms were approached, and of which many were of stately proportions and exhibited marks of splendour. On the second story was a labyrinth of little uncomfortable garrets, destined for the attendants of the great folks who inhabited the mansion in the days when it was first built: and I do not know any more cheering mark of the increased philanthropy of our own times, than to contrast our domestic architecture with that of our ancestors, and to see how much better servants and poor are cared for now, than in times when my lord and my lady slept under gold canopies, and their servants lay above them in quarters not so airy or so clean as stables are now.

Up and down the house the two gentlemen wandered, the owner of the mansion being very silent and resigned about the pleasure of possessing it; whereas the Captain, his friend, examined the premises with so much interest and eagerness that you would have thought he was the master, and the other the indifferent spectator of the place. “I see capabilities in it — capabilities in it, sir,” cried the Captain. “Gad, sir, leave it to me, and I’ll make it the pride of the country, at a small expense. What a theatre we can have in the library here, the curtains between the columns which divide the room! What a famous room for a galop! — it will hold the whole shire. We’ll hang the morning parlour with the tapestry in your second salon in the Rue de Grenelle, and furnish the oak room with the Moyen-age cabinets and the armour. Armour looks splendid against black oak, and there’s a Venice glass in the Quai Voltaire, which will suit that high mantelpiece to an inch, sir. The long saloon, white and crimson of course; the drawing-room yellow satin; and the little drawing-room light blue, with lace over — hay?”

“I recollect my old governor caning me in that little room,” Sir Francis said sententially; “he always hated me, my old governor.”

“Chintz is the dodge, I suppose, for my lady’s rooms — the suite in the landing, to the south, the bedroom, the sitting-room, and the dressing-room. We’ll throw a conservatory out, over the balcony. Where will you have your rooms?”

“Put mine in the north wing,” said the Baronet, with a yawn, “and out of the reach of Miss Amory’s confounded piano. I can’t bear it. She’s scweeching from morning till night.”

The Captain burst out laughing. He settled the whole further arrangements of the house in the course of their walk through it; and, the promenade ended, they went into the steward's room, now inhabited by Mrs. Blenkinsop, and where Mr. Tatham was sitting poring over a plan of the estate, and the old housekeeper had prepared a collation in honour of her lord and master.

Then they inspected the kitchen and stables, about both of which Sir Francis was rather interested, and Captain Strong was for examining the gardens; but the Baronet said, "D—— the gardens, and that sort of thing!" and finally he drove away from the house as unconcernedly as he had entered it; and that night the people of Clavering learned that Sir Francis Clavering had paid a visit to the Park, and was coming to live in the county.

When this fact came to be known at Chatteris, all the folks in the place were set in commotion: High Church and Low Church, half-pay captains and old maids and dowagers, sporting squireens of the viciniage, farmers, tradesmen, and factory people — all the population in and round about the little place. The news was brought to Fair Oaks, and received by the ladies there, and by Mr. Pen, with some excitement. "Mrs. Pybus says there is a very pretty girl in the family, Arthur," Laura said, who was as kind and thoughtful upon this point as women generally are: "a Miss Amory, Lady Clavering's daughter by her first marriage. Of course, you will fall in love with her as soon as she arrives."

Helen cried out, "Don't talk nonsense, Laura." Pen laughed, and said, "Well, there is the young Sir Francis for you."

"He is but four years old," Miss Laura replied. "But I shall console myself with that handsome officer, Sir Francis's friend. He was at church last Sunday, in the Clavering pew, and his mustachios were beautiful."

Indeed the number of Sir Francis's family (whereof the members have all been mentioned in the above paragraphs) was pretty soon known in his town, and everything else, as nearly as human industry and ingenuity could calculate, regarding his household. The Park avenue and grounds were dotted now with town folks of the summer evenings, who made their way up to the great house, peered about the premises, and criticised the improvements which were taking place there. Loads upon loads of furniture arrived in numberless vans from Chatteris and London; and numerous as the vans are, there was not one but Captain Glanders knew what it contained, and escorted the baggage up to the Park House.

He and Captain Edward Strong had formed an intimate acquaintance by this time. The younger Captain occupied those very lodgings at Clavering, which the peaceful Smirke had previously tenanted, and was deep in the good graces of Madame Fribsby, his landlady; and of the whole town, indeed. The Captain was splendid in person and raiment; fresh-coloured, blue-eyed, black-whiskered, broad-chested, athletic — a slight tendency to fulness did not take away from the comeliness of his jolly figure — a braver soldier never presented a broader chest to the enemy. As he strode down Clavering High Street, his hat on one side, his cane clanking on the pavement, or waving round him in the execution of military cuts and soldatesque manoeuvres — his jolly laughter ringing through the otherwise silent street — he was as welcome as sunshine to the place, and a comfort to every inhabitant in it.

On the first market-day he knew every pretty girl in the market: he joked with all the women: had a word with the farmers about their stock, and dined at the Agricultural Ordinary at the Clavering Arms, where he set them all dying with laughing by his fun and jokes. "Tu be sure he be a vine veller, tu be sure that he be," was the universal opinion of the gentlemen in top-boots. He shook hands with a score of them, as they rode out of the inn-yard on their old nags, waving his hat to them splendidly as he smoked his cigar in the inn-gate. In the course of the evening he was free of the landlady's bar, knew what rent the landlord paid, how many acres he farmed, how much malt he put in his strong beer; and whether he ever ran in a little brandy unexcised by kings from Baymouth, or the fishing villages along the coast.

He had tried to live at the great house first; but it was so dull he couldn't stand it. "I am a creature born for society," he told Captain Glanders. "I'm down here to see Clavering's house set in order; for between ourselves, Frank has no energy, sir, no energy; he's not the chest for it, sir (and he threw out his own trunk as he spoke); but I must have social intercourse. Old Mrs. Blenkinsop goes to bed at seven, and takes Polly with her. There was nobody but me and the Ghost for the first two nights at the great house, and I own it, sir, I like company. Most old soldiers do."

Glanders asked Strong where he had served? Captain Strong curled his mustache, and said with a laugh, that the other might almost ask where he had not served. "I began, sir, as cadet of Hungarian Uhlans, and when the war of Greek independence broke out, quitted that service in consequence of a quarrel with my governor, and was one of seven who escaped from Missolonghi, and was blown up in one of Botzaris's fireships, at the age of seventeen. I'll show you my Cross of the Redeemer, if you'll come over to my lodgings and take a glass of grog with me, Captain, this evening. I've a few of

those baubles in my desk. I've the White Eagle of Poland; Skrzynecki gave it me" (he pronounced Skrzynecki's name with wonderful accuracy and gusto) "upon the field of Ostrolenka. I was a lieutenant of the fourth regiment, sir, and we marched through Diebitsch's lines — bang thro' 'em into Prussia, sir, without firing a shot. Ah, Captain, that was a mismanaged business. I received this wound by the side of the King before Oporto — where he would have pounded the stock-jobbing Pedroites, had Bourmont followed my advice; and I served in Spain with the King's troops, until the death of my dear friend, Zumalacarreguy, when I saw the game was over, and hung up my toasting iron, Captain. Alava offered me a regiment, the Queen's Muleteros; but I couldn't — damme, I couldn't — and now, sir, you know Ned Strong — the Chevalier Strong they call me abroad — as well as he knows himself."

In this way almost everybody in Clavering came to know Ned Strong. He told Madame Fribsby, he told the landlord of the George, he told Baker at the reading-rooms, he told Mrs. Glanders, and the young ones, at dinner: and, finally, he told Mr. Arthur Pendennis, who, yawning into Clavering one day, found the Chevalier Strong in company with Captain Glanders; and who was delighted with his new acquaintance.

Before many days were over, Captain Strong was as much at home in Helen's drawing-room as he was in Madame Fribsby's first floor; and made the lonely house very gay with his good-humour and ceaseless flow of talk. The two women had never before seen such a man. He had a thousand stories about battles and dangers to interest them — about Greek captives, Polish beauties, and Spanish nuns. He could sing scores of songs, in half a dozen languages, and would sit down to the piano and troll them off in a rich manly voice. Both the ladies pronounced him to be delightful — and so he was; though, indeed, they had not had much choice of man's society as yet, having seen in the course of their lives but few persons, except old Portman and the Major, and Mr. Pen, who was a genius, to be sure; but then your geniuses are somewhat flat and moody at home.

And Captain Strong acquainted his new friends at Fair Oaks, not only with his own biography, but with the whole history of the family now coming to Clavering. It was he who had made the marriage between his friend Frank and the widow Amory. She wanted rank, and he wanted money. What match could be more suitable? He organised it; he made those two people happy. There was no particular romantic attachment between them; the widow was not of an age or a person for romance, and Sir Francis, if he had his game at billiards, and his dinner, cared for little besides. But they were as happy as people could be. Clavering would return to his native place and country, his wife's fortune would pay his encumbrances off, and his son and heir would be one of the first men in the county.

"And Miss Amory?" Laura asked. Laura was uncommonly curious about Miss Amory.

Strong laughed. "Oh, Miss Amory is a muse — Miss Amory is a mystery — Miss Amory is a femme incomprise." "What is that?" asked simple Mrs. Pendennis — but the Chevalier gave her no answer: perhaps could not give her one. "Miss Amory paints, Miss Amory writes poems, Miss Amory composes music, Miss Amory rides like Diana Vernon. Miss Amory is a paragon, in a word."

"I hate clever women," said Pen.

"Thank you," said Laura. For her part she was sure she should be charmed with Miss Amory, and quite longed to have such a friend. And with this she looked Pen full in the face, as if every word the little hypocrite said was Gospel truth.

Thus, an intimacy was arranged and prepared beforehand between the Fair Oaks family and their wealthy neighbours at the Park; and Pen and Laura were to the full as eager for their arrival, as even the most curious of the Clavering folks. A Londoner, who sees fresh faces and yawns at them every day may smile at the eagerness with which country people expect a visitor. A cockney comes amongst them, and is remembered by his rural entertainers for years after he has left them, and forgotten them very likely — floated far away from them on the vast London sea. But the islanders remember long after the mariner has sailed away, and can tell you what he said and what he wore, and how he looked and how he laughed. In fine, a new arrival is an event in the country not to be understood by us, who don't, and had rather not, know who lives next door.

When the painters and upholsterers had done their work in the house, and so beautified it, under Captain Strong's superintendence, that he might well be proud of his taste, that gentleman announced that he should go to London, where the whole family had arrived by this time, and should speedily return to establish them in their renovated mansion.

Detachments of domestics preceded them. Carriages came down by sea, and were brought over from Baymouth by horses which had previously arrived under the care of grooms and coachmen. One day the 'Alacrity' coach brought down on its roof two large and melancholy men, who were dropped at the Park lodge with their trunks, and who were Messieurs

Frederic and James, metropolitan footmen, who had no objection to the country, and brought with them state and other suits of the Clavering uniform.

On another day, the mail deposited at the gate a foreign gentleman, adorned with many ringlets and chains. He made a great riot at the lodge-gate to the keeper's wife (who, being a West-country woman, did not understand his English or his Gascon French), because there was no carriage in waiting to drive him to the house, a mile off, and because he could not walk entire leagues in his fatigued state and varnished boots. This was Monsieur Alcide Mirobolant, formerly Chef of his Highness the Duc de Borodino, of H. Eminence Cardinal Beccafico, and at present Chef of the bouche of Sir Clavering, Baronet:— Monsieur Mirobolant's library, pictures, and piano had arrived previously in charge of the intelligent young Englishman, his aide-de-camp. He was, moreover, aided by a professed female cook, likewise from London, who had inferior females under her orders.

He did not dine in the steward's room, but took his nutriment in solitude in his own apartments, where a female servant was affected to his private use. It was a grand sight to behold him in his dressing-gown composing a menu. He always sate down and played the piano for some time before that. If interrupted, he remonstrated pathetically with his little maid. Every great artist, he said, had need of solitude to perfectionate his works.

But we are advancing matters in the fulness of our love and respect for Monsieur Mirobolant, and bringing him prematurely on the stage.

The Chevalier Strong had a hand in the engagement of all the London domestics, and, indeed, seemed to be the master of the house. There were those among them who said he was the house-steward, only he dined with the family. Howbeit, he knew how to make himself respected, and two of by no means the least comfortable rooms of the house were assigned to his particular use.

He was walking upon the terrace finally upon the eventful day when, amidst an immense jangling of bells from Clavering Church, where the flag was flying, an open carriage and one of those travelling chariots or family arks, which only English philoprogenitiveness could invent drove rapidly with foaming horses through the Park gates, and up to the steps of the Hall. The two battans of the sculptured door flew open. The superior officers in black, the large and melancholy gentlemen, now in livery with their hair in powder, the country menials engaged to aid them, were in waiting in the hall, and bowed like elms when autumn winds wail in the park. Through this avenue passed Sir Francis Clavering with a most unmoved face: Lady Clavering, with a pair of bright black eyes, and a good-humoured countenance, which waggled and nodded very graciously: Master Francis Clavering, who was holding his mamma's skirt (and who stopped the procession to look at the largest footman, whose appearance seemed to strike the young gentleman), and Miss Blandy, governess to Master Francis, and Miss Amory, her ladyship's daughter, giving her arm to Captain Strong. It was summer, but fires of welcome were crackling in the great hall chimney, and in the rooms which the family were to occupy.

Monsieur Mirobolant had looked at the procession from one of the lime-trees in the avenue. "Elle est la," he said, laying his jewelled hand on his richly-embroidered velvet glass buttons, "Je t'ai vue, je te benis, O ma sylphide, O mon ange!" and he dived into the thicket, and made his way back to his furnaces and saucepans.

The next Sunday the same party which had just made its appearance at Clavering Park, came and publicly took possession of the ancient pew in the church, where so many of the Baronet's ancestors had prayed, and were now kneeling in effigy. There was such a run to see the new folks, that the Low Church was deserted, to the disgust of its pastor; and as the state barouche, with the greys and coachman in silver wig, and solemn footmen, drew up at the old churchyard-gate, there was such a crowd assembled there as had not been seen for many a long day. Captain Strong knew everybody, and saluted for all the company — the country people vowed my lady was not handsome, to be sure, but pronounced her to be uncommon fine dressed, as indeed she was — with the finest of shawls, the finest of pelisses, the brilliantest of bonnets and wreaths, and a power of rings, cameos, brooches, chains, bangles, and other nameless gimcracks; and ribbons of every breadth and colour of the rainbow flaming on her person. Miss Amory appeared meek in dove-colour, like a vestal virgin — while Master Francis was in the costume, then prevalent, of Rob Roy Macgregor, a celebrated Highland outlaw. The Baronet was not more animated than ordinarily — there was a happy vacuity about him which enabled him to face a dinner, a death, a church, a marriage, with the same indifferent ease.

A pew for the Clavering servants was filled by these domestics, and the enraptured congregation saw the gentlemen from London with "vlower on their heeds," and the miraculous coachman with his silver wig, take their places in that pew

so soon as his horses were put up at the Clavering Arms.

In the course of the service, Master Francis began to make such a yelling in the pew, that Frederic, the tallest of the footmen, was beckoned by his master, and rose and went and carried out Master Francis, who roared and beat him on the head, so that the powder flew round about, like clouds of incense. Nor was he pacified until placed on the box of the carriage, where he played at horses with John's whip.

"You see the little beggar's never been to church before, Miss Bell," the Baronet drawled out to a young lady who was visiting him; "no wonder he should make a row: I don't go in town neither, but I think it's right in the country to give a good example — and that sort of thing."

Miss Bell laughed and said, "The little boy had not given a particularly good example."

"Gad, I don't know, and that sort of thing," said the Baronet. "It ain't so bad neither. Whenever he wants a thing, Frank always cwies, and whenever he cwies he gets it."

Here the child in question began to howl for a dish of sweetmeats on the luncheon-table, and making a lunge across the table-cloth, upset a glass of wine over the best waistcoat of one of the guests present, Mr. Arthur Pendennis, who was greatly annoyed at being made to look foolish, and at having his spotless cambric shirt front blotched with wine.

"We do spoil him so," said Lady Clavering to Mrs. Pendennis, finally gazing at the cherub, whose hands and face were now frothed over with the species of lather which is inserted in the confection called meringues a la creme.

"It is very wrong," said Mrs. Pendennis, as if she had never done such a thing herself as spoil a child.

"Mamma says she spoils my brother — do you think anything could, Miss Bell? Look at him — isn't he like a little angel?"

"Gad, I was quite wight," said the Baronet. "He has cwied, and he has got it, you see. Go it, Fwank, old boy."

"Sir Francis is a very judicious parent," Miss Amory whispered. Don't you think so, Miss Bell? I shan't call you Miss Bell — I shall call you Laura. I admired you so at church. Your robe was not well made, nor your bonnet very fresh. But you have such beautiful grey eyes, and such a lovely tint."

"Thank you," said Miss Bell, laughing.

"Your cousin is handsome, and thinks so. He is uneasy de sa personne. He has not seen the world yet. Has he genius? Has he suffered? A lady, a little woman in a rumpled satin and velvet shoes — a Miss Pybus — came here, and said he has suffered. I, too, have suffered — and you, Laura, has your heart ever been touched?"

Laura said "No!" but perhaps blushed a little at the idea or the question, so that the other said —

"Ah Laura! I see it all. It is the beau cousin. Tell me everything. I already love you as a sister."

"You are very kind," said Miss Bell, smiling, "and — and it must be owned that it is a very sudden attachment."

"All attachments are so. It is electricity — spontaneity. It is instantaneous. I knew I should love you from the moment I saw you. Do you not feel it yourself?"

"Not yet," said Laura; "but — I daresay I shall if I try."

"Call me by my name, then."

"But I don't know it," Laura cried out.

"My name is Blanche — isn't it a pretty name? Call me by it."

"Blanche — it is very pretty, indeed."

"And while mamma talks with that kind-looking lady — what relation is she to you? She must have been pretty once, but is rather passee; she is not well gantee, but she has a pretty hand — and while mamma talks to her, come with me to my own room — my own, own room. It's a darling room, though that horrid creature, Captain Strong, did arrange it. Are you eprise of him? He says you are, but I know better; it is the beau cousin. Yes — il a de beaux yeux. Je n'aime pas les blonds, ordinairement. Car je suis blonde moi — je suis Blanche et blonde," — and she looked at her face and made a moue in the glass; and never stopped for Laura's answer to the questions which she had put.

Blanche was fair, and like a sylph. She had fair hair, with green reflections in it. But she had dark eyebrows. She had long black eyelashes, which veiled beautiful brown eyes. She had such a slim waist, that it was a wonder to behold; and such a slim little feet, that you would have thought the grass would hardly bend under them. Her lips were of the colour of faint rosebuds, and her voice warbled limpidly over a set of the sweetest little pearly teeth ever seen. She showed them very

often, for they were very pretty. She was very good-natured, and a smile not only showed her teeth wonderfully, but likewise exhibited two lovely little pink dimples, that nestled in either cheek.

She showed Laura her drawings, which the other thought charming. She played her some of her waltzes, with a rapid and brilliant finger, and Laura was still more charmed. And she then read her some poems, in French and English, likewise of her own composition, and which she kept locked in her own book — her own dear little book; it was bound in blue velvet, with a gilt lock, and on it was printed in gold the title of ‘Mes Larmes.’

“Mes Larmes! — isn’t it a pretty name?” the young lady continued, who was pleased with everything that she did, and did everything very well. Laura owned that it was. She had never seen anything like it before; anything so lovely, so accomplished, so fragile and pretty; warbling so prettily, and tripping about such a pretty room, with such a number of pretty books, pictures, flowers, round about her. The honest and generous country girl forgot even jealousy in her admiration. “Indeed, Blanche,” she said, “everything in the room is pretty; and you are the prettiest of all.” The other smiled, looked in the glass, went up and took both of Laura’s hands, and kissed them, and sat down to the piano, and shook out a little song, as if she had been a nightingale.

This was the first visit paid by Fairoaks to Clavering Park, in return for Clavering Park’s visit to Fairoaks, in reply to Fairoaks’s cards left a few days after the arrival of Sir Francis’s family. The intimacy between the young ladies sprang up like Jack’s Bean-stalk to the skies in a single night. The large footmen were perpetually walking with little rose-coloured pink notes to Fairoaks; where there was a pretty house-maid in the kitchen, who might possibly tempt those gentlemen to so humble a place. Miss Amory sent music, or Miss Amory sent a new novel, or a picture from the ‘Journal des Modes,’ to Laura; or my lady’s compliments arrived with flowers and fruit; or Miss Amory begged and prayed Miss Bell to come to dinner; and dear Mrs. Pendennis, if she was strong enough; and Mr. Arthur, if a humdrum party were not too stupid for him; and would send a pony-carriage for Mrs. Pendennis; and would take no denial.

Neither Arthur nor Laura wished to refuse. And Helen, who was, indeed, somewhat ailing, was glad that the two should have their pleasure; and would look at them fondly as they set forth, and ask in her heart that she might not be called away until those two beings whom she loved best in the world should be joined together. As they went out and crossed over the bridge, she remembered summer evenings five-and-twenty years ago, when she, too, had bloomed in her brief prime of love and happiness. It was all over now. The moon was looking from the purpling sky, and the stars glittering there, just as they used in the early, well-remembered evenings. He was lying dead far away, with the billows rolling between them. Good God! how well she remembered the last look of his face as they parted. It looked out at her through the vista of long years, as sad and as clear as then.

So Mr. Pen and Miss Laura found the society at Clavering Park an uncommonly agreeable resort of summer evenings. Blanche vowed that she raffoled of Laura; and, very likely, Mr. Pen was pleased with Blanche. His spirits came back: he laughed and rattled till Laura wondered to hear him. It was not the same Pen, yawning in a shooting jacket, in the Fairoaks parlour, who appeared alert and brisk, and smiling and well dressed, in Lady Clavering’s drawing-room. Sometimes they had music. Laura had a sweet contralto voice, and sang with Blanche, who had had the best continental instruction, and was charmed to be her friend’s mistress. Sometimes Mr. Pen joined in these concerts, or oftener looked sweet upon Miss Blanche as she sang. Sometimes they had glees, when Captain Strong’s chest was of vast service, and he boomed out in a prodigious bass, of which he was not a little proud.

“Good fellow, Strong — ain’t he, Miss Bell?” Sir Francis would say to her. “Plays at *ecarte* with Lady Clavering — plays anything, pitch-and-toss, pianoforte, *cwibbage* if you like. How long do you think he’s been staying with me? He came for a week with a carpet-bag, and Gad, he’s been staying here thwee years. Good fellow, ain’t he? Don’t know how he gets a shillin’ though, begad I don’t, Miss Lauwa.”

And yet the Chevalier, if he lost his money to Lady Clavering, always paid it; and if he lived with his friend for three years, paid for that too — in good-humour, in kindness and joviality, in a thousand little services by which he made himself agreeable. What gentleman could want a better friend than a man who was always in spirits, never in the way or out of it, and was ready to execute any commission for his patron, whether it was to sing a song or meet a lawyer, to fight a duel or to carve a capon?

Although Laura and Pen commonly went to Clavering Park together, yet sometimes Mr. Pen took walks there unattended by her, and about which he did not tell her. He took to fishing the Brawl, which runs through the Park, and

passes not very far from the garden-wall. And by the oddest coincidence, Miss Amory would walk out (having been to look at her flowers), and would be quite surprised to see Mr. Pendennis fishing.

I wonder what trout Pen caught while the young lady was looking on? or whether Miss Blanche was the pretty little fish which played round his fly, and which Mr. Pen was endeavouring to hook? It must be owned, he became very fond of that healthful and invigorating pursuit of angling, and was whipping the Brawl continually with his fly.

As for Miss Blanche she had a kind heart; and having, as she owned, herself “suffered” a good deal in the course of her brief life and experience — why, she could compassionate other susceptible beings like Pen, who had suffered too. Her love for Laura and that dear Mrs. Pendennis redoubled: if they were not at the Park, she was not easy unless she herself was at Fair Oaks. She played with Laura; she read French and German with Laura; and Mr. Pen read French and German along with them. He turned sentimental ballads of Schiller and Goethe into English verse for the ladies, and Blanche unlocked ‘*Mes Larmes*’ for him, and imparted to him some of the plaintive outpourings of her own tender Muse.

It appeared from these poems that this young creature had indeed suffered prodigiously. She was familiar with the idea of suicide. Death she repeatedly longed for. A faded rose inspired her with such grief that you would have thought she must die in pain of it. It was a wonder how a young creature (who had had a snug home or been at a comfortable boarding-school, and had no outward grief or hardship to complain of) should have suffered so much — should have found the means of getting at such an ocean of despair and passion (as a runaway boy who will get to sea), and having embarked on it should survive it. What a talent she must have had for weeping to be able to pour out so many of *Mes Larmes*!

They were not particularly briny, Miss Blanche’s tears, that is the truth; but Pen, who read her verses, thought them very well for a lady — and wrote some verses himself for her. His were very violent and passionate, very hot, sweet and strong: and he not only wrote verses; but — O the villain! O, the deceiver! he altered and adapted former poems in his possession, and which had been composed for a certain Emily Fotheringay, for the use and to the Christian name of Miss Blanche Amory.



CHAPTER XXIV

A LITTLE INNOCENT

Every house has its skeleton in it somewhere, and it may be a comfort to some unhappy folks to think that the luckier and most wealthy of their neighbours have their miseries and causes of disquiet. Our little innocent Muse of Blanche, who sang so nicely and talked so sweetly, you would have thought she must have made sunshine where ever she went, was the skeleton, or the misery, or the bore, or the Nemesis of Clavering House, and of most of the inhabitants thereof. As one little stone in your own shoe or your horse's, suffices to put either to torture and to make your journey miserable, so in life a little obstacle is sufficient to obstruct your entire progress, and subject you to endless annoyance and disquiet. Who would have guessed that such a smiling little fairy as Blanche Amory could be the cause of discord in any family?

"I say, Strong," one day the Baronet said, as the pair were conversing after dinner over the billiard-table, and that great unbosomer of secrets, a cigar; "I say, Strong, I wish to the doose your wife was dead."

"So do I. That's a cannon, by Jove. But she won't; she'll live for ever — you see if she don't. Why do you wish her off the hooks, Frank, my boy?" asked Captain Strong.

"Because then you might marry Missy. She ain't bad-looking. She'll have ten thousand, and that's a good bit of money for such a poor old devil as you," drawled out the other gentleman.

"And gad, Strong, I hate her worse and worse every day. I can't stand her, Strong, by gad, I can't."

"I wouldn't take her at twice the figure," Captain Strong said, laughing. "I never saw such a little devil in my life."

"I should like to poison her," said the sententious Baronet; "by Jove I should,"

"Why, what has she been at now?" asked his friend.

"Nothing particular," answered Sir Francis; "only her old tricks. That girl has such a knack of making everybody miserable that, hang me, it's quite surprising. Last night she sent the governess crying away from the dinner-table. Afterwards, as I was passing Frank's room, I heard the poor little beggar howling in the dark, and found his sister had been frightening his soul out of his body, by telling him stories about the ghost that's in the house. At lunch she gave my lady a turn; and though my wife's a fool, she's a good soul — I'm hanged if she ain't."

"What did Missy do to her?" Strong asked.

"Why, hang me, if she didn't begin talking about the late Amory, my predecessor," the Baronet said, with a grin. "She got some picture out of the Keepsake, and said she was sure it was like her dear father, She wanted to know where her father's grave was. Hang her father! Whenever Miss Amory talks about him, Lady Clavering always bursts out crying; and the little devil will talk about him in order to spite her mother. Today when she began, I got in a confounded rage; said I was her father; and — and that sort of thing, and then, sir, she took a shy at me."

"And what did she say about you, Frank?" Mr. Strong, still laughing, inquired of his friend and patron.

"Gad, she said I wasn't her father; that I wasn't fit to comprehend her; that her father must have been a man of genius, and fine feelings, and that sort of thing: whereas I had married her mother for money."

"Well, didn't you?" asked Strong.

"It don't make it any the pleasanter to hear because it's true, don't you know," Sir Francis Clavering answered. "I ain't a literary man and that; but I ain't such a fool as she makes me out. I don't know how it is, but she always manages to put me in the hole, don't you understand. She turns all the house round her in her quiet way, and with her confounded sentimental airs. I wish she was dead, Ned."

"It was my wife whom you wanted dead just now," Strong said, always in perfect good-humour; upon which the Baron with his accustomed candour, said, "Well; when people bore my life out, I do wish they were dead, and I wish Missy were down a well, with all my heart."

Thus it will be seen from the above report of this candid conversation that our accomplished little friend had some peculiarities or defects of character which rendered her not very popular. She was a young lady of some genius, exquisite

sympathies and considerable literary attainments, living, like many another genius, with relatives who could not comprehend her. Neither her mother nor her stepfather were persons of a literary turn. Bell's Life and the Racing Calendar were the extent of the Baronet's reading, and Lady Clavering still wrote like a schoolgirl of thirteen, and with an extraordinary disregard to grammar and spelling. And as Miss Amory felt very keenly that she was not appreciated, and that she lived with persons who were not her equals in intellect or conversational power, she lost no opportunity to acquaint her family circle with their inferiority to herself, and not only was a martyr, but took care to let everybody know that she was so. If she suffered, as she said and thought she did, severely, are we to wonder that a young creature of such delicate sensibilities should shriek and cry out a good deal? Without sympathy life is nothing; and would it not have been a want of candour on her part to affect a cheerfulness which she did not feel, or pretend a respect for those towards whom it was quite impossible she should entertain any reverence? If a poetess may not bemoan her lot, of what earthly use is her lyre? Blanche struck hers only to the saddest of tunes; and sang elegies over her dead hopes, dirges over her early frost-nipt buds of affection, as became such a melancholy fate and Muse.

Her actual distresses, as we have said, had not been up to the present time very considerable: but her griefs lay; like those of most of us, in her own soul — that being sad and habitually dissatisfied, what wonder that she should weep? So Mes Larmes dribbled out of her eyes any day at command: she could furnish an unlimited supply of tears, and her faculty of shedding them increased by practice. For sentiment is like another complaint mentioned by Horace, as increasing by self-indulgence (I am sorry to say, ladies, that the complaint in question is called the dropsy), and the more you cry, the more you will be able and desirous to do so.

Missy had begun to gush at a very early age. Lamartine was her favourite bard from the period when she first could feel: and she had subsequently improved her mind by a sedulous study of novels of the great modern authors of the French language. There was not a romance of Balzac and George Sand which the indefatigable little creature had not devoured — by the time she was sixteen: and, however little she sympathised with her relatives at home, she had friends, as she said, in the spirit-world, meaning the tender Indiana, the passionate and poetic Lelia, the amiable Trenmor, that high-souled convict, that angel of the galleys — the fiery Stenio — and the other numberless heroes of the French romances. She had been in love with Prince Rodolph and Prince Djalma while she was yet at school, and had settled the divorce question, and the rights of woman, with Indiana, before she had left off pinafores. The impetuous little lady played at love with these imaginary worthies as a little while before she had played at maternity with her doll. Pretty little poetical spirits! It is curious to watch them with those playthings. To-day the blue-eyed one is the favourite, and the black-eyed one is pushed behind the drawers. To-morrow blue-eyes may take its turn of neglect and it may be an odious little wretch with a burnt nose, or torn bead of hair, and no eyes at all, that takes the first place in Miss's affection, and is dandled and caressed in her arms.

As novelists are supposed to know everything, even the secrets of female hearts, which the owners themselves do not perhaps know, we may state that at eleven years of age Mademoiselle Betsi, as Miss Amory was then called, had felt tender emotions towards a young Savoyard organ-grinder at Paris, whom she persisted in believing to be a prince carried off from his parents; that at twelve an old and hideous drawing-master (but, ah, what age or personal defects are proof against woman's love?) had agitated her young heart; and that, at thirteen, being at Madame de Caramel's boarding-school, in the Champs Elysees, which, as everybody knows, is next door to Monsieur Rogron's (Chevalier of the Legion of Honour) pension for young gentlemen, a correspondence by letter took place between the seduisante Miss Betsi and two young gentlemen of the College of Charlemagne, who were pensioners of the Chevalier Rogron.

In the above paragraph our young friend has been called by a Christian name different to that under which we were lately presented to her. The fact is, that Miss Amory, called Missy at home, had really at the first been christened Betsy — but assumed the name of Blanche of her own will and fantasy, and crowned herself with it; and the weapon which the Baronet, her stepfather, held in terror over her, was the threat to call her publicly by her name of Betsy, by which menace he sometimes managed to keep the young rebel in order.

We have spoken just now of children's dolls, and of the manner in which those little people take up and neglect their darling toys, and very likely this history will show that Miss Blanche assumed and put away her live dolls with a similar girlish inconstancy. She had had hosts of dear, dear, darling, friends ere now, and had quite a little museum of locks of hair in her treasure-chest, which she had gathered in the course of her sentimental progress. Some dear friends had married: some had gone to other schools: one beloved sister she had lost from the pension, and found again, O, horror! her darling,

her Leocadie keeping the books in her father's shop, a grocer in the Rue du Bac: in fact, she had met with a number of disappointments, estrangements, disillusionments, as she called them in her pretty French jargon, and had seen and suffered a great deal for so young a woman. But it is the lot of sensibility to suffer, and of confiding tenderness to be deceived, and she felt that she was only undergoing the penalties of genius in these pangs and disappointments of her young career.

Meanwhile, she managed to make the honest lady, her mother, as uncomfortable as circumstances would permit; and caused her worthy stepfather to wish she was dead. With the exception of Captain Strong, whose invincible good-humour was proof against her sarcasms, the little lady ruled the whole house with her tongue. If Lady Clavering talked about Sparrowgrass instead of Asparagus, or called an object a hobnob, as this unfortunate lady would sometimes do, Missy calmly corrected her, and frightened the good soul, her mother, into errors only the more frequent as she grew more nervous under her daughter's eye.

It is not to be supposed, considering the vast interest which the arrival of the family at Clavering Park inspired in the inhabitants of the little town, that Madame Fribsby alone, of all the folks in Clavering, should have remained unmoved and incurious. At the first appearance of the Park family in church, Madame noted every article of toilette which the ladies wore, from their bonnets to their brodequins, and took a survey of the attire of the ladies' maids in the pew allotted to them. We fear that Doctor Portman's sermon, though it was one of his oldest and most valued compositions, had little effect upon Madame Fribsby on that day.

In a very few days afterwards, she had managed for herself an interview with Lady Clavering's confidential attendant in the housekeeper's room at the Park; and her cards in French and English, stating that she received the newest fashions from Paris from her correspondent Madame Victorine, and that she was in the custom of making court and ball dresses for the nobility and gentry of the shire, were in the possession of Lady Clavering and Miss Amory, and favourably received, as she was happy to hear, by those ladies.

Mrs. Bonner, Lady Clavering's lady, became soon a great frequenter of Madame Fribsby's drawing-room, and partook of many entertainments at the milliner's expense. A meal of green tea, scandal, hot Sally-Lunn cakes, and a little novel reading, were always at the service of Mrs. Bonner, whenever she was free to pass an evening in the town. And she found much more time for these pleasures than her junior officer, Miss Amory's maid, who seldom could be spared for a holiday, and was worked as hard as any factory-girl by that inexorable little Muse, her mistress.

The Muse loved to be dressed becomingly, and, having a lively fancy and a poetic desire for change, was for altering her attire every day. Her maid having a taste in dressmaking — to which art she had been an apprentice at Paris, before she entered into Miss Blanche's service there — was kept from morning till night altering and remodelling Miss Amory's habiliments; and rose very early and went to bed very late, in obedience to the untiring caprices of her little taskmistress. The girl was of respectable English parents. There are many of our people, colonists of Paris, who have seen better days, who are not quite ruined, who do not quite live upon charity, and yet cannot get on without it; and as her father was a cripple incapable of work, and her return home would only increase the burthen and add to the misery of the family, poor Pincott was fain to stay where she could maintain herself, and spare a little relief to her parents.

Our Muse, with the candour which distinguished her, never failed to remind her attendant of the real state of matters. "I should send you away, Pincott, for you are a great deal too weak, and your eyes are failing you, and you are always crying and snivelling and wanting the doctor; but I wish that your parents at home should be supported, and I go on enduring you for their sake, mind," the dear Blanche would say to her timid little attendant. Or, "Pincott, your wretched appearance and slavish manner, and red eyes, positively give me the migraine; and I think I shall make you wear rouge, so that you may look a little cheerful;" or, "Pincott, I can't bear, even for the sake of your starving parents, that you should tear my hair out of my head in that manner; and I will thank you to write to them and say that I dispense with your services." After which sort of speeches, and after keeping her for an hour trembling over her hair, which the young lady loved to have combed, as she perused one of her favourite French novels, she would go to bed at one o'clock, and say, "Pincott, you may kiss me. Good night. I should like you to have the pink dress ready for the morning." And so with blessing upon her attendant, she would turn round and go to sleep.

The Muse might lie in bed as long as she chose of a morning, and availed herself of that privilege; but Pincott had to rise very early indeed to get her mistress's task done; and had to appear next day with the same red eyes and the same wan face, which displeased Miss Amory by their want of gaiety, and caused the mistress to be so angry, because the servant

persisted in being and looking unwell and unhappy. Not that Blanche ever thought she was a hard mistress. Indeed, she made quite a friend of Pincott, at times, and wrote some very pretty verses about the lonely little tiring-maid, whose heart was far away. Our beloved Blanche was a superior being, and expected to be waited upon as such. And I do not know whether there are any other ladies in this world who treat their servants or dependants so, but it may be that there are such, and that the tyranny which they exercise over their subordinates, and the pangs which they can manage to inflict with a soft voice, and a well-bred simper, are as cruel as those which a slave-driver administers with an oath and a whip.

But Blanche was a Muse — a delicate little creature, quite tremulous with excitability, whose eyes filled with tears at the smallest emotion; and who knows, but that it was the very fineness of her feelings which caused them to be froissed so easily? You crush a butterfly by merely touching it. Vulgar people have no idea of the sensibility of a Muse.

So little Pincott being occupied all day and night in stitching, hemming, ripping, combing, ironing, crimping, for her mistress; reading to her when in bed — for the girl was mistress of the two languages, and had a sweet voice and manner — could take no share in Madame Fribsby's soirees, nor indeed was she much missed, or considered of sufficient consequence to appear at their entertainments.

But there was another person connected with the Clavering establishment, who became a constant guest of our friend, the milliner. This was the chief of the kitchen, Monsieur Mirobolant, with whom Madame Fribsby soon formed an intimacy.

Not having been accustomed to the appearance or society of persons of the French nation, the rustic inhabitants of Clavering were not so favourably impressed by Monsieur Alcide's manners and appearance, as that gentleman might have desired that they should be. He walked among them quite unsuspectingly upon the afternoon of a summer day, when his services were not required at the House, in his usual favourite costume, namely, his light green frock or paletot, his crimson velvet waistcoat, with blue glass buttons, his pantalon Ecosais, of a very large and decided check pattern, his orange satin neckcloth, and his jean-boots, with tips of shiny leather — these, with a gold-embroidered cap, and a richly gilt cane, or other varieties of ornament of a similar tendency, formed his usual holiday costume, in which he flattered himself there was nothing remarkable (unless, indeed, the beauty of his person should attract observation), and in which he considered that he exhibited the appearance of a gentleman of good Parisian ton.

He walked then down the street, grinning and ogling every woman he met with glances, which he meant should kill them outright, and peered over the railings, and in at the windows, where females were, in the tranquil summer evening. But Betsy, Mrs. Pybus's maid, shrank back with a *Lor bless us*, as Alcide ogled her over the laurel-bush; the Miss Bakers, and their mamma, stared with wonder; and presently a crowd began to follow the interesting foreigner, of ragged urchins and children, who left their dirt-pies in the street to pursue him.

For some time he thought that admiration was the cause which led these persons in his wake, and walked on, pleased himself that he could so easily confer on others so much harmless pleasure. But the little children and dirt-pie manufacturers were presently succeeded by followers of a larger growth, and a number of lads and girls from the factory being let loose at this hour, joined the mob, and began laughing, jeering, hooting, and calling opprobrious names at the Frenchman. Some cried out "*Frenchy! Frenchy!*" some exclaimed "*Frogs!*" one asked for a lock of his hair, which was long and in richly-flowing ringlets; and at length the poor artist began to perceive that he was an object of derision rather than of respect to the rude grinning mob.

It was at this juncture that Madame Fribsby spied the unlucky gentleman with the train at his heels, and heard the scornful shouts with which they assailed him. She ran out of her room, and across the street to the persecuted foreigner; she held out her hand, and, addressing him in his own language, invited him into her abode; and when she had housed him fairly within her door, she stood bravely at the threshold before the gibing factory girls and boys, and said they were a pack of cowards to insult a poor man who could not speak their language, and was alone and without protection. The little crowd, with some ironical cheers and hootings, nevertheless felt the force of Madame Fribsby's vigorous allocution, and retreated before her; for the old lady was rather respected in the place, and her oddity and her kindness had made her many friends there.

Poor Mirobolant was grateful indeed to hear the language of his country ever so ill spoken. Frenchmen pardon our faults in their language much more readily than we excuse their bad English; and will face our blunders throughout a long conversation, without the least propensity to grin. The rescued artist vowed that Madame Fribsby was his guardian angel,

and that he had not as yet met with such suavity and politeness among les Anglaises. He was as courteous and complimentary to her as if it was the fairest and noblest of ladies whom he was addressing for Alcide Mirobolant paid homage after his fashion to all womankind, and never dreamed of a distinction of ranks in the realms of beauty, as his phrase was.

A cream, flavoured with pineapple — a mayonnaise of lobster, which he flattered himself was not unworthy of his hand, or of her to whom he had the honour to offer it as an homage, and a box of preserved fruits of Provence, were brought by one of the chef's aides-de-camp, in a basket, the next day to the milliner's, and were accompanied with a gallant note to the amiable Madame Fribsbi. "Her kindness," Alcide said, "had made a green place in the desert of his existence — her suavity would ever contrast in memory with the grossierete of the rustic population, who were not worthy to possess such a jewel." An intimacy of the most confidential nature thus sprang up between the milliner and the chief of the kitchen; but I do not know whether it was with pleasure or mortification that Madame received the declarations of friendship which the young Alcides proffered to her, for he persisted in calling her "La respectable Fribsbi," "La vertueuse Fribsbi," — and in stating that he should consider her as his mother, while he hoped she would regard him as her son. Ah! it was not very long ago, Fribsby thought, that words had been addressed to her in that dear French language, indicating a different sort of attachment. And she sighed as she looked up at the picture of her Carabineer. For it is surprising how young some people's hearts remain when their heads have need of a front or a little hair-dye — and, at this moment, Madame Fribsby, as she told young Alcide, felt as romantic as a girl of eighteen.

When the conversation took this turn — and at their first intimacy Madame Fribsby was rather inclined so to lead it — Alcide always politely diverged to another subject: it was as his mother that he persisted in considering the good milliner. He would recognise her in no other capacity, and with that relationship the gentle lady was forced to content herself, when she found how deeply the artist's heart was engaged elsewhere.

He was not long before he described to her the subject and origin of his passion.

"I declared myself to her," said Alcide, laying his hand on his heart, "in a manner which was as novel as I am charmed to think it was agreeable. Where cannot Love penetrate, respectable Madame Fribsbi? Cupid is the father of invention! — I inquired of the domestics what were the plats of which Mademoiselle partook with most pleasure; and built up my little battery accordingly. On a day when her parents had gone to dine in the world (and I am grieved to say that a grossier dinner at a restaurateur, in the Boulevard, or in the Palais Royal seemed to form the delights of these unrefined persons), the charming Miss entertained some comrades of the pension; and I advised myself to send up a little repast suitable to so delicate young palates. Her lovely name is Blanche. The name of the maiden is white; the wreath of roses which she wears is white. I determined that my dinner should be as spotless as the snow. At her accustomed hour, and instead of the rude gigot a l'eau, which was ordinarily served at her too simple table, I sent her up a little potage a la Reine — a la Reine Blanche I called it — as white as her own tint — and confectioned with the most fragrant cream and almonds. I then offered up at her shrine a filet de merlan a l'gnes, and a delicate plat which I designated as Eperlan a la Sainte-Therese, and of which my charming Miss partook with pleasure. I followed this by two little entrees of sweetbread and chicken; and the only brown thing which I permitted myself in the entertainment was a little roast of lamb, which I lay in a meadow of spinaches, surrounded with croustillons, representing sheep, and ornamented with daisies and other savage flowers. After this came my second service: a pudding a la Reine Elizabeth (who, Madame Fribsbi knows, was a maiden princess); a dish of opal-coloured plover's eggs which I called Nid de tourtereaux a la Roucoule; placing in the midst of them two of those tender volatiles, billing each other, and confectioned with butter; a basket containing little gateaux of apricots, which, I know, all young ladies adore; and a jelly of marasquin, bland insinuating, intoxicating as the glance of beauty. This I designated Ambrosie de Calypso a la Souveraine de mon Coeur. And when the ice was brought in — an ice of plombiere and cherries — how do you think I had shaped them, Madame Fribsbi? In the form of two hearts united with an arrow, on which I had laid, before it entered, a bridal veil in cut-paper, surmounted by a wreath of virginal orange-flowers. I stood at the door to watch the effect of this entry. It was but one cry of admiration. The three young ladies filled their glasses with the sparkling Ay, and carried me in a toast. I heard it — I heard Miss speak of me — I heard her say, 'Tell Monsieur Mirobolant that we thank him — we admire him — we love him!' My feet almost failed me as she spoke.

"Since that, can I have any reason to doubt that the young artist has made some progress in the heart of the English Miss? I am modest, but my glass informs me that I am not ill-looking. Other victories have convinced me of the fact."

"Dangerous man!" cried the milliner.

“The blond misses of Albion see nothing in the dull inhabitants of their brumous isle, which can compare with the ardour and vivacity of the children of the South. We bring our sunshine with us; we are Frenchmen, and accustomed to conquer. Were it not for this affair of the heart, and my determination to marry an Anglaise, do you think I would stop in this island (which is not altogether ungrateful, since I have found here a tender mother in the respectable Madame Fribsbi), in this island, in this family? My genius would use itself in the company of these rustics — the poesy of my art cannot be understood by these carnivorous insularies. No — the men are odious, but the women — the women! I own, dear Fribsbi, are seducing! I have vowed to marry one; and as I cannot go into your markets and purchase, according to the custom of the country, I am resolved to adopt another custom, and fly with one to Gretna Grin. The blonde Miss will go. She is fascinated. Her eyes have told me so. The white dove wants but the signal to fly.”

“Have you any correspondence with her?” asked Fribsby, in amazement, and not knowing whether the young lady or the lover might be labouring under a romantic delusion.

“I correspond with her by means of my art. She partakes of dishes which I make expressly for her. I insinuate to her thus a thousand hints which as she is perfectly spiritual, she receives. But I want other intelligences near her.”

“There is Pincott, her maid,” said Madame Fribsby, who, by aptitude or education, seemed to have some knowledge of affairs of the heart, but the great artist’s brow darkened at this suggestion.

“Madame,” he said, “there are points upon which a gallant man ought to silence himself; though, if he break the secret, he may do so with the least impropriety to his best friend — his adopted mother. Know then, that there is a cause why Miss Pincott should be hostile to me — a cause not uncommon with your sex — jealousy.”

“Perfidious monster!” said the confidante.

“Ah, no,” said the artist, with a deep bass voice, and a tragic accent worthy of the Port St Martin and his favourite melodramas, “not perfidious, but fatal. Yes, I am a fatal man, Madame Fribsbi. To inspire hopeless passion is my destiny. I cannot help it that women love me. Is it my fault that that young woman deperishes and languishes to the view of the eye, consumed by a flame which I cannot return? Listen! There are others in this family who are similarly unhappy. The governess of the young Milor has encountered me in my walks, and looked at me in a way which can bear but one interpretation. And Milady herself, who is of mature age, but who has oriental blood, has once or twice addressed compliments to the lonely artist which can admit of no mistake. I avoid the household, I seek solitude, I undergo my destiny. I can marry but one, and am resolved it shall be to a lady of your nation. And, if her fortune is sufficient I think Miss would be the person who would be most suitable. I wish to ascertain what her means are before I lead her to Gretna Grin.”

Whether Alcides was as irresistible a conqueror as his namesake, or whether he was simply crazy, is a point which must be left to the reader’s judgment. But the latter if he had had the benefit of much French acquaintance, has perhaps met with men amongst them who fancied themselves almost as invincible; and who, if you credit them, have made equal havoc in the hearts of les Anglaises.



CHAPTER XXV

CONTAINS BOTH LOVE AND JEALOUSY

Our readers have already heard Sir Francis Clavering's candid opinion of the lady who had given him her fortune and restored him to his native country and home, and it must be owned that the Baronet was not far wrong in his estimate of his wife, and that Lady Clavering was not the wisest or the best educated of women. She had had a couple of years' education in Europe, in a suburb of London, which she persisted in calling Ackney to her dying day, whence she had been summoned to join her father at Calcutta at the age of fifteen. And it was on her voyage thither, on board the *Ramchunder East Indiaman*, Captain Bragg, in which ship she had two years previously made her journey to Europe, that she formed the acquaintance of her first husband, Mr. Amory, who was third mate of the vessel in question.

We are not going to enter into the early part of Lady Clavering's history, but Captain Bragg, under whose charge Miss Snell went out to her father, who was one of the Captain's consignees, and part owner of the *Ramchunder* and many other vessels, found reason to put the rebellious rascal of a mate in irons, until they reached the Cape, where the Captain left his officer behind; and finally delivered his ward to her father at Calcutta, after a stormy and perilous voyage in which the *Ramchunder* and the cargo and passengers incurred no small danger and damage.

Some months afterwards Amory made his appearance at Calcutta, having worked his way out before the mast from the Cape — married the rich Attorney's daughter in spite of that old speculator — set up as indigo-planter and failed — set up as agent and failed again — set up as editor of the *Sunderbund Pilot* and failed again — quarrelling ceaselessly with his father-inlaw and his wife during the progress of all these mercantile transactions and disasters, and ending his career finally with a crash which compelled him to leave Calcutta and go to New South Wales. It was in the course of these luckless proceedings, that Mr. Amory probably made the acquaintance of Sir Jasper Rogers, the respected Judge of the Supreme Court of Calcutta, who has been mentioned before: and, as the truth must out, it was by making an improper use of his father-inlaw's name, who could write perfectly well, and had no need of an amanuensis, that fortune finally forsook Mr. Amory and caused him to abandon all further struggles with her.

Not being in the habit of reading the Calcutta law-reports very assiduously, the European public did not know of these facts as well as people did in Bengal, and Mrs. Amory and her father finding her residence in India not a comfortable one, it was agreed that the lady should return to Europe, whither she came with her little daughter Betsy or Blanche, then four years old. They were accompanied by Betsy's nurse, who has been presented to the reader in the last chapter as the confidential maid of Lady Clavering, Mrs. Bonner: and Captain Bragg took a house for them in the near neighbourhood of his residence in Pocklington Street.

It was a very hard bitter summer, and the rain it rained every day for some time after Mrs. Amory's arrival. Bragg was very pompous and disagreeable, perhaps ashamed, perhaps anxious, to get rid of the Indian lady. She believed that all the world in London was talking about her husband's disaster, and that the King and Queen and the Court of Directors were aware of her unlucky history. She had a good allowance from her father; she had no call to live in England; and she determined to go abroad. Away she went, then, glad to escape the gloomy surveillance of the odious bully, Captain Bragg. People had no objection to receive her at the continental towns where she stopped, and at the various boarding-houses, where she royally paid her way. She called Hackney Ackney, to be sure (though otherwise she spoke English with a little foreign twang, very curious and not unpleasant); she dressed amazingly; she was conspicuous for her love of eating and drinking, and prepared curries and pillaws at every boarding-house which she frequented; but her singularities of language and behaviour only gave a zest to her society, and Mrs. Amory was deservedly popular. She was the most good-natured, jovial, and generous of women. She was up to any party of pleasure by whomsoever proposed. She brought three times more champagne and fowl and ham to the picnics than anyone else. She took endless boxes for the play, and tickets for the masked balls, and gave them away to everybody. She paid the boarding-house people months beforehand; she helped poor shabby mustachiod bucks and dowagers whose remittances had not arrived, with constant supplies from her purse; and in this way she tramped through Europe, and appeared at Brussels, at Paris, at Milan, at Naples, at Rome, as her fancy led her. News of Amory's death reached her at the latter place, where Captain Clavering was then staying, unable to pay his hotel bill, as, indeed, was his friend, the Chevalier Strong; and the good-natured widow married the descendant of the

ancient house of Clavering — professing, indeed, no particular grief for the scapegrace of a husband whom she had lost. We have brought her thus up to the present time when she was mistress of Clavering Park, in the midst of which Mr. Pinckney, the celebrated painter, portrayed her with her little boy by her side.

Missy followed her mamma in most of her peregrinations, and so learned a deal of life. She had a governess for some time; and after her mother's second marriage, the benefit of Madame de Caramel's select pension in the Champs Elysees. When the Claverings came to England, she of course came with them. It was only within a few years, after the death of her grandfather, and the birth of her little brother, that she began to understand that her position in life was altered, and that Miss Amory, nobody's daughter, was a very small personage in a house compared with Master Francis Clavering, heir to an ancient baronetcy and a noble estate. But for little Frank, she would have been an heiress, in spite of her father: and though she knew, and cared not much about money, of which she never had any stint, and though she was a romantic little Muse, as we have seen, yet she could not reasonably be grateful to the persons who had so contributed to change her condition: nor, indeed, did she understand what the latter really was, until she had made some further progress, and acquired more accurate knowledge in the world.

But this was clear, that her stepfather was dull and weak: that mamma dropped her H's, and was not refined in manners or appearance; and that little Frank was a spoiled quarrelsome urchin, always having his way, always treading upon her feet, always upsetting his dinner on her dresses, and keeping her out of her inheritance. None of these, as she felt, could comprehend her: and her solitary heart naturally pined for other attachments, and she sought around her where to bestow the precious boon of her unoccupied affection.

This dear girl, then, from want of sympathy, or other cause, made herself so disagreeable at home, and frightened her mother and bored her stepfather so much, that they were quite as anxious as she could be that she should settle for herself in life; and hence Sir Francis Clavering's desire expressed to his friend, in the last chapter, that Mrs. Strong should die, and that he would take Blanche to himself as a second Mrs. Strong.

But as this could not be, any other person was welcome to win her: and a smart young fellow, well-looking and well educated like our friend Arthur Pendennis, was quite free to propose for her if he had a mind, and would have been received with open arms by Lady Clavering as a son-in-law, had he had the courage to come forward as a competitor for Miss Amory's hand.

Mr. Pen, however, besides other drawbacks, chose to entertain an extreme diffidence about himself. He was ashamed of his late failures, of his idle and nameless condition, of the poverty which he had brought on his mother by his folly, and there was as much of vanity as remorse in his present state of doubt and distrust. How could he ever hope for such a prize as this brilliant Blanche Amory, who lived in a fine park and mansion, and was waited on by a score of grand domestics, whilst a maid-servant brought in their meagre meal at Fair Oaks, and his mother was obliged to pinch and manage to make both ends meet? Obstacles seemed for him insurmountable, which would have vanished had he marched manfully upon them: and he preferred despairing, or dallying with his wishes — or perhaps he had not positively shaped them as yet — to attempting to win gallantly the object of his desire. Many a young man fails by that species of vanity called shyness, who might, for the asking have his will.

But we do not pretend to say that Pen had, as yet, ascertained his: or that he was doing much more than thinking about falling in love. Miss Amory was charming and lively. She fascinated and cajoled him by a thousand arts or natural graces or flatteries. But there were lurking reasons and doubts, besides shyness and vanity, withholding him. In spite of her cleverness, and her protestations, and her fascinations, Pen's mother had divined the girl, and did not trust her. Mrs. Pendennis saw Blanche light-minded and frivolous, detected many wants in her which offended the pure and pious-minded lady; a want of reverence for her parents, and for things more sacred, Helen thought: worldliness and selfishness couched under pretty words and tender expressions. Laura and Pen battled these points strongly at first with the widow — Laura being as yet enthusiastic about her new friend, and Pen not far-gone enough in love to attempt any concealment of his feelings. He would laugh at these objections of Helen's, and say, "Psha, mother! you are jealous about Laura — all women are jealous."

But when, in the course of a month or two, and by watching the pair with that anxiety with which brooding women watch over their sons' affections — and in acknowledging which, I have no doubt there is a sexual jealousy on the mother's part, and a secret pang — when Helen saw that the intimacy appeared to make progress, that the two young people were perpetually finding pretexts to meet, and that Miss Blanche was at Fair Oaks or Mr. Pen at the Park every day, the poor

widow's heart began to fail her — her darling project seemed to vanish before her; and, giving way to her weakness, she fairly told Pen one day what her views and longings were; that she felt herself breaking, and not long for this world, and that she hoped and prayed before she went, that she might see her two children one. The late events, Pen's life and career and former passion for the actress, had broken the spirit of this tender lady. She felt that he had escaped her, and was in the maternal nest no more; and she clung with a sickening fondness to Laura, Laura who had been left to her by Francis in Heaven.

Pen kissed and soothed her in his grand patronising way. He had seen something of this, he had long thought his mother wanted to make this marriage — did Laura know anything of it? (Not she — Mrs. Pendennis said — not for worlds would she have breathed a word of it to Laura)—“Well, well, there was time enough, his mother wouldn't die,” Pen said, laughingly: “he wouldn't hear of any such thing, and as for the Muse, she is too grand a lady to think about poor little me — and as for Laura, who knows that she would have me? She would do anything you told her, to be sure. But am I worthy of her?”

“O, Pen, you might be,” was the widow's reply; not that Mr. Pen ever doubted that he was; and a feeling of indefinable pleasure and self-complacency came over him as he thought over this proposal, and imaged Laura to himself, as his memory remembered her for years past, always fair and open, kindly and pious, cheerful, tender and true. He looked at her with brightening eyes as she came in from the garden at the end of this talk, her cheeks rather flushed, her looks frank and smiling — a basket of roses in her hand.

She took the finest of them and brought it to Mrs. Pendennis, who was refreshed by the odour and colour of these flowers; and hung over her fondly and gave it to her.

“And I might have this prize for the asking!” Pen thought with a thrill of triumph, as he looked at the kindly girl. “Why, she is as beautiful and as generous as her roses.” The image of the two women remained for ever after in his mind, and he never recalled it but the tears came into his eyes.

Before very many weeks' intimacy with her new acquaintance, however, Miss Laura was obliged to give in to Helen's opinion, and own that the Muse was selfish, unkind, and inconstant. Of course Blanche confided to her bosom friend all the little griefs and domestic annoyances; how the family could not comprehend her and she moved among them an isolated being; how her poor mamma's education had been neglected, and she was forced to blush for her blunders; how Sir Francis was a weak person deplorably unintellectual, and only happy when smoking his odious cigars; how, since the birth of her little brother, she had seen her mother's precious affection, which she valued more than anything in life, estranged from her once darling daughter; how she was alone, alone, alone in the world.

But these griefs, real and heart-rending though they might be to a young lady of exquisite sensibility, did not convince Laura of the propriety of Blanche's conduct in many small incidents of Little Frank, for instance, life might be very provoking, and might have deprived Blanche of her mamma's affection, but this was no reason why Blanche should box the child's ears because he upset a glass of water over her drawing, and why she should call him many opprobrious names in the English and French language; and the preference accorded to little Frank was certainly no reason why Blanche should give herself imperial airs of command towards the boy's governess, and send that young lady upon messages through the house to bring her book or to fetch her pocket-handkerchief. When a domestic performed an errand for honest Laura, she was always thankful and pleased; whereas she could not but perceive that the little Muse had not the slightest scruple in giving her commands to all the world round about her, and in disturbing anybody's ease or comfort, in order to administer to her own. It was Laura's first experience in friendship; and it pained the kind creature's heart to be obliged to give up as delusions, one by one, those charms and brilliant qualities in which her fancy had dressed her new friend, and to find that the fascinating little fairy was but a mortal, and not a very amiable mortal after all. What generous person is there that has not been so deceived in his time? — what person, perhaps, that has not so disappointed others in his turn?

After the scene with little Frank, in which that refractory son and heir of the house of Clavering had received the compliments in French and English, and the accompanying box on the ear from his sister, Miss Laura who had plenty of humour, could not help calling to mind some very touching and tender verses which the Muse had read to her out of *Mes Larmes*, and which began, “My pretty baby brother, may angels guard thy rest,” in which the Muse, after complimenting the baby upon the station in life which it was about to occupy, and contrasting it with her own lonely condition, vowed nevertheless that the angel boy would never enjoy such affection as hers was, or find in the false world before him anything so constant and tender as a sister's heart. “It may be,” the forlorn one said, “it may be, you will slight it, my pretty baby

sweet, You will spurn me from your bosom, I'll cling around your feet! O let me, let me, love you! the world will prove to you As false as 'tis to others, but I am ever true." And behold the Muse was boxing the darling brother's ears instead of kneeling at his feet, and giving Miss Laura her first lesson in the Cynical philosophy — not quite her first, however — something like this selfishness and waywardness, something like this contrast between practice and poetry, between grand versified aspirations and everyday life, she had witnessed at home in the person of our young friend Mr. Pen.

But then Pen was different. Pen was a man. It seemed natural somehow that he should be self-willed and should have his own way. And under his waywardness and selfishness, indeed there was a kind and generous heart. O it was hard that such a diamond should be changed away against such a false stone as this. In a word, Laura began to be tired of her admired Blanche. She had assayed her and found her not true; and her former admiration and delight, which she had expressed with her accustomed generous artlessness, gave way to a feeling, which we shall not call contempt, but which was very near it; and which caused Laura to adopt towards Miss Amory a grave and tranquil tone of superiority, which was at first by no means to the Muse's liking. Nobody likes to be found out, or, having held a high place, to submit to step down.

The consciousness that this event was impending did not serve to increase Miss Blanche's good-humour, and as it made her peevish and dissatisfied with herself, it probably rendered her even less agreeable to the persons round about her. So there arose, one fatal day, a battle-royal between dearest Blanche and dearest Laura, in which the friendship between them was all but slain outright. Dearest Blanche had been unusually capricious and wicked on this day. She had been insolent to her mother; savage with little Frank; odiously impertinent in her behaviour to the boy's governess; and intolerably cruel to Pincott, her attendant. Not venturing to attack her friend (for the little tyrant was of a timid feline nature, and only used her claws upon those who were weaker than herself), she maltreated all these, and especially poor Pincott, who was menial, confidante, companion (slave always), according to the caprice of her young mistress.

This girl, who had been sitting in the room with the young ladies, being driven thence in tears, occasioned by the cruelty of her mistress, and raked with a parting sarcasm as she went sobbing from the door, Laura fairly broke out into a loud and indignant invective — wondered how one so young could forget the deference owing to her elders as well as to her inferiors in station; and professing so much sensibility of her own, could torture the feelings of others so wantonly. Laura told her friend that her conduct was absolutely wicked, and that she ought to ask pardon of Heaven on her knees for it. And having delivered herself of a hot and voluble speech whereof the delivery astonished the speaker as much almost as her auditor, she ran to her bonnet and shawl, and went home across the park in a great flurry and perturbation, and to the surprise of Mrs. Pendennis, who had not expected her until night.

Alone with Helen, Laura gave an account of the scene, and gave up her friend henceforth. "O Mamma," she said, "you were right; Blanche, who seems so soft and so kind, is, as you have said, selfish and cruel. She who is always speaking of her affections can have no heart. No honest girl would afflict a mother so, or torture a dependant; and — and, I give her up from this day, and I will have no other friend but you."

On this the two ladies went through the osculatory ceremony which they were in the habit of performing, and Mrs. Pendennis got a great secret comfort from the little quarrel — for Laura's confession seemed to say, "That girl can never be a wife for Pen, for she is light-minded and heartless, and quite unworthy of our noble hero. He will be sure to find out her unworthiness for his own part, and then he will be saved from this flighty creature, and awake out of his delusion."

But Miss Laura did not tell Mrs. Pendennis, perhaps did not acknowledge to herself, what had been the real cause of the day's quarrel. Being in a very wicked mood, and bent upon mischief everywhere, the little wicked Muse of a Blanche had very soon begun her tricks. Her darling Laura had come to pass a long day; and as they were sitting in her own room together, had chosen to bring the conversation round to the subject of Mr. Pen.

"I am afraid he is sadly fickle," Miss Blanche observed; "Mrs. Pybus, and many more Clavering people, have told us all about the actress."

"I was quite a child when it happened, and I don't know anything about it," Laura answered, blushing very much.

"He used her very ill," Blanche said, wagging her little head. "He was false to her."

"I am sure he was not," Laura cried out; "he acted most generously by her; he wanted to give up everything to marry her. It was she that was false to him. He nearly broke his heart about it: he —"

"I thought you didn't know anything about the story, dearest," interposed Miss Blanche.

“Mamma has said so,” said Laura.

“Well, he is very clever,” continued the other little dear, “What a sweet poet he is! Have you ever read his poems?”

“Only the ‘Fisherman and the Diver,’ which he translated for us, and his Prize Poem, which didn’t get the prize; and, indeed, I thought it very pompous and prosy,” Laura said, laughing.

“Has he never written you any poems, then, love?” asked Miss Amory.

“No, my dear,” said Miss Bell.

Blanche ran up to her friend, kissed her fondly, called her my dearest Laura at least three times, looked her archly in the face, nodded her head, and said, “Promise to tell no-o-body, and I will show you something.”

And tripping across the room daintily to a little mother-of-pearl inlaid desk, she opened it with a silver key, and took out two or three papers crumpled and rather stained with green, which she submitted to her friend. Laura took them and read them. They were love-verses sure enough — something about Undine — about a Naiad — about a river. She looked at them for a long time; but in truth the lines were not very distinct before her eyes.

“And you have answered them, Blanche?” she asked, putting them back.

“O no! not for worlds, dearest,” the other said: and when her dearest Laura had quite done with the verses, she tripped back and popped them again into the pretty desk.

Then she went to her piano, and sang two or three songs of Rossini, whose flourishes of music her flexible little voice could execute to perfection, and Laura sate by, vaguely listening as she performed these pieces. What was Miss Bell thinking about the while? She hardly knew; but sate there silent as the songs rolled by. After this concert the young ladies were summoned to the room where luncheon was served; and whither they of course went with their arms round each other’s waists.

And it could not have been jealousy or anger on Laura’s part which had made her silent; for, after they had tripped along the corridor and descended the steps, and were about to open the door which leads into the hall, Laura paused, and looking her friend kindly and frankly in the face, kissed her with a sisterly warmth.

Something occurred after this — Master Frank’s manner of eating, probably, or mamma’s blunders, or Sir Francis smelling of cigars — which vexed Miss Blanche, and she gave way to that series of naughtinesses whereof we have spoken, and which ended in the above little quarrel.



CHAPTER XXVI

A HOUSE FULL OF VISITORS

The difference between the girls did not last long. Laura was always too eager to forgive and be forgiven, and as for Miss Blanche, her hostilities, never very long or durable, had not been provoked by the above scene. Nobody cares about being accused of wickedness. No vanity is hurt by that sort of charge: Blanche was rather pleased than provoked by her friend's indignation, which never would have been raised but for a cause which both knew, though neither spoke of.

And so Laura, with a sigh, was obliged to confess that the romantic part of her first friendship was at an end, and that the object of it was only worthy of a very ordinary sort of regard.

As for Blanche, she instantly composed a copy of touching verses, setting forth her desertion and disenchantment. It was only the old story, she wrote, of love meeting with coldness, and fidelity returned by neglect; and some new neighbours arriving from London about this time, in whose family there were daughters, Miss Amory had the advantage of selecting an eternal friend from one of these young ladies, and imparting her sorrows and disappointments to this new sister. The tall footmen came but seldom now with notes to the sweet Laura; the pony-carriage was but rarely despatched to Fair Oaks to be at the orders of the ladies there. Blanche adopted a sweet look of suffering martyrdom when Laura came to see her. The other laughed at her friend's sentimental mood, and treated it with a good-humour that was by no means respectful.

But if Miss Blanche found new female friends to console her, the faithful historian is also bound to say, that she discovered some acquaintances of the other sex who seemed to give her consolation too. If ever this artless young creature met a young man, and had ten minutes' conversation with him in a garden walk, in a drawing-room window, or in the intervals of a waltz, she confided in him, so to speak — made play with her beautiful eyes — spoke in a tone of tender interest, and simple and touching appeal, and left him, to perform the same pretty little drama in behalf of his successor.

When the Claverings first came down to the Park, there were very few audiences before whom Miss Blanche could perform: hence Pen had all the benefits of her glances and confidences, and the drawing-room window or the garden walk all to himself. In the town of Clavering, it has been said, there were actually young men: in the near surrounding country, only a curate or two or a rustic young squire, with large feet and ill-made clothes. To the dragoons quartered at Chatteris the Baronet made no overtures: it was unluckily his own regiment: he had left it on bad terms with some officers of the corps — an ugly business about a horse bargain — a disputed play account — blind-Hookey — a white feather — who need ask? — it is not our business to inquire too closely into the by-gones of our characters, except in so far as their previous history appertains to the development of this present story.

But the autumn, and the end of the Parliamentary Session and the London season, brought one or two county families down to their houses, and filled tolerably the neighbouring little watering-place of Baymouth, and opened our friend Mr. Bingley's Theatre Royal at Chatteris, and collected the usual company at the Assizes and Race-balls there. Up to this time, the old county families had been rather shy of our friends of Clavering Park. The Fogeys of Drummington; the Squares of Tozely Park; the Welbores of The Barrow, etc.: all sorts of stories were current among these folks regarding the family at Clavering; — indeed, nobody ought to say that people in the country have no imagination who heard them talk about new neighbours. About Sir Francis and his Lady, and her birth and parentage, about Miss Amory, about Captain Strong, there had been endless histories which need not be recapitulated; and the family of the Park had been three months in the county before the great people around began to call.

But at the end of the season, the Earl of Trehawk, Lord Lieutenant of the County, coming to Eyrie Castle, and the Countess Dowager of Rockminster, whose son was also a magnate of the land, to occupy a mansion on the Marine Parade at Baymouth — these great folks came publicly, immediately, and in state, to call upon the family of Clavering Park; and the carriages of the county families speedily followed in the track which had been left in the avenue by their lordly wheels.

It was then that Mirobolant began to have an opportunity of exercising that skill which he possessed, and of forgetting, in the occupations of his art, the pangs of love. It was then that the large footmen were too much employed at Clavering Park to be able to bring messages, or dally over the cup of small beer with the poor little maids at Fair Oaks. It was then that

Blanche found other dear friends than Laura, and other places to walk in besides the river-side, where Pen was fishing. He came day after day, and whipped the stream, but the "fish, fish!" wouldn't do their duty, nor the Peri appear. And here, though in strict confidence, and with a request that the matter go no further, we may as well allude to a delicate business, of which previous hint has been given. Mention has been made, in a former page, of a certain hollow tree, at which Pen used to take his station when engaged in his passion for Miss Fotheringay, and the cavity of which he afterwards used for other purposes than to insert his baits and fishing-cans in. The truth is, he converted this tree into a post-office. Under a piece of moss and a stone, he used to put little poems, or letters equally poetical, which were addressed to a certain Undine, or Naiad who frequented the stream, and which, once or twice, were replaced by a receipt in the shape of a flower, or by a modest little word or two of acknowledgment, written in a delicate hand, in French or English, and on pink scented paper. Certainly, Miss Amory used to walk by this stream, as we have seen; and it is a fact that she used pink scented paper for her correspondence. But after the great folks had invaded Clavering Park, and the family coach passed out of the lodge-gates, evening after evening, on their way to the other great country houses, nobody came to fetch Pen's letters at the post-office; the white paper was not exchanged for the pink, but lay undisturbed under its stone and its moss, whilst the tree was reflected into the stream, and the Brawl went rolling by. There was not much in the letters certainly; in the pink notes scarcely anything — merely a little word or two, half jocular, half sympathetic, such as might be written by any young lady. But oh, you silly Pendennis, if you wanted this one, why did you not speak? Perhaps neither party was in earnest. You were only playing at being in love, and the sportive little Undine was humouring you at the same play.

But if a man is balked at this game, he not unfrequently loses his temper; and when nobody came any more for Pen's poems, he began to look upon those compositions in a very serious light. He felt almost tragical and romantic again, as in his first affair of the heart:— at any rate he was bent upon having an explanation. One day he went to the Hall and there was a roomful of visitors: on another, Miss Amory was not to be seen; she was going to a ball that night, and was lying down to take a little sleep. Pen cursed balls, and the narrowness of his means, and the humility of his position in the country that caused him to be passed over by the givers of these entertainments. On a third occasion, Miss Amory was in the garden, and he ran thither; she was walking there in state with no less personages than the Bishop and Bishopess of Chatteris and the episcopal family, who scowled at him, and drew up in great dignity when he was presented to them, and they heard his name. The Right Reverend Prelate had heard it before, and also of the little transaction in the Dean's garden.

"The Bishop says you're a sad young man," good-natured Lady Clavering whispered to him. "What have you been a doing of? Nothink, I hope, to vex such a dear Mar as yours? How is your dear Mar? Why don't she come and me? We ain't seen her this ever such a time. We're a goin about a gaddin, so that we don't see no neighbours now. Give my love to her and Laurar, and come all to dinner tomorrow."

Mrs. Pendennis was too unwell to come out but Laura and Pen came, and there was a great party, and Pen only got an opportunity of a hurried word with Miss Amory. "You never come to the river now" he said.

"I can't," said Blanche, "the house is full of people."

"Undine has left the stream," Mr. Pen went on, choosing to be poetical.

"She never ought to have gone there," Miss Amory answered. "She won't go again. It was very foolish: very wrong: it was only play. Besides, you have other consolations at home," she added, looking him full in the face an instant, and dropping her eyes.

If he wanted her, why did he not speak then? She might have said "Yes" even then. But as she spoke of other consolations at home, he thought of Laura, so affectionate and so pure, and of his mother at home, who had bent her fond heart upon uniting him with her adopted daughter. "Blanche!" he began, in a vexed tone — "Miss Amory!"

"Laura is looking at us, Mr. Pendennis," the young lady said. "I must go back to the company," and she ran off, leaving Mr. Pendennis to bite his nails in perplexity, and to look out into the moonlight in the garden.

Laura indeed was looking at Pen. She was talking with, or appearing to listen to the talk of, Mr. Pynsent, Lord Rockminster's son, and grandson of the Dowager Lady, who was seated in state in the place of honour, gravely receiving Lady Clavering's bad grammar, and patronising the vacuous Sir Francis, whose interest in the county she was desirous to secure. Pynsent and Pen had been at Oxbridge together, where the latter, during his heyday of good fortune and fashion, had been the superior of the young patrician, and perhaps rather supercilious towards him. They had met for the first time,

since they parted at the University, at the table today, and given each other that exceedingly impertinent and amusing demi-nod of recognition which is practised in England only, and only to perfection by University men — and which seems to say, “Confound you — what do you do here?”

“I knew that man at Oxbridge,” Mr. Pynsent said to Miss Bell — “a Mr. Pendennis, I think.”

“Yes,” said Miss Bell.

“He seems rather sweet upon Miss Amory,” the gentleman went on. Laura looked at them, and perhaps thought so too, but said nothing.

“A man of large property in the county, ain’t he? He used to talk about representing it. He used to speak at the Union. Whereabouts do his estates lie?”

Laura smiled. “His estates lie on the other side of the river, near the lodge-gate. He is my cousin, and I live there.”

“Where?” asked Mr. Pynsent, with a laugh.

“Why, on the other side of the river, at Fair Oaks,” answered Miss Bell.

“Many pheasants there? Cover looks rather good,” said the simple gentleman.

Laura smiled again. “We have nine hens and a cock, a pig, and an old pointer.”

“Pendennis don’t preserve, then?” continued Mr. Pynsent.

“You should come and see him,” the girl said, laughing, and greatly amused at the notion that her Pen was a great county gentleman, and perhaps had given himself out to be such.

“Indeed, I quite long to renew our acquaintance,” Mr. Pynsent said, gallantly, and with a look which fairly said, “It is you that I would like to come and see” — to which look and speech Miss Laura vouchsafed a smile, and made a little bow.

Here Blanche came stepping up with her most fascinating smile and ogle, and begged dear Laura to come and take the second in a song. Laura was ready to do anything good-natured, and went to the piano; by which Mr. Pynsent listened as long as the duet lasted, and until Miss Amory began for herself, when he strode away.

“What a nice, frank, amiable, well-bred girl that is, Wagg,” said Mr. Pynsent to a gentleman who had come over with him from Baymouth — “the tall one, I mean, with the ringlets and red lips — monstrous red, ain’t they?”

“What do you think of the girl of the house?” asked Wagg.

“I think she’s a lean, scraggy humbug,” said Mr. Pynsent, with great candour. “She drags her shoulders out of her dress, she never lets her eyes alone: and she goes simpering and ogling about like a French waiting-maid.

“Pynsent, be civil,” cried the other, “somebody can hear.”

“Oh, it’s Pendennis of Boniface,” Mr. Pynsent said. “Fine evening, Mr. Pendennis; we were just talking of your charming cousin.”

“Any relation to my old friend, Major Pendennis?” asked Mr. Wagg.

“His nephew. Had the pleasure of meeting you at Gaunt House,” Mr. Pen said with his very best air — the acquaintance between the gentlemen was made in an instant.

In the afternoon of the next day, the two gentlemen who were staying at Clavering Park were found by Mr. Pen on his return from a fishing excursion, in which he had no sport, seated in his mother’s drawing-room in comfortable conversation with the widow and her ward. Mr. Pynsent, tall and gaunt, with large red whiskers and an imposing tuft to his chin, was striding over a chair in the intimate neighbourhood of Miss Laura. She was amused by his talk, which was simple, straightforward, rather humorous and keen, and interspersed with homely expressions of a style which is sometimes called slang. It was the first specimen of a young London dandy that Laura had seen or heard: for she had been but a chit at the time of Mr. Foker’s introduction at Fair Oaks, nor indeed was that ingenuous gentleman much more than a boy, and his refinement was only that of a school and college.

Mr. Wagg, as he entered the Fair Oaks premises with his companion, eyed and noted everything. “Old gardener,” he said, seeing Mr. John at the lodge — “old red livery waistcoat — clothes hanging out to dry on the gooseberry-bushes — blue aprons, white ducks — gad, they must be young Pendennis’s white ducks — nobody else wears ’em in the family. Rather a shy place for a sucking county member, ay, Pynsent?”

“Snug little crib,” said Mr. Pynsent, “pretty cosy little lawn.”

"Mr. Pendennis at home, old gentleman?" Mr. Wagg said to the old domestic. John answered, "No, Master Pendennis was agone out."

"Are the ladies at home?" asked the younger visitor. Mr. John answered, "Yes, they be;" and as the pair walked over the trim gravel, and by the neat shrubberies, up the steps to the hall-door, which old John opened, Mr. Wagg noted everything that he saw; the barometer and the letter-bag, the umbrellas and the ladies' clogs, Pen's hats and tartan wrapper, and old John opening the drawing-room door, to introduce the new-comers. Such minutiae attracted Wagg instinctively; he seized them in spite of himself.

"Old fellow does all the work," he whispered to Pynsent. "Caleb Balderstone. Shouldn't wonder if he's the housemaid." The next minute the pair were in the presence of the Fair Oaks ladies; in whom Pynsent could not help recognising two perfectly well-bred ladies, and to whom Mr. Wagg made his obeisance, with florid bows, and extra courtesy, accompanied with an occasional knowing leer at his companion. Mr. Pynsent did not choose to acknowledge these signals, except by extreme haughtiness towards Mr. Wagg, and particular deference to the ladies. If there was one thing laughable in Mr. Wagg's eyes, it was poverty. He had the soul of a butler who had been brought from his pantry to make fun in the drawing-room. His jokes were plenty, and his good-nature thoroughly genuine, but he did not seem to understand that a gentleman could wear an old coat, or that a lady could be respectable unless she had her carriage, or employed a French milliner.

"Charming place, ma'am," said he, bowing to the widow; "noble prospect — delightful to us Cocknies, who seldom see anything but Pall Mall." The widow said simply, she had never been in London but once in her life — before her son was born.

"Fine village, ma'am, fine village," said Mr. Wagg, "and increasing every day. It'll be quite a large town soon. It's not a bad place to live in for those who can't get the country, and will repay a visit when you honour it."

"My brother, Major Pendennis, has often mentioned your name to us," the widow said, "and we have been very much amused by some of your droll books, sir," Helen continued, who never could be brought to like Mr. Wagg's books, and detested their tone most thoroughly.

"He is my very good friend," Mr. Wagg said, with a low bow, "and one of the best known men about town, and where known, ma'am, appreciated — I assure you appreciated. He is with our friend Steyne, at Aix-la-Chapelle. Steyne has a touch of the gout and so, between ourselves, has your brother. I am going to Stillbrook for the pheasant-shooting, and afterwards to Bareacres, where Pendennis and I shall probably meet;" and he poured out a flood of fashionable talk, introducing the names of a score of peers, and rattling on with breathless spirits, whilst the simple widow listened in silent wonder. What a man, she thought; are all the men of fashion in London like this? I am sure Pen will never like him.

Mr. Pynsent was in the meanwhile engaged with Miss Laura. He named some of the houses in the neighbourhood whither he was going, and hoped very much that he should see Miss Bell at some of them. He hoped that her aunt would give her a season in London. He said, that in the next parliament it was probable that he should canvass the county, and he hoped to get Pendennis's interest here. He spoke of Pen's triumph as an orator at Oxbridge, and asked was he coming into parliament too? He talked on very pleasantly, and greatly to Laura's satisfaction, until Pen himself appeared, and, as has been said, found these gentlemen.

Pen behaved very courteously to the pair, now that they have found their way into his quarters; and though he recollected with some twinges a conversation at Oxbridge, when Pynsent was present, and in which after a great debate at the Union, and in the midst of considerable excitement produced by a supper and champagne-cup — he had announced his intention of coming in for his native county, and had absolutely returned thanks in a fine speech as the future member; yet Mr. Pynsent's manner was so frank and cordial, that Pen hoped Pynsent might have forgotten his little fanfaronnade, and any other braggadocio speeches or actions which he might have made. He suited himself to the tone of the visitors, then, and talked about Plinlimmon and Magnus Charters, and the old set at Oxbridge, with careless familiarity and high-bred ease, as if he lived with marquises every day, and a duke was no more to him than a village curate.

But at this juncture, and it being then six o'clock in the evening, Betsy, the maid, who did not know of the advent of strangers, walked into the room without any preliminary but that of flinging the door wide open before her, and bearing in her arms a tray, containing three tea-cups, a tea-pot, and a plate of thick bread-and-butter. All Pen's splendour and magnificence vanished away at this — and he faltered and became quite abashed. "What will they think of us?" he thought: and, indeed, Wagg thrust his tongue in his cheek, thought the tea infinitely contemptible, and leered and winked at

Pynsent to that effect.

But to Mr. Pynsent the transaction appeared perfectly simple — there was no reason present to his mind why people should not drink tea at six if they were minded, as well as at any other hour; and he asked of Mr. Wagg, when they went away, “What the devil he was grinning and winking at, and what amused him?”

“Didn’t you see how the cub was ashamed of the thick bread-and-butter? I dare say they’re going to have treacle if they are good. I’ll take an opportunity of telling old Pendennis when we get back to town,” Mr. Wagg chuckled out.

“Don’t see the fun,” said Mr. Pynsent.

“Never thought you did,” growled Wagg between his teeth; they walked home rather sulkily.

Wagg told the story at dinner very smartly, with wonderful accuracy of observation. He described old John, the clothes that were drying, the clogs in the hall, the drawing-room, and its furniture and pictures; — “Old man with a beak and bald head — feu Pendennis I bet two to one; sticking-plaster full-length of a youth in a cap and gown — the present Marquis of Fair Oaks, of course; the widow when young in a miniature, Mrs. Mee; she had the gown on when we came, or a dress made the year after, and the tips cut off the fingers of her gloves which she stitches her son’s collars with; and then the serving maid came in with their teas so we left the Earl and the Countess to their bread-and-butter.”

Blanche, near whom he sat as he told this story, and who adored *les hommes desprit*, burst out laughing, and called him such an odd, droll creature. But Pynsent, who began to be utterly disgusted with him, broke out in a loud voice, and said, “I don’t know, Mr. Wagg, what sort of ladies you are accustomed to meet in your own family, but by gad, as far as a first acquaintance can show, I never met two better-bred women in my life, and I hope, ma’am, you’ll call upon ’em,” he added, addressing Lady Rockminster, who was seated at Sir Francis Clavering’s right hand.

Sir Francis turned to the guest on his left, and whispered. “That’s what I call a sticker for Wagg.” And Lady Clavering, giving the young gentleman a delighted tap with her fan, winked her black eyes at him, and said, “Mr. Pynsent, you’re a good feller.”

After the affair with Blanche, a difference ever so slight, a tone of melancholy, perhaps a little bitter, might be perceived in Laura’s converse with her cousin. She seemed to weigh him and find him wanting too; the widow saw the girl’s clear and honest eyes watching the young man at times, and a look of almost scorn pass over her face, as he lounged in the room with the women, or lazily sauntered smoking upon the lawn, or lolled under a tree there over a book which he was too listless to read.

“What has happened between you?” eager-sighted Helen asked of the girl. “Something has happened. Has that wicked little Blanche been making mischief? Tell me, Laura.”

“Nothing has happened at all,” Laura said.

“Then why do you look at Pen so?” asked his mother quickly.

“Look at him, dear mother!” said the girl. “We two women are no society for him: we don’t interest him; we are not clever enough for such a genius as Pen. He wastes his life and energies away among us, tied to our apron-strings. He interests himself in nothing: he scarcely cares to go beyond the garden-gate. Even Captain Glanders and Captain Strong pall upon him,” she added with a bitter laugh; “and they are men, you know, and our superiors. He will never be happy while he is here. Why, is he not facing the world, and without a profession?”

“We have got enough, with great economy,” said the widow, her heart beginning to beat violently. “Pen has spent nothing for months. I’m sure he is very good. I am sure he might be very happy with us.”

“Don’t agitate yourself so, dear mother,” the girl answered. “I don’t like to see you so. You should not be sad because Pen is unhappy here. All men are so. They must work. They must make themselves names and a place in the world. Look, the two captains have fought and seen battles; that Mr. Pynsent, who came here, and who will be very rich, is in a public office; he works very hard, he aspires to a name and a reputation. He says Pen was one of the best speakers at Oxbridge, and had as great a character for talent as any of the young gentlemen there. Pen himself laughs at Mr. Wagg’s celebrity (and indeed he is a horrid person), and says he is a dunce, and that anybody could write his books.”

“I am sure they are odious and vulgar,” interposed the widow.

“Yet he has a reputation. — You see the County Chronicle says, ‘The celebrated Mr. Wagg has been sojourning at Baymouth — let our fashionables and eccentrics look out for something from his caustic pen.’ If Pen can write better than

this gentleman, and speak better than Mr. Pynsent, why doesn't he? Mamma, he can't make speeches to us; or distinguish himself here. He ought to go away, indeed he ought."

"Dear Laura," said Helen, taking the girl's hand. "Is it kind of you to hurry him so? I have been waiting. I have been saving up money these many months — to — to pay back your advance to us."

"Hush, mother!" Laura cried, embracing her friend hastily. "It was your money, not mine. Never speak about that again. How much money have you saved?"

Helen said there were more than two hundred pounds at the bank, and that she would be enabled to pay off all Laura's money by the end of the next year.

"Give it him — let him have the two hundred pounds. Let him go to London and be a lawyer: be something, be worthy of his mother — and of mine, dearest mamma," said the good girl; upon which, and with her usual tenderness and emotion, the fond widow declared that Laura was a blessing to her and the best of girls — and I hope no one in this instance will be disposed to contradict her.

The widow and her daughter had more than one conversation on this subject; and the elder gave way to the superior reason of the honest and stronger-minded girl; and indeed, whenever there was a sacrifice to be made on her part, this kind lady was only too eager to make it. But she took her own way, and did not lose sight of the end she had in view, in imparting these new plans to Pen. One day she told him of these projects, and it was that had formed them; how it was Laura who insisted upon his going to London and studying; how it was Laura who would not hear of the — the money arrangements when he came back from Oxbridge — being settled just then: how it was Laura whom he had to thank, if indeed he thought that he had to go.

At that news Pen's countenance blazed up with pleasure, and he hugged his mother to his heart with an ardour that I fear disappointed the fond lady; but she rallied when he said, "By Heaven! she is a noble girl, and may God Almighty bless her mother! I have been wearing myself away for months here, longing to work, and not knowing how. I've been fretting over the thoughts of my shame, and my debts, and my past cursed extravagance and follies. I've suffered infernally. My heart has been half broken — never mind about that. If I can get a chance to redeem the past, and to do my duty to myself and the best mother in the world, indeed, indeed, I will. I'll be worthy of you yet. Heaven bless you! God bless Laura! Why isn't she here, that I may go and thank her?" Pen went on with more incoherent phrases; paced up and down the room, drank glasses of water, jumped about his mother with a thousand embraces — began to laugh — began to sing — was happier than she had seen him since he was a boy — since he had tasted of the fruit of that awful Tree of Life, which, from the beginning, has tempted all mankind.

Laura was not at home. Laura was on a visit to the stately Lady Rockminster, daughter to my Lord Bareacres, sister to the late Lady Pontypool, and by consequence a distant kinswoman of Helen's, as her ladyship, who was deeply versed in genealogy, was graciously to point out to the modest country lady. Mr. Pen was greatly delighted at the relationship being acknowledged; though perhaps not over well pleased that Lady Rockminster took Miss Bell home with her for a couple of days to Baymouth, and did not make the slightest invitation to Mr. Arthur Pendennis. There was to be a ball at Baymouth, and it was to be Miss Laura's first appearance. The dowager came to fetch her in her carriage, and she went off with a white dress in her box, happy and blushing, like the rose to which Pen compared her.

This was the night of the ball — a public entertainment at the Baymouth Hotel. "By Jove!" said Pen, "I'll ride over — No, I won't ride, but I'll go too." His mother was charmed that he should do so; and, as he was debating about the conveyance in which he should start for Baymouth, Captain Strong called opportunely, said he was going himself, and that he would put his horse, The Butcher Boy, into the gig, and drive Pen over.

When the grand company began to fill the house at Clavering Park, the Chevalier Strong, who, as his patron said, was never in the way or out of it, seldom intruded himself upon its society, but went elsewhere to seek his relaxation. "I've seen plenty of grand dinners in my time," he said, "and dined, by Jove, in a company where there was a king and royal duke at top and bottom, and every man along the table had six stars on his coat; but dammy, Glanders, this finery don't suit me; and the English ladies with their confounded buckram airs, and the squires with their politics after dinner, send me to sleep — sink me dead if they don't. I like a place where I can blow my cigar when the cloth is removed, and when I'm thirsty, have my beer in its native pewter." So on a gala-day at Clavering Park, the Chevalier would content himself with superintending the arrangements of the table, and drilling the major-domo and servants; and having looked over the bill-

of-fare with Monsieur Mirobolant, would not care to take the least part in the banquet. "Send me up a cutlet and a bottle of claret to my room," this philosopher would say, and from the windows of that apartment, which commanded the terrace and avenue, he would survey the company as they arrived in their carriages, or take a peep at the ladies in the hall through an oeil-de-boeuf which commanded it from his corridor. And the guests being seated, Strong would cross the park to Captain Glanders's cottage at Clavering, or to pay the landlady a visit at the Clavering Arms, or to drop in upon Madame Fribsby over her novel and tea. Wherever the Chevalier went he was welcome, and whenever he came away a smell of hot brandy-and-water lingered behind him.

The Butcher Boy — not the worst horse in Sir Francis's stable — was appropriated to Captain Strong's express use; and the old Campaigner saddled him or brought him home at all hours of the day or night, and drove or rode him up and down the country. Where there was a public-house with a good tap of beer — where there was a tenant with a pretty daughter who played on the piano — to Chatteris, to the play, or the barracks — to Baymouth, if any fun was on foot there; to the rural fairs or races, the Chevalier and his brown horse made their way continually; and this worthy gentleman lived at free quarters in a friendly country. The Butcher Boy soon took Pen and the Chevalier to Baymouth. The latter was as familiar with the hotel and landlord there as with every other inn round about; and having been accommodated with a bedroom to dress, they entered the ballroom. The Chevalier was splendid. He wore three little gold crosses in a brochette on the portly breast of his blue coat, and looked like a foreign field-marshal.

The ball was public and all sorts of persons were admitted and encouraged to come, young Pynsent having views upon the county and Lady Rockminster being patroness of the ball. There was a quadrille for the aristocracy at one end, and select benches for the people of fashion. Towards this end the Chevalier did not care to penetrate far (as he said he did not care for the nobs); but in the other part of the room he knew everybody — the wine-merchants', innkeepers', tradesmen's, solicitors', squire-farmers' daughters, their sires and brothers, and plunged about shaking hands.

"Who is that man with the blue ribbon and the three-pointed star?" asked Pen. A gentleman in black with ringlets and a tuft stood gazing fiercely about him, with one hand in the arm-hole of his waistcoat and the other holding his claque.

"By Jupiter, it's Mirobolant!" cried Strong, bursting out laughing. "Bon jour, Chef! — Bon jour, Chevalier!"

"De la croix de Juillet, Chevalier!" said the Chef, laying his hand on his decoration.

"By Jove, here's some more ribbon!" said Pen, amused.

A man with very black hair and whiskers, dyed evidently with the purple of Tyre, with twinkling eyes and white eyelashes, and a thousand wrinkles in his face, which was of a strange red colour, with two under-vests, and large gloves and hands, and a profusion of diamonds and jewels in his waistcoat and stock, with coarse feet crumpled into immense shiny boots, and a piece of parti-coloured ribbon in his button-hole, here came up and nodded familiarly to the Chevalier.

The Chevalier shook hands. "My friend Mr. Pendennis," Strong said. "Colonel Altamont, of the bodyguard of his Highness the Nawaub of Lucknow." That officer bowed to the salute of Pen; who was now looking out eagerly to see if the person wanted had entered the room.

Not yet. But the band began presently performing 'See the Conquering Hero comes,' and a host of fashionables — Dowager Countess of Rockminster, Mr. Pynsent and Miss Bell, Sir Francis Clavering, Bart., of Clavering Park, Lady Clavering and Miss Amory, Sir Horace Fogey, Bart., Lady Fogey, Colonel and Mrs. Higgs Wagg, Esq. (as the county paper afterwards described them), entered the room.

Pen rushed by Blanche, ran up to Laura, and seized her hand. "God bless you!" he said, "I want to speak to you — I must speak to you — Let me dance with you." "Not for three dances, dear Pen," she said, smiling; and he fell back, biting his nails with vexation, and forgetting to salute Pynsent.

After Lady Rockminster's party, Lady Clavering's followed in the procession.

Colonel Altamont eyed it hard, holding a most musky pocket-handkerchief up to his face, and bursting with laughter behind it.

"Who's the gal in green along with 'em, Cap'n?" he asked of Strong.

"That's Miss Amory, Lady Clavering's daughter," replied the Chevalier.

The Colonel could hardly contain himself for laughing.

CHAPTER XXVII

CONTAINS SOME BALL-PRACTISING

Under some calico draperies in the shady embrasure of a window, Arthur Pendennis chose to assume a very gloomy and frowning countenance, and to watch Miss Bell dance her first quadrille with Mr. Pynsent for a partner. That gentleman was as solemn and severe as Englishmen are upon such occasions, and walked through the dance as he would have walked up to his pew in church, without a smile upon his face, or allowing any outward circumstance to interfere with his attention to the grave duty in which he was engaged. But Miss Laura's face was beaming with pleasure and good-nature. The lights and the crowd and music excited her. As she spread out her white robes, and performed her part of the dance, smiling and happy, her brown ringlets flowing back over her fair shoulders from her honest rosy face, more than one gentleman in the room admired and looked after her; and Lady Fogey, who had a house in London and gave herself no small airs of fashion when in the country, asked of Lady Rockminster who the young person was, mentioned a reigning beauty in London whom, in her ladyship's opinion, Laura was rather like, and pronounced that she would "do."

Lady Rockminster would have been very much surprised if any protegee of hers would not "do," and wondered at Lady Fogey's impudence in judging upon the point at all. She surveyed Laura with majestic glances through her eyeglass. She was pleased with the girl's artless looks, and gay innocent manner. Her manner is very good, her ladyship thought. Her arms are rather red, but that is a defect of her youth. Her tone is far better than that of the little pert Miss Amory, who is dancing opposite to her.

Miss Blanche was, indeed, the vis-a-vis of Miss Laura, and smiled most killingly upon her dearest friend, and nodded to her and talked to her, when they met during the quadrille evolutions, and patronised her a great deal. Her shoulders were the whitest in the whole room: and they were never easy in her frock for one single instant: nor were her eyes, which rolled about incessantly: nor was her little figure:— it seemed to say to all the people, "Come and look at me — not at that pink, healthy, bouncing country lass, Miss Bell, who scarcely knew how to dance till I taught her. This is the true Parisian manner — this is the prettiest little foot in the room, and the prettiest little chaussure too. Look at it, Mr. Pynsent. Look at it, Mr. Pendennis, you who are scowling behind the curtain — I know you are longing to dance with me."

Laura went on dancing, and keeping an attentive eye upon Mr. Pen in the embrasure of the window. He did not quit that retirement during the first quadrille, nor until the second, when the good-natured Lady Clavering beckoned to him to come up to her to the dais or place of honour where the dowagers were — and whither Pen went blushing and exceedingly awkward, as most conceited young fellows are. He performed a haughty salutation to Lady Rockminster, who hardly acknowledged his bow, and then went and paid his respects to the widow of the late Amory, who was splendid in diamonds, velvet, lace, feathers, and all sorts of millinery and goldsmith's ware.

Young Mr. Fogey, then in the fifth form at Eton, and ardently expecting his beard and his commission in a dragoon regiment, was the second partner who was honoured with Miss Bell's hand. He was rapt in admiration of that young lady. He thought he had never seen so charming a creature. "I like you much better than the French girl" (for this young gentleman had been dancing with Miss Amory before), he candidly said to her. Laura laughed, and looked more good-humoured than ever; and in the midst of her laughter caught a sight of Pen, and continued to laugh as he, on his side, continued to look absurdly pompous and sulky. The next dance was a waltz, and young Fogey thought, with a sigh, that he did not know how to waltz, and vowed he would have a master the next holidays.

Mr. Pynsent again claimed Miss Bell's hand for this dance; and Pen beheld her, in a fury, twirling round the room, her waist encircled by the arm of that gentleman. He never used to be angry before when, on summer evenings, the chairs and tables being removed, and the governess called downstairs to play the piano, he and the Chevalier Strong (who was a splendid performer, and could dance a British hornpipe, a German waltz, or a Spanish fandango, if need were), and the two young ladies, Blanche and Laura, improvised little balls at Clavering Park. Laura enjoyed this dancing so much, and was so animated, that she even animated Mr. Pynsent. Blanche, who could dance beautifully, had an unlucky partner, Captain Broadfoot, of the Dragoons, then stationed at Chatteris. For Captain Broadfoot, though devoting himself with great energy to the object in view, could not get round in time: and, not having the least ear for music, was unaware that his movements were too slow.

So, in the waltz as in the quadrille, Miss Blanche saw that her dear friend Laura had the honours of the dance, and was by no means pleased with the latter's success. After a couple of turns with the heavy dragoon, she pleaded fatigue, and requested to be led back to her place, near her mamma, to whom Pen was talking; and she asked him why he had not asked her to waltz, and had left her for the mercies of that great odious man in spurs and a red coat?

"I thought spurs and scarlet were the most fascinating objects in the world to young ladies," Pen answered. "I never should have dared to put my black coat in competition with that splendid red jacket."

"You are very unkind and cruel and sulky and naughty," said Miss Amory, with another shrug of the shoulders. "You had better go away. Your cousin is looking at us over Mr. Pynsent's shoulder."

"Will you waltz with me?" said Pen.

"Not this waltz. I can't, having just sent away that good Captain Broadfoot. Look at Mr. Pynsent, did you ever see such a creature? But I will dance the next waltz with you, and the quadrille too. I am promised, but I will tell Mr. Poole that I had forgotten my engagement to you."

"Women forget very readily," Pendennis said.

"But they always come back, and are very repentant and sorry for what they've done," Blanche said. "See, here comes the Foker, and dear Laura leaning on him. How pretty she looks!"

Laura came up, and put out her hand to Pen, to whom Pynsent made a sort of bow, appearing to be not much more graceful than that domestic instrument to which Miss Amory compared him.

But Laura's face was full of kindness. "I am so glad to have come, dear Pen," she said. "I can speak to you now. How is mamma? The three dances are over, and I am engaged to you for the next, Pen."

"I have just engaged myself to Miss Amory," said Pen; and Miss Amory nodded her head, and made her usual little curtsy. "I don't intend to give him up, dearest Laura," she said.

"Well, then, he'll waltz with me, dear Blanche," said the other. "Won't you, Pen?"

"I promised to waltz with Miss Amory."

"Provoking!" said Laura, and making a curtsy in her turn she went and placed herself under the ample wing of Lady Rockminster.

Pen was delighted with his mischief. The two prettiest girls in the room were quarrelling about him. He flattered himself he had punished Miss Laura. He leaned in a dandified air, with his elbow over the wall, and talked to Blanche: he quizzed unmercifully all the men in the room — the heavy dragoons in their tight jackets — the country dandies in their queer attire — the strange toilettes of the ladies. One seemed to have a bird's nest in her head; another had six pounds of grapes in her hair, besides her false pearls. "It's a coiffure of almonds and raisins," said Pen "and might be served up for dessert." In a word, he was exceedingly satirical and amusing.

During the quadrille he carried on this kind of conversation with unflinching bitterness and vivacity, and kept Blanche continually laughing, both at his wickedness and jokes, which were good, and also because Laura was again their vis-a-vis, and could see and hear how merry and confidential they were.

"Arthur is charming to-night," she whispered to Laura, across Cornet Perch's shell-jacket, as Pen was performing cavalier seul before them, drawing through that figure with a thumb in the pocket of each waistcoat.

"Who?" said Laura.

"Arthur," answered Blanche, in French. "Oh, it's such a pretty name!" And now the young ladies went over to Pen's side, and Cornet Perch performed a pas seul in his turn. He had no waistcoat pocket to put his hands into, and they looked large and swollen as they hung before him depending from the tight arms in the jacket.

During the interval between the quadrille and the succeeding waltz, Pen did not take any notice of Laura, except to ask her whether her partner, Cornet Perch, was an amusing youth, and whether she liked him so well as her other partner, Mr. Pynsent. Having planted which two daggers in Laura's gentle bosom, Mr. Pendennis proceeded to rattle on with Blanche Amory, and to make jokes good or bad, but which were always loud. Laura was at a loss to account for her cousin's sulky behaviour, and ignorant in what she had offended him; however, she was not angry in her turn at Pen's sullen mood, for she was the most good-natured and forgiving of women, and besides, an exhibition of jealousy on a man's part is not always disagreeable to a lady.

As Pen would not dance with her, she was glad to take up with the active Chevalier Strong, who was a still better performer than Pen; and being very fond of dancing, as every brisk and innocent young girl should be, when the waltz music began she set off, and chose to enjoy herself with all her heart. Captain Broadfoot on this occasion occupied the floor in conjunction with a lady of proportions scarcely inferior to his own; Miss Roundle, a large young woman in a strawberry-ice coloured crape dress, the daughter of the lady with the grapes in her head, whose bunches Pen had admired.

And now taking his time, and with his fair partner Blanche hanging lovingly on the arm which encircled her, Mr. Arthur Pendennis set out upon his waltzing career, and felt, as he whirled round to the music, that he and Blanche were performing very brilliantly indeed. Very likely he looked to see if Miss Bell thought so too; but she did not or would not see him, and was always engaged with her partner Captain Strong. But Pen's triumph was not destined to last long; and it was doomed that poor Blanche was to have yet another discomfiture on that unfortunate night. While she and Pen were whirling round as light and brisk as a couple of opera-dancers, honest Captain Broadfoot and the lady round whose large waist he was clinging, were twisting round very leisurely according to their natures, and indeed were in everybody's way. But they were more in Pendennis's way than in anybody's else, for he and Blanche, whilst executing their rapid gyrations, came bolt up against the heavy dragoon and his lady, and with such force that the centre of gravity was lost by all four of the circumvolving bodies; Captain Broadfoot and Miss Roundle were fairly upset, as was Pen himself, who was less lucky than his partner Miss Amory, who was only thrown upon a bench against a wall.

But Pendennis came fairly down upon the floor, sprawling in the general ruin with Broadfoot and Miss Roundle. The Captain, though heavy, was good-natured, and was the first to burst out into a loud laugh at his own misfortune, which nobody therefore heeded. But Miss Amory was savage at her mishap; Miss Roundle placed on her seant, and looking pitifully round, presented an object which very few people could see without laughing; and Pen was furious when he heard the people giggling about him. He was one of those sarcastic young fellows that did not bear a laugh at his own expense, and of all things in the world feared ridicule most.

As he got up Laura and Strong were laughing at him; everybody was laughing; Pynsent and his partner were laughing; and Pen boiled with wrath against the pair, and could have stabbed them both on the spot. He turned away in a fury from them, and began blundering out apologies to Miss Amory. It was the other couple's fault — the woman in pink had done it — Pen hoped Miss Amory was not hurt — would she not have the courage to take another turn?

Miss Amory in a pet said she was very much hurt indeed, and she would not take another turn; and she accepted with great thanks a glass of water which a cavalier, who wore a blue ribbon and a three-pointed star, rushed to fetch for her when he had seen the deplorable accident. She drank the water, smiled upon the bringer gracefully, and turning her white shoulder at Mr. Pen in the most marked and haughty manner, besought the gentleman with the star to conduct her to her mamma; and she held out her hand in order to take his arm.

The man with the star trembled with delight at this mark of her favour; he bowed over her hand, pressed it to his coat fervidly, and looked round him with triumph.

It was no other than the happy Mirobolant whom Blanche had selected as an escort. But the truth is, that the young lady had never fairly looked in the artist's face since he had been employed in her mother's family, and had no idea but it was a foreign nobleman on whose arm she was leaning. As she went off, Pen forgot his humiliation in his surprise, and cried out, "By Jove, it's the cook!"

The instant he had uttered the words, he was sorry for having spoken them — for it was Blanche who had herself invited Mirobolant to escort her, nor could the artist do otherwise than comply with a lady's command. Blanche in her flutter did not hear what Arthur said; but Mirobolant heard him, and cast a furious glance at him over his shoulder, which rather amused Mr. Pen. He was in a mischievous and sulky humour; wanting perhaps to pick a quarrel with somebody; but the idea of having insulted a cook, or that such an individual should have any feeling of honour at all, did not much enter into the mind of this lofty young aristocrat, the apothecary's son.

It had never entered that poor artist's head, that he as a man was not equal to any other mortal, or that there was anything in his position so degrading as to prevent him from giving his arm to a lady who asked for it. He had seen in the fetes in his own country fine ladies, not certainly demoiselles (but the demoiselle Anglaise he knew was a great deal more free than the spinster in France), join in the dance with Blaise or Pierre; and he would have taken Blanche up to Lady Clavering, and possibly have asked her to dance too, but he heard Pen's exclamation, which struck him as if it had shot

him, and cruelly humiliated and angered him. She did not know what caused him to start, and to grind a Gascon oath between his teeth.

But Strong, who was acquainted with the poor fellow's state of mind, having had the interesting information from our friend Madame Fribsby, was luckily in the way when wanted, and saying something rapidly in Spanish, which the other understood, the Chevalier begged Miss Amory to come and take an ice before she went back to Lady Clavering. Upon which the unhappy Mirobolant relinquished the arm which he had held for a minute, and with a most profound and piteous bow, fell back. "Don't you know who it is?" Strong asked of Miss Amory, as he led her away. "It is the chef Mirobolant."

"How should I know?" asked Blanche. "He has a croix; he is very distingue; he has beautiful eyes."

"The poor fellow is mad for your beaux yeux, I believe," Strong said. "He is a very good cook, but he is not quite right in the head."

"What did you say to him in the unknown tongue?" asked Miss Blanche.

"He is a Gascon, and comes from the borders of Spain," Strong answered. "I told him he would lose his place if he walked with you."

"Poor Monsieur Mirobolant!" said Blanche.

"Did you see the look he gave Pendennis?"— Strong asked, enjoying the idea of the mischief—"I think he would like to run little Pen through with one of his spits."

"He is an odious, conceited, clumsy creature, that Mr. Pen," said Blanche.

"Broadfoot looked as if he would like to kill him too, so did Pynsent," Strong said. "What ice will you have—water ice or cream ice?"

"Water ice. Who is that odd man staring at me—he is *decore* too."

"That is my friend Colonel Altamont, a very queer character, in the service of the Nawaub of Lucknow. Hallo! what's that noise? I'll be back in an instant," said the Chevalier, and sprang out of the room to the ballroom, where a scuffle and a noise of high voices was heard.

The refreshment-room, in which Miss Amory now found herself, was a room set apart for the purposes of supper, which Mr. Rincer the landlord had provided for those who chose to partake, at the rate of five shillings per head. Also, refreshments of a superior class were here ready for the ladies and gentlemen of the county families who came to the ball; but the commoner sort of persons were kept out of the room by a waiter who stood at the portal, and who said that was a select room for Lady Clavering and Lady Rockminster's parties, and not to be opened to the public till supper-time, which was not to be until past midnight. Pynsent, who danced with his constituents' daughters, took them and their mammas in for their refreshment there. Strong, who was manager and master of the revels wherever he went, had of course the *entree*—and the only person who was now occupying the room was the gentleman with the black wig and the orders in his button—hole; the officer in the service of his Highness the Nawaub of Lucknow.

This gentleman had established himself very early in the evening in this apartment, where, saying he was confoundedly thirsty, he called for a bottle of champagne. At this order the waiter instantly supposed that he had to do with a *grandee*, and the Colonel sate down and began to eat his supper and absorb his drink, and enter affably into conversation with anybody who entered the room.

Sir Francis Clavering and Mr. Wagg found him there, when they left the ballroom, which they did pretty early—Sir Francis to go and smoke a cigar, and look at the people gathered outside the ballroom on the shore, which he declared was much better fun than to remain within; Mr. Wagg to hang on to a Baronet's arm, as he was always pleased to do on the arm of the greatest man in the company. Colonel Altamont had stared at these gentlemen in so odd a manner, as they passed through the 'Select' room, that Clavering made inquiries of the landlord who he was, and hinted a strong opinion that the officer of the Nawaub's service was drunk.

Mr. Pynsent, too, had had the honour of a conversation with the servant of the Indian potentate. It was Pynsent's cue to speak to everybody (which he did, to do him justice, in the most ungracious manner); and he took the gentleman in the black wig for some constituent, some merchant captain, or other outlandish man of the place. Mr. Pynsent, then, coming into the refreshment-room with a lady, the wife of a constituent, on his arm, the Colonel asked him if he would try a glass of Sham? Pynsent took it with great gravity, bowed, tasted the wine, and pronounced it excellent, and with the utmost politeness retreated before Colonel Altamont. This gravity and decorum routed and surprised the Colonel more than any

other kind of behaviour probably would: he stared after Pynsent stupidly, and pronounced to the landlord over the counter that he was a rum one. Mr. Rincer blushed, and hardly knew what to say. Mr. Pynsent was a county Earl's grandson, going to set up as a Parliament man. Colonel Altamont on the other hand, wore orders and diamonds, jingled sovereigns constantly in his pocket, and paid his way like a man; so not knowing what to say, Mr. Rincer said, "Yes, Colonel — yes, ma'am, did you say tea? Cup a tea for Mr. Jones, Mrs. R.," and so got off that discussion regarding Mr. Pynsent's qualities, into which the Nizam's officer appeared inclined to enter.

In fact, if the truth must be told, Mr. Altamont, having remained at the buffet almost all night, and employed himself very actively whilst there, had considerably flushed his brain by drinking, and he was still going on drinking, when Mr. Strong and Miss Amory entered the room.

When the Chevalier ran out of the apartment, attracted by the noise in the dancing-room, the Colonel rose from his chair with his little red eyes glowing like coals, and, with rather an unsteady gait advanced towards Blanche, who was sipping her ice. She was absorbed in absorbing it, for it was very fresh and good; or she was not curious to know what was going on in the adjoining room, although the waiters were, who ran after Chevalier Strong. So that when she looked up from her glass, she beheld this strange man staring at her out of his little red eyes. "Who was he? It was quite exciting."

"And so you're Betsy Amory," said he, after gazing at her. "Betsy Amory, by Jove!"

"Who — who speaks to me?" said Betsy, alias Blanche.

But the noise in the ballroom is really becoming so loud, that we must rush back thither, and see what is the cause of the disturbance.



CHAPTER XXVIII

WHICH IS BOTH QUARRELSOME AND SENTIMENTAL

Civil war was raging, high words passing, people pushing and squeezing together in an unseemly manner, round a window in the corner of the ballroom, close by the door through which the Chevalier Strong shouldered his way. Through the opened window, the crowd in the street below was sending up sarcastic remarks, such as "Pitch into him!" "Where's the police?" and the like; and a ring of individuals, amongst whom Madame Fribsby was conspicuous, was gathered round Monsieur Alcide Mirobolant on the one side; whilst several gentlemen and ladies surrounded our friend Arthur Pendennis on the other. Strong penetrated into this assembly, elbowing by Madame Fribsby, who was charmed at the Chevalier's appearance, and cried, "Save him, save him!" in frantic and pathetic accents.

The cause of the disturbance, it appeared, was the angry little chef of Sir Francis Clavering's culinary establishment. Shortly after Strong had quitted the room, and whilst Mr. Pen, greatly irate at his downfall in the waltz, which had made him look ridiculous in the eyes of the nation, and by Miss Amory's behaviour to him, which had still further insulted his dignity, was endeavouring to get some coolness of body and temper, by looking out of window towards the sea, which was sparkling in the distance, and murmuring in a wonderful calm — whilst he was really trying to compose himself, and owing to himself, perhaps, that he had acted in a very absurd and peevish manner during the night — he felt a hand upon his shoulder; and, on looking round, beheld, to his utter surprise and horror, that the hand in question belonged to Monsieur Mirobolant, whose eyes were glaring out of his pale face and ringlets at Mr. Pen. To be tapped on the shoulder by a French cook was a piece of familiarity which made the blood of the Pendennises to boil up in the veins of their descendant, and he was astounded, almost more than enraged, at such an indignity.

"You speak French?" Mirobolant said in his own language to Pen.

"What is that to you, pray?" said Pen, in English.

"At any rate, you understand it?" continued the other, with a bow.

"Yes, sir," said Pen, with a stamp of his foot; "I understand it pretty well."

"Vous me comprendrez alors, Monsieur Pendennis," replied the other, rolling out his r with Gascon force, "quand je vous dis que vous etes un lache. Monsieur Pendennis — un lache, entendez-vous?"

"What?" said Pen, starting round on him.

"You understand the meaning of the word and its consequences among men of honour?" the artist said, putting his hand on his hip, and staring at Pen.

"The consequences are, that I will fling you out of window, you impudent scoundrel," bawled out Mr. Pen; and darting upon the Frenchman, he would very likely have put his threat into execution, for the window was at hand, and the artist by no means a match for the young gentleman — had not Captain Broadfoot and another heavy officer flung themselves between the combatants — had not the ladies begun to scream — had not the fiddles stopped, had not the crowd of people come running in that direction — had not Laura, with a face of great alarm, looked over their heads and asked for Heaven's sake what was wrong — had not the opportune Strong made his appearance from the refreshment-room, and found Alcides grinding his teeth and jabbering oaths in his Galleon French, and Pen looking uncommonly wicked, although trying to appear as calm as possible, when the ladies and the crowd came up.

"What has happened?" Strong asked of the chef, in Spanish.

"I am Chevalier de Juillet," said the other, slapping his breast, "and he has insulted me."

"What has he said to you?" asked Strong.

"Il m'a appele — Cuisinier," hissed out the little Frenchman.

Strong could hardly help laughing. "Come away with me, poor Chevalier," he said. "We must not quarrel before ladies. Come away; I will carry your message to Mr. Pendennis. — The poor fellow is not right in his head," he whispered to one or two people about him; — and others, and anxious Laura's face visible amongst these, gathered round Pen and asked the cause of the disturbance.

Pen did not know. "The man was going to give his arm to a young lady, on which I said that he was a cook, and the man called me a coward and challenged me to fight. I own I was so surprised and indignant, that if you gentlemen had not stopped me, I should have thrown him out of window," Pen said.

"D— him, serve him right, too — the impudent foreign scoundrel," the gentlemen said.

"I— I'm very sorry if I hurt his feelings, though," Pen added and Laura was glad to hear him say that; although some of the young bucks said, "No, hang the fellow — hang those impudent foreigners — little thrashing would do them good."

"You will go and shake hands with him before you go to sleep — won't you, Pen?" said Laura, coming up to him. "Foreigners may be more susceptible than we are, and have different manners. If you hurt a poor man's feelings, I am sure you would be the first to ask his pardon. Wouldn't you, dear Pen?"

She looked all forgiveness and gentleness, like an angel, as she spoke; and Pen took both her hands, and looked into her kind face, and said indeed he would.

"How fond that girl is of me!" he thought, as she stood gazing at him. "Shall I speak to her now? No — not now. I must have this absurd business with the Frenchman over."

Laura asked — Wouldn't he stop and dance with her? She was as anxious to keep him in the room, as he to quit it. "Won't you stop and waltz with me, Pen? I'm not afraid to waltz with you."

This was an affectionate, but an unlucky speech. Pen saw himself prostrate on the ground, having tumbled over Miss Roundle and the dragoon, and flung Blanche up against the wall — saw himself on the ground, and all the people laughing at him, Laura and Pynsent amongst them.

"I shall never dance again," he replied, with a dark and determined face. "Never. I'm surprised you should ask me."

"Is it because you can't get Blanche for a partner?" asked Laura, with a wicked, unlucky captiousness.

"Because I don't wish to make a fool of myself, for other people to laugh at me," Pen answered — "for you to laugh at me, Laura. I saw you and Pynsent. By Jove! no man shall laugh at me."

"Pen, Pen, don't be so wicked!" cried out the poor girl, hurt at the morbid perverseness and savage vanity of Pen. He was glaring round in the direction of Mr. Pynsent as if he would have liked to engage that gentleman as he had done the cook. "Who thinks the worse of you for stumbling in a waltz?" If Laura does, we don't. "Why are you so sensitive, and ready to think evil?"

Here again, by ill luck, Mr. Pynsent came up to Laura, and said "I have it in command from Lady Rockminster to ask whether I may take you in to supper?"

"I— I was going in with my cousin," Laura said.

"O— pray, no!" said Pen. "You are in such good hands, that I can't do better than leave you: and I'm going home."

"Good-night, Mr. Pendennis," Pynsent said, drily — to which speech (which, in fact, meant, "Go to the deuce for an insolent, jealous, impertinent jackanapes, whose ears I should like to box") Mr. Pendennis did not vouchsafe any reply, except a bow: and in spite of Laura's imploring looks, he left the room.

"How beautifully calm and bright the night outside is!" said Mr. Pynsent; "and what a murmur the sea is making! It would be pleasanter to be walking on the beach, than in this hot room."

"Very," said Laura.

"What a strange congregation of people," continued Pynsent. "I have had to go up and perform the agreeable to most of them — the attorney's daughters — the apothecary's wife — I scarcely know whom. There was a man in the refreshment-room, who insisted upon treating me to champagne — a seafaring-looking man — extraordinarily dressed, and seeming half tipsy. As a public man one is bound to conciliate all these people, but it is a hard task — especially when one would so very much like to be elsewhere"— and he blushed rather as he spoke.

"I beg your pardon," said Laura — "I— I was not listening. Indeed — I was frightened about that quarrel between my cousin and that — that — French person."

"Your cousin has been rather unlucky to-night," Pynsent said. "There are three or four persons whom he has not succeeded in pleasing — captain Broadwood; what is his name — the officer — and the young lady in red with whom he danced — and Miss Blanche — and the poor chef — and I don't think he seemed to be particularly pleased with me."

"Didn't he leave me in charge to you?" Laura said, looking up into Mr. Pynsent's face, and dropping her eyes instantly,

like a guilty little story-telling coquette.

"Indeed, I can forgive him a good deal for that," Pynsent eagerly cried out, and she took his arm, and he led off his little prize in the direction of the supper-room.

She had no great desire for that repast, though it was served in Rincer's well-known style, as the county paper said, giving an account of the entertainment afterwards; indeed, she was very distraite; and exceedingly pained and unhappy about Pen. Captious and quarrelsome; jealous and selfish; fickle and violent and unjust when his anger led him astray; how could her mother (as indeed Helen had by a thousand words and hints) ask her to give her heart to such a man? and suppose she were to do so, would it make him happy?

But she got some relief at length, when, at the end of half an hour — a long half-hour it had seemed to her — a waiter brought her a little note in pencil from Pen, who said, "I met Cooky below ready to fight me; and I asked his pardon. I'm glad I did it. I wanted to speak to you to-night, but will keep what I had to say till you come home. God bless you. Dance away all night with Pynsent, and be very happy. — PEN." Laura was very thankful for this letter, and to think that there was goodness and forgiveness still in her mother's boy.

Pen went downstairs, his heart reproaching him for his absurd behaviour to Laura, whose gentle and imploring looks followed and rebuked him; and he was scarcely out of the ballroom door but he longed to turn back and ask her pardon. But he remembered that he had left her with that confounded Pynsent. He could not apologise before him. He would compromise and forget his wrath, and make his peace with the Frenchman.

The Chevalier was pacing down below in the hall of the inn when Pen descended from the ballroom; and he came up to Pen, with all sorts of fun and mischief lighting up his jolly face.

"I have got him in the coffee-room," he said, "with a brace of pistols and a candle. Or would you like swords on the beach? Mirobolant is a dead hand with the foils, and killed four gardes-du-corps with his own point in the barricades of July."

"Confound it," said Pen, in a fury, "I can't fight a cook!"

"He is a Chevalier of July," replied the other. "They present arms to him in his own country."

"And do you ask me, Captain Strong, to go out with a servant?" Pen asked fiercely; "I'll call a policeman him but — but —"

"You'll invite me to hair triggers?" cried Strong, with a laugh. "Thank you for nothing; I was but joking. I came to settle quarrels, not to fight them. I have been soothing down Mirobolant; I have told him that you did not apply the word 'Cook' to him in an offensive sense: that it was contrary to all the customs of the country that a hired officer of a household, as I called it, should give his arm to the daughter of the house." And then he told Pen the grand secret which he had had from Madame Fribsby of the violent passion under which the poor artist was labouring.

When Arthur heard this tale, he broke out into a hearty laugh, in which Strong joined, and his rage against the poor cook vanished at once. He had been absurdly jealous himself all the evening, and had longed for a pretext to insult Pynsent. He remembered how jealous he had been of Oaks in his first affair; he was ready to pardon anything to a man under a passion like that: and he went into the coffee-room where Mirobolant was waiting, with an outstretched hand, and made him a speech in French, in which he declared that he was "sincerement fache d'avoir use une expression qui avoit pu blesser Monsieur Mirobolant, et qu'il donnoit sa parole comme un gentilhomme qu'il ne l'avoit jamais, jamais — intende," said Pen, who made a shot at a French word for "intended," and was secretly much pleased with his own fluency and correctness in speaking that language.

"Bravo, bravo!" cried Strong, as much amused with Pen's speech as pleased by his kind manner. And the Chevalier Mirobolant of course withdraws, and sincerely regrets the expression of which he made use.

"Monsieur Pendennis has disproved my words himself," said Alcide with great politeness; "he has shown that he is a galant homme."

And so they shook hands and parted, Arthur in the first place despatching his note to Laura before he and Strong committed themselves to the Butcher Boy.

As they drove along, Strong complimented Pen upon his behaviour, as well as upon his skill in French. "You're a good fellow, Pendennis, and you speak French like Chateaubriand, by Jove."

"I've been accustomed to it from my youth upwards," said Pen; and Strong had the grace not to laugh for five minutes, when he exploded into fits of hilarity which Pendennis has never perhaps understood up to this day.

It was daybreak when they got to the Brawl, where they separated. By that time the ball at Baymouth was over too. Madame Fribsby and Mirobolant were on their way home in the Clavering fly; Laura was in bed with an easy heart and asleep at Lady Rockminster's; and the Claverings at rest at the inn at Baymouth, where they had quarters for the night. A short time after the disturbance between Pen and the chef, Blanche had come out of the refreshment-room, looking as pale as a lemon-ice. She told her maid, having no other confidante at hand, that she had met with the most romantic adventure — the most singular man — one who had known the author of her being — her persecuted — her unhappy — her heroic — her murdered father; and she began a sonnet to his manes before she went to sleep.

So Pen returned to Fairoaks, in company with his friend the Chevalier, without having uttered a word of the message which he had been so anxious to deliver to Laura at Baymouth. He could wait, however, until her return home, which was to take place on the succeeding day. He was not seriously jealous of the progress made by Mr. Pynsent in her favour; and he felt pretty certain that in this, as in any other family arrangement, he had but to ask and have, and Laura, like his mother, could refuse him nothing.

When Helen's anxious looks inquired of him what had happened at Baymouth, and whether her darling project was fulfilled, Pen, in a gay tone, told of the calamity which had befallen; laughingly said, that no man could think about declarations under such a mishap, and made light of the matter. "There will be plenty of time for sentiment, dear mother, when Laura comes back," he said, and he looked in the glass with a killing air, and his mother put his hair off his forehead and kissed him, and of course thought, for her part, that no woman could resist him: and was exceedingly happy that day.

When he was not with her, Mr. Pen occupied himself in packing books and portmanteaus, burning and arranging papers, cleaning his gun and putting it into its case: in fact, in making dispositions for departure. For though he was ready to marry, this gentleman was eager to go to London too, rightly considering that at three-and-twenty it was quite time for him to begin upon the serious business of life, and to set about making a fortune as quickly as possible.

The means to this end he had already shaped out for himself. "I shall take chambers," he said, "and enter myself at an Inn of Court. With a couple of hundred pounds I shall be able to carry through the first year very well; after that I have little doubt my pen will support me, as it is doing with several Oxbridge men now in town. I have a tragedy, a comedy, and a novel, all nearly finished, and for which I can't fail to get a price. And so I shall be able to live pretty well, without drawing upon my poor mother, until I have made my way at the bar. Then, some day I will come back and make her dear soul happy by marrying Laura. She is as good and as sweet-tempered a girl as ever lived, besides being really very good-looking, and the engagement will serve to steady me — won't it, Ponto?" Thus, smoking his pipe, and talking to his dog as he sauntered through the gardens and orchards of the little domain of Fairoaks, this young day-dreamer built castles in the air for himself: "Yes, she'll steady me, won't she? And you'll miss me when I've gone, won't you, old boy?" he asked of Ponto, who quivered his tail and thrust his brown nose into his master's fist. Ponto licked his hand and shoe, as they all did in that house, and Mr. Pen received their homage as other folks do the flattery which they get.

Laura came home rather late in the evening of the second day; and Mr. Pynsent, as ill luck would have it, drove her from Clavering. The poor girl could not refuse his offer, but his appearance brought a dark cloud upon the brow of Arthur Pendennis. Laura saw this, and was pained by it: the eager widow, however, was aware of nothing, and being anxious, doubtless, that the delicate question should be asked at once, was for going to bed very soon after Laura's arrival, and rose for that purpose to leave the sofa where she now generally lay, and where Laura would come and sit and work or read by her. But when Helen rose, Laura said, with a blush and rather an alarmed voice, that she was also very tired and wanted to go to bed: so that the widow was disappointed in her scheme for that night at least, and Mr. Pen was left another day in suspense regarding his fate.

His dignity was offended at being thus obliged to remain in the ante-chamber when he wanted an audience. Such a sultan as he, could not afford to be kept waiting. However, he went to bed and slept upon his disappointment pretty comfortably, and did not wake until the early morning, when he looked up and saw his mother standing in his room.

"Dear Pen, rouse up," said this lady. "Do not be lazy. It is the most beautiful morning in the world. I have not been able to sleep since daybreak; and Laura has been out for an hour. She is in the garden. Everybody ought to be in the garden and out on such a morning as this."

Pen laughed. He saw what thoughts were uppermost in the simple woman's heart. His good-natured laughter cheered the widow. "Oh you profound dissembler," he said, kissing his mother. "Oh you artful creature! Can nobody escape from your wicked tricks? and will you make your only son your victim?" Helen too laughed, she blushed, she fluttered, and was agitated. She was as happy as she could be — a good tender, matchmaking woman, the dearest project of whose heart was about to be accomplished.

So, after exchanging some knowing looks and hasty words, Helen left Arthur; and this young hero, rising from his bed, proceeded to decorate his beautiful person, and shave his ambrosial chin; and in half an hour he issued out from his apartment into the garden in quest of Laura. His reflections as he made his toilette were rather dismal. "I am going to tie myself for life," he thought, "to please my mother. Laura is the best of women, and — and she has given me her money. I wish to Heaven I had not received it; I wish I had not this duty to perform just yet. But as both the women have set their hearts on the match, why I suppose I must satisfy them — and now for it. A man may do worse than make happy two of the best creatures in the world." So Pen, now he was actually come to the point, felt very grave, and by no means elated, and, indeed, thought it was a great sacrifice he was going to perform.

It was Miss Laura's custom, upon her garden excursions, to wear a sort of uniform, which, though homely, was thought by many people to be not unbecoming. She had a large straw hat, with a streamer of broad ribbon, which was useless probably, but the hat sufficiently protected the owner's pretty face from the sun. Over her accustomed gown she wore a blouse or pinafore, which, being fastened round her little waist by a smart belt, looked extremely well, and her bands were guaranteed from the thorns of her favourite rose-bushes by a pair of gauntlets, which gave this young lady a military and resolute air.

Somehow she had the very same smile with which she had laughed at him on the night previous, and the recollection of his disaster again offended Pen. But Laura, though she saw him coming down the walk looking so gloomy and full of care, accorded to him a smile of the most perfect and provoking good-humour, and went to meet him, holding one of the gauntlets to him, so that he might shake it if he liked — and Mr. Pen condescended to do so. His face, however, did not lose its tragic expression in consequence of this favour, and he continued to regard her with a dismal and solemn air.

"Excuse my glove," said Laura, with a laugh, pressing Pen's hand kindly with it. "We are not angry again, are we, Pen?"

"Why do you laugh at me?" said Pen. "You did the other night, and made a fool of me to the people at Baymouth."

"My dear Arthur, I meant you no wrong," the girl answered. "You and Miss Roundle looked so droll as you — as you met with your little accident, that I could not make a tragedy of it. Dear Pen, it wasn't a serious fall. And, besides, it was Miss Roundle who was the most unfortunate."

"Confound Miss Roundle," bellowed out Pen.

"I'm sure she looked so," said Laura, archly. "You were up in an instant; but that poor lady sitting on the ground in her red crape dress, and looking about her with that piteous face — can I ever forget her?" — and Laura began to make a face in imitation of Miss Roundle's under the disaster, but she checked herself repentantly, saying, "Well, we must not laugh at her, but I am sure we ought to laugh at you, Pen, if you were angry about such a trifle."

"You should not laugh at me, Laura," said Pen, with some bitterness; "not you, of all people."

"And why not? Are you such a great man?" asked Laura,

"Ah no, Laura, I'm such a poor one," Pen answered. "Haven't you baited me enough already?"

"My dear Pen, and how?" cried Laura. "Indeed, indeed, I didn't think to vex you by such a trifle. I thought such a clever man as you could bear a harmless little joke from his sister," she said, holding her hand out again. "Dear Arthur, if I have hurt you, I beg your pardon."

"It is your kindness that humiliates me more even than your laughter, Laura," Pen said. "You are always my superior."

"What! superior to the great Arthur Pendennis? How can it be possible?" said Miss Laura, who may have had a little wickedness as well as a great deal of kindness in her composition. "You can't mean that any woman is your equal?"

"Those who confer benefits should not sneer," said Pen. "I don't like my benefactor to laugh at me, Laura; it makes the obligation very hard to bear. You scorn me because I have taken your money, and I am worthy to be scorned; but the blow is hard coming from you."

"Money! Obligation! For shame, Pen; this is ungenerous," Laura said, flushing red. "May not our mother claim

everything that belongs to us? Don't I owe her all my happiness in this world, Arthur? What matters about a few paltry guineas, if we can set her tender heart at rest, and ease her mind regarding you? I would dig in the fields, I would go out and be a servant — I would die for her. You know I would," said Miss Laura, kindling up; "and you call this paltry money an obligation? Oh, Pen, it's cruel — it's unworthy of you to take it so! If my brother may not share with me my superfluity, who may? — Mine? — I tell you it was not mine; it was all mamma's to do with as she chose, and so is everything I have," said Laura; "my life is hers." And the enthusiastic girl looked towards the windows of the widow's room, and blessed in her heart the kind creature within.

Helen was looking, unseen, out of that window towards which Laura's eyes and heart were turned as she spoke, and was watching her two children with the deepest interest and emotion, longing and hoping that the prayer of her life might be fulfilled; and if Laura had spoken as Helen hoped, who knows what temptations Arthur Pendennis might have been spared, or what different trials he would have had to undergo? He might have remained at Fair Oaks all his days, and died a country gentleman. But would he have escaped then? Temptation is an obsequious servant that has no objection to the country, and we know that it takes up its lodging in hermitages as well as in cities; and that in the most remote and inaccessible desert it keeps company with the fugitive solitary.

"Is your life my mother's?" said Pen, beginning to tremble, and speak in a very agitated manner. "You know, Laura, what the great object of hers is?" And he took her hand once more.

"What, Arthur?" she said, dropping it, and looking at him, at the window again, and then dropping her eyes to the ground, so that they avoided Pen's gaze. She, too, trembled, for she felt that the crisis for which she had been secretly preparing was come.

"Our mother has one wish above all others in the world, Laura," Pen said; "and I think you know it. I own to you that she has spoken to me of it; and if you will fulfil it, dear sister, I am ready. I am but very young as yet; but I have had so many pains and disappointments, that I am old and weary. I think I have hardly got a heart to offer. Before I have almost begun the race in life, I am a tired man. My career has been a failure; I have been protected by those whom I by right should have protected. I own that your nobleness and generosity, dear Laura, shame me, whilst they render me grateful. When I heard from our mother what you had done for me; that it was you who armed me and bade me go out for one struggle more; I longed to go and throw myself at your feet, and say, 'Laura, will you come and share the contest with me?' Your sympathy will cheer me while it lasts. I shall have one of the tenderest and most generous creatures under heaven to aid and bear me company. Will you take me, dear Laura, and make our mother happy?"

"Do you think mamma would be happy if you were otherwise, Arthur?" Laura said in a low sad voice.

"And why should I not be," asked Pen eagerly, "with so dear a creature as you by my side? I have not my first love to give you. I am a broken man. But indeed I would love you fondly and truly. I have lost many an illusion and ambition, but I am not without hope still. Talents I know I have, wretchedly as I have misapplied them: they may serve me yet: they would, had I a motive for action. Let me go away and think that I am pledged to return to you. Let me go and work, and hope, that you will share my success if I gain it. You have given me so much, Laura dear, will you take from me nothing?"

"What have you got to give, Arthur?" Laura said, with a grave sadness of tone, which made Pen start, and see that his words had committed him. Indeed, his declaration had not been such as he would have made it two days earlier, when, full of hope and gratitude, he had run over to Laura, his liberatress, to thank her for his recovered freedom. Had he been permitted to speak then, he had spoken, and she, perhaps, had listened differently. It would have been a grateful heart asking for hers; not a weary one offered to her, to take or to leave. Laura was offended with the terms in which Pen offered himself to her. He had, in fact, said that he had no love, and yet would take no denial. "I give myself to you to please my mother," he had said: "take me, as she wishes that I should make this sacrifice." The girl's spirit would brook a husband under no such conditions: she was not minded to run forward because Pen chose to hold out the handkerchief, and her tone, in reply to Arthur, showed her determination to be independent.

"No, Arthur," she said, "our marriage would not make mamma happy, as she fancies; for it would not content you very long. I, too, have known what her wishes were; for she is too open to conceal anything she has at heart: and once, perhaps, I thought — but that is over now — that I could have made you — that it might have been as she wished."

"You have seen somebody else," said Pen, angry at her tone, and recalling the incidents of the past days.

"That allusion might have been spared," Laura replied, flinging up her head. "A heart which has worn out love at

three-and-twenty, as yours has, you say, should have survived jealousy too. I do not condescend to say whether I have seen or encouraged any other person. I shall neither admit the charge, nor deny it: and beg you also to allude to it no more."

"I ask your pardon, Laura, if I have offended you: but if I am jealous, does it not prove that I have a heart?"

"Not for me, Arthur. Perhaps you think you love me now but it is only for an instant, and because you are foiled. Were there no obstacle, you would feel no ardour to overcome it. No, Arthur, you don't love me. You would weary of me in three months, as — as you do of most things; and mamma, seeing you tired of me, would be more unhappy than at my refusal to be yours. Let us be brother and sister, Arthur, as heretofore — but no more. You will get over this little disappointment."

"I will try," said Arthur, in a great indignation.

"Have you not tried before?" Laura said, with some anger, for she had been angry with Arthur for a very long time, and was now determined, I suppose, to speak her mind. "And the next time, Arthur, when you offer yourself to a woman, do not say as you have done to me, 'I have no heart — I do not love you; but I am ready to marry you because my mother wishes for the match.' We require more than this in return for our love — that is, I think so. I have had no experience hitherto, and have not had the — the practice which you supposed me to have, when you spoke but now of my having seen somebody else. Did you tell your first love that you had no heart, Arthur? or your second that you did not love her, but that she might have you if she liked?"

"What — what do you mean?" asked Arthur, blushing, and still in great wrath.

"I mean Blanche Amory, Arthur Pendennis," Laura said, proudly. "It is but two months since you were sighing at her feet — making poems to her — placing them in hollow trees by the river-side. I knew all. I watched you — that is, she showed them to me. Neither one nor the other were in earnest perhaps; but it is too soon now, Arthur, to begin a new attachment. Go through the time of your — your widowhood at least, and do not think of marrying until you are out of mourning"—(Here the girl's eyes filled with tears, and she passed her hand across them. "I am angry and hurt, and I have no right to be so, and I ask your pardon in my turn now, dear Arthur. You had a right to love Blanche. She was a thousand times prettier and more accomplished than — than any girl near us here; and you not could know that she had no heart; and so you were right to leave her too. I ought not to rebuke you about Blanche Amory, and because she deceived you. Pardon me, Pen,"— and she held the kind hand out to Pen once more.

"We were both jealous," said Pen. "Dear Laura, let us both forgive"— and he seized her band and would have drawn her towards him. He thought that she was relenting, and already assumed the airs of a victor.

But she shrank back, and her tears passed away; and she fixed on him a look so melancholy and severe, that the young man in his turn shrank before it. "Do not mistake me, Arthur," she said, "it cannot be. You do not know what you ask, and do not be too angry with me for saying that I think you do not deserve it. What do you offer in exchange to a woman for her love, honour, and obedience? If ever I say these words, dear Pen, I hope to say them in earnest, and by the blessing of God to keep my vow. But you — what tie binds you? You do not care about many things which we poor women hold sacred, I do not like to think or ask how far your incredulity leads you. You offer to marry to please our mother, and own that you have no heart to give away. Oh, Arthur, what is it you offer me? What a rash compact would you enter into so lightly? A month ago, and you would have given yourself to another. I pray you do not trifle with your own or others' hearts so recklessly. Go and work; go and mend, dear Arthur, for I see your faults, and dare speak of them now: go and get fame, as you say that you can, and I will pray for my brother, and watch our dearest mother at home."

"Is that your final decision, Laura?" Arthur cried.

"Yes," said Laura, bowing her head; and once more giving him her hand, she went away. He saw her pass under the creepers of the little porch, and disappear into the house. The curtains of his mother's window fell at the same minute, but he did not mark that, or suspect that Helen had been witnessing the scene. Was he pleased, or was he angry at its termination? He had asked her, and a secret triumph filled his heart to think that he was still free. She had refused him, but did she not love him? That avowal of jealousy made him still think that her heart was his own, whatever her lips might utter. And now we ought, perhaps, to describe another scene which took place at Fair Oaks, between the widow and Laura, when the latter had to tell Helen that she had refused Arthur Pendennis. Perhaps it was the hardest task of all which Laura had to go through in this matter: and the one which gave her the most pain. But as we do not like to see a good woman unjust, we shall not say a word more of the quarrel which now befell between Helen and her adopted daughter, or of the bitter tears which the poor girl was made to shed. It was the only difference which she and the widow had ever had as yet, and the more cruel from this cause. Pen left home whilst it was as yet pending — and Helen, who could pardon almost everything, could not pardon an act of justice in Laura.

CHAPTER XXIX

BABYLON

Our reader must now please to quit the woods and sea-shore of the west, and the gossip of Clavering, and the humdrum life of poor little Fair Oaks, and transport himself with Arthur Pendennis, on the 'Alacrity' coach, to London, whither he goes once for all to face the world and to make his fortune. As the coach whirls through the night away from the friendly gates of home, many a plan does the young man cast in his mind of future life and conduct, prudence, and peradventure success and fame. He knows he is a better man than many who have hitherto been ahead of him in the race: his first failure has caused him remorse, and brought with it reflection; it has not taken away his courage, or, let us add, his good opinion of himself. A hundred eager fancies and busy hopes keep him awake. How much older his mishaps and a year's thought and self-communion have made him, than when, twelve months since, he passed on this road on his way to and from Oxbridge! His thoughts turn in the night with inexpressible fondness and tenderness towards the fond mother who blessed him when parting, and who, in spite of all his past faults and follies, trusts him and loves him still. Blessings be on her! he prays, as he looks up to the stars overhead. O Heaven! give him strength to work, to endure, to be honest, to avoid temptation, to be worthy of the loving soul who loves him so entirely! Very likely she is awake, too, at that moment, and sending up to the same Father purer prayers than his for the welfare of her boy. That woman's love is a talisman by which he holds and hopes to get his safety. And Laura's — he would have fain carried her affection with him too, but she has denied it, as he is not worthy of it. He owns as much with shame and remorse; confesses how much better and loftier her nature is than his own — confesses it, and yet is glad to be free. "I am not good enough for such a creature," he owns to himself. He draws back before her spotless beauty and innocence, as from something that scares him. He feels he is not fit for such a mate as that; as many a wild prodigal who has been pious and guiltless in early days, keeps away from a church which he used to frequent once — shunning it, but not hostile to it — only feeling that he has no right in that pure place.

With these thoughts to occupy him, Pen did not fall asleep until the nipping dawn of an October morning, and woke considerably refreshed when the coach stopped at the old breakfasting place at B — where he had had a score of merry meals on his way to and from school and college many times since he was a boy. As they left that place, the sun broke out brightly, the pace was rapid, the horn blew, the milestones flew by, Pen smoked and joked with guard and fellow-passengers and people along the familiar road; it grew more busy and animated at every instant; the last team of greys came out at H — and the coach drove into London. What young fellow has not felt a thrill as he entered the vast place? Hundreds of other carriages, crowded with their thousands of men, were hastening to the great city. "Here is my place," thought Pen; "here is my battle beginning, in which I must fight and conquer, or fall. I have been a boy and a dawdler as yet. Oh, I long, I long to show that I can be a man." And from his place on the coach-roof the eager young fellow looked down upon the city, with the sort of longing desire which young soldiers feel on the eve of a campaign.

As they came along the road, Pen had formed acquaintance with a cheery fellow-passenger in a shabby cloak, who talked a great deal about men of letters with whom he was very familiar, and who was, in fact, the reporter of a London newspaper, as whose representative he had been to attend a great wrestling-match in the west. This gentleman knew intimately, as it appeared, all the leading men of letters of his day, and talked about Tom Campbell, and Tom Hood, and Sydney Smith, and this and the other, as if he had been their most intimate friend. As they passed by Brompton, this gentleman pointed out to Pen Mr. Hurtle, the reviewer, walking with his umbrella. Pen craned over the coach to have a long look at the great Hurtle. He was a Boniface man, said Pen. And Mr. Doolan, of the Star newspaper (for such was the gentleman's name and address upon the card which he handed to Pen), said "Faith he was, and he knew him very well." Pen thought it was quite an honour to have seen the great Mr. Hurtle, whose works he admired. He believed fondly, as yet, in authors, reviewers, and editors of newspapers. Even Wagg, whose books did not appear to him to be masterpieces of human intellect, he yet secretly revered as a successful writer. He mentioned that he had met Wagg in the country, and Doolan told him how that famous novelist received three hundred pounds a volume for every one of his novels. Pen began to calculate instantly whether he might not make five thousand a year.

The very first acquaintance of his own whom Arthur met, as the coach pulled up at the Gloster Coffee-house, was his

old friend Harry Foker, who came prancing down Arlington Street behind an enormous cab-horse. He had white kid gloves and white reins, and nature had by this time decorated him with a considerable tuft on the chin. A very small cab-boy, vice Stoopid retired, swung on behind Foker's vehicle; knock-kneed and in the tightest leather breeches. Foker looked at the dusty coach, and the smoking horses of the 'Alacrity' by which he had made journeys in former times. "What, Foker!" cried out Pendennis — "Hullo! Pen, my boy!" said the other, and he waved his whip by way of amity and salute to Arthur, who was very glad to see his queer friend's kind old face. Mr. Doolan had a great respect for Pen who had an acquaintance in such a grand cab; and Pen was greatly excited and pleased to be at liberty and in London. He asked Doolan to come and dine with him at the Covent Garden Coffee-house, where he put up: he called a cab and rattled away thither in the highest spirits. He was glad to see the bustling waiter and polite bowing landlord again; and asked for the landlady, and missed the old Boots and would have liked to shake hands with everybody. He had a hundred pounds in his pocket. He dressed himself in his very best; dined in the coffee-room with a modest pint of sherry (for he was determined to be very economical), and went to the theatre adjoining.

The lights and the music, the crowd and the gaiety, charmed and exhilarated Pen, as those sights will do young fellows from college and the country, to whom they are tolerably new. He laughed at the jokes; he applauded the songs, to the delight of some of the dreary old habitués of the boxes, who had ceased long ago to find the least excitement in their place of nightly resort, and were pleased to see any one so fresh, and so much amused. At the end of the first piece, he went and strutted about the lobbies of the theatre, as if he was in a resort of the highest fashion. What tired frequenter of the London pave is there that cannot remember having had similar early delusions, and would not call them back again? Here was young Foker again, like an ardent votary of pleasure as he was. He was walking with Grandy Tiptoff, of the Household Brigade, Lord Tiptoff's brother, and Lord Colchicum, Captain Tiptoff's uncle, a venerable peer, who had been a man of pleasure since the first French Revolution. Foker rushed upon Pen with eagerness, and insisted that the latter should come into his private box, where a lady with the longest ringlets and the fairest shoulders, was seated. This was Miss Blenkinsop, the eminent actress of high comedy; and in the back of the box snoozing in a wig, sat old Blenkinsop, her papa. He was described in the theatrical prints as the "veteran Blenkinsop"—"the useful Blenkinsop"—"that old favourite of the public, Blenkinsop"—those parts in the drama, which are called the heavy fathers, were usually assigned to this veteran, who, indeed, acted the heavy father in public, as in private life.

At this time, it being about eleven o'clock, Mrs. Pendennis was gone to bed at Fair Oaks, and wondering whether her dearest Arthur was at rest after his journey. At this time Laura, too, was awake. And at this time yesterday night, as the coach rolled over silent commons, where cottage windows twinkled, and by darkling woods under calm starlit skies, Pen was vowing to reform and to resist temptation, and his heart was at home. Meanwhile the farce was going on very successfully, and Mrs. Leary, in a hussar jacket and braided pantaloons, was enchanting the audience with her archness, her lovely figure, and her delightful ballads.

Pen, being new to the town, would have liked to listen to Mrs. Leary; but the other people in the box did not care about her song or her pantaloons, and kept up an incessant chattering. Tiptoff knew where her maillots came from. Colchicum saw her when she came out in '14. Miss Blenkinsop said she sang out of all tune, to the pain and astonishment of Pen, who thought that she was as beautiful as an angel, and that she sang like a nightingale; and when Hoppus came on as Sir Harcourt Featherby, the young man of the piece, the gentlemen in the box declared that Hoppus was getting too stale, and Tiptoff was for flinging Miss Blenkinsop's bouquet to him.

"Not for the world," cried the daughter of the veteran Blenkinsop; "Lord Colchicum gave it to me."

Pen remembered that nobleman's name, and with a bow and a blush said he believed he had to thank Lord Colchicum for having proposed him at the Megatherium Club, at the request of his uncle, Major Pendennis.

"What, you're Wigsby's nephew, are you?" said the peer. "I beg your pardon, we always call him Wigsby." Pen blushed to hear his venerable uncle called by such a familiar name. "We balloted you in last week, didn't we? Yes, last Wednesday night. Your uncle wasn't there."

Here was delightful news for Pen! He professed himself very much obliged indeed to Lord Colchicum, and made him a handsome speech of thanks, to which the other listened with his double opera-glass up to his eyes. Pen was full of excitement at the idea of being a member of this polite Club.

"Don't be always looking at that box, you naughty creature," cried Miss Blenkinsop.

"She's a dev'lish fine woman, that Mirabel," said Tiptoff; "though Mirabel was a d — d fool to marry her."

"A stupid old spooney," said the peer.

"Mirabel!" cried out Pendennis.

"Ha! ha!" laughed out Harry Foker. "We've heard of her before, haven't we, Pen?"

It was Pen's first love. It was Miss Fotheringay. The year before she had been led to the altar by Sir Charles Mirabel, G.C.B., and formerly envoy to the Court of Pumpnickel, who had taken so active a part in the negotiations before the Congress of Swammerdam, and signed, on behalf of H.B.M., the Peace of Pultusk.

"Emily was always as stupid as an owl," said Miss Blenkinsop.

"Eh! Eh! pas si bete," the old Peer said.

"Oh, for shame!" cried the actress, who did not in the least know what he meant.

And Pen looked out and beheld his first love once again — and wondered how he ever could have loved her.

Thus on the very first night of his arrival in London, Mr. Arthur Pendennis found himself introduced to a Club, to an actress of genteel comedy and a heavy father of the Stage, and to a dashing society of jovial blades, old and young; for my Lord Colchicum, though stricken in years, bald of head and enfeebled in person, was still indefatigable in the pursuit of enjoyment, and it was the venerable Viscount's boast that he could drink as much claret as the youngest member of the society which he frequented. He lived with the youth about town: he gave them countless dinners at Richmond and Greenwich: an enlightened patron of the drama in all languages and of the Terpsichorean art, he received dramatic professors of all nations at his banquets — English from the Covent Garden and Strand houses, Italians from the Haymarket, French from their own pretty little theatre, or the boards of the Opera where they danced. And at his villa on the Thames, this pillar of the State gave sumptuous entertainments to scores of young men of fashion, who very affably consorted with the ladies and gentlemen of the greenroom — with the former chiefly, for Viscount Colchicum preferred their society as more polished and gay than that of their male brethren.

Pen went the next day and paid his entrance-money at the Club, which operation carried off exactly one-third of his hundred pounds; and took possession of the edifice, and ate his luncheon there with immense satisfaction. He plunged into an easy-chair in the library, and tried to read all the magazines. He wondered whether the members were looking at him, and that they could dare to keep on their hats in such fine rooms. He sat down and wrote a letter to Fair Oaks on the Club paper, and said, what a comfort this place would be to him after his day's work was over. He went over to his uncle's lodgings in Bury Street with some considerable tremor, and in compliance with his mother's earnest desire, that he should instantly call on Major Pendennis; and was not a little relieved to find that the Major had not yet returned to town. His apartments were blank. Brown holland covered his library-table, and bills and letters lay on the mantelpiece, grimly awaiting the return of their owner. The Major was on the Continent, the landlady of the house said, at Badnbadn, with the Marcus of Steyne. Pen left his card upon the shelf with the rest. Fair Oaks was written on it still.

When the Major returned to London, which he did in time for the fogs of November, after enjoying which he proposed to spend Christmas with some friends in the country, he found another card of Arthur's, on which Lamb Court, Temple, was engraved, and a note from that young gentleman and from his mother, stating that he was come to town, was entered a member of the Upper Temple, and was reading hard for the bar.

Lamb Court, Temple:— where was it? Major Pendennis remembered that some ladies of fashion used to talk of dining with Mr. Ayliffe, the barrister, who was "in society," and who lived there in the King's Bench, of which prison there was probably a branch in the Temple, and Ayliffe was very likely an officer. Mr. Deuceace, Lord Crabs's son, had also lived there, he recollected. He despatched Morgan to find out where Lamb Court was, and to report upon the lodging selected by Mr. Arthur. That alert messenger had little difficulty in discovering Mr. Pen's abode. Discreet Morgan had in his time traced people far more difficult to find than Arthur.

"What sort of a place is it, Morgan?" asked the Major, out of the bed-curtains in Bury Street the next morning, as the valet was arranging his toilette in the deep yellow London fog.

"I should say rather a shy place," said Mr. Morgan. "The lawyers live there, and has their names on the doors. Mr. Harthur lives three pair high, sir. Mr. Warrington lives there too, sir."

"Suffolk Warringtons! I shouldn't wonder: a good family," thought the Major. "The cadets of many of our good families follow the robe as a profession. Comfortable rooms, eh?"

"Hon'ly saw the outside of the door, sir, with Mr. Warrington's name and Mr. Arthur's painted up, and a piece of paper with 'Back at 6;' but I couldn't see no servant, sir."

"Economical at any rate," said the Major.

"Very, sir. Three pair, sir. Nasty black staircase as ever I see. Wonder how a gentleman can live in such a place."

"Pray, who taught you where gentlemen should or should not live, Morgan? Mr. Arthur, sir, is going to study for the bar, sir," the Major said with much dignity; and closed the conversation and began to array himself in the yellow fog.

"Boys will be boys," the mollified uncle thought to himself. "He has written to me a devilish good letter. Colchicum says he has had him to dine, and thinks him a gentlemanlike lad. His mother is one of the best creatures in the world. If he has sown his wild oats, and will stick to his business, he may do well yet. Think of Charley Mirabel, the old fool, marrying that flame of his! that Fotheringay! He doesn't like to come here until I give him leave, and puts it in a very manly nice way. I was deuced angry with him, after his Oxbridge escapades — and showed it too when he was here before — Gad, I'll go and see him, hang me if I don't."

And having ascertained from Morgan that he could reach the Temple without much difficulty, and that a city omnibus would put him down at the gate, the Major one day after breakfast at his Club — not the Polyanthus, whereof Mr. Pen was just elected a member, but another Club: for the Major was too wise to have a nephew as a constant inmate of any house where he was in the habit of passing his time — the Major one day entered one of those public vehicles, and bade the conductor to put him down at the gate of the Upper Temple.

When Major Pendennis reached that dingy portal it was about twelve o'clock in the day; and he was directed by a civil personage with a badge and a white apron, through some dark alleys, and under various melancholy archways into courts each more dismal than the other, until finally he reached Lamb Court. If it was dark in Pall Mall, what was it in Lamb Court? Candles were burning in many of the rooms there — in the pupil-room of Mr. Hodgeman, the special pleader, where six pupils were scribbling declarations under the tallow; in Sir Hokey Walker's clerk's room, where the clerk, a person far more gentlemanlike and cheerful in appearance than the celebrated counsel, his master, was conversing in a patronising manner with the managing clerk of an attorney at the door; and in Curling the wigmaker's melancholy shop, where, from behind the feeble glimmer of a couple of lights, large serpents' and judges' wigs were looming drearily, with the blank blocks looking at the lamp-post in the court. Two little clerks were playing at toss-halfpenny under that lamp. A laundress in pattens passed in at one door, a newspaper boy issued from another. A porter, whose white apron was faintly visible, paced up and down. It would be impossible to conceive a place more dismal, and the Major shuddered to think that any one should select such a residence. "Good Ged!" he said, "the poor boy mustn't live on here."

The feeble and filthy oil-lamps, with which the staircases of the Upper Temple are lighted of nights, were of course not illuminating the stairs by day, and Major Pendennis, having read with difficulty his nephew's name under Mr. Warrington's on the wall of No. 6, found still greater difficulty in climbing the abominable black stairs, up the banisters of which, which contributed their damp exudations to his gloves, he groped painfully until he came to the third story. A candle was in the passage of one of the two sets of rooms; the doors were open, and the names of Mr. Warrington and Mr. A. Pendennis were very clearly visible to the Major as he went in. An Irish charwoman, with a pail and broom, opened the door for the Major.

"Is that the beer?" cried out a great voice: "give us hold of it."

The gentleman who was speaking was seated on a table, unshorn and smoking a short pipe; in a farther chair sate Pen, with a cigar, and his legs near the fire. A little boy, who acted as the clerk of these gentlemen, was grinning in the Major's face, at the idea of his being mistaken for beer. Here, upon the third floor, the rooms were somewhat lighter, and the Major could see place.

"Pen, my boy, it's I— it's your uncle," he said, choking with the smoke. But as most young men of fashion used the weed, he pardoned the practice easily enough.

Mr. Warrington got up from the table, and Pen, in a very perturbed manner, from his chair. "Beg your pardon for mistaking you," said Warrington, in a frank, loud voice. "Will you take a cigar, sir? Clear those things off the chair, Pidgeon, and pull it round to the fire."

Pen flung his cigar into the grate; and was pleased with the cordiality with which his uncle shook him by the hand. As soon as he could speak for the stairs and the smoke, the Major began to ask Pen very kindly about himself and about his

mother; for blood is blood, and he was pleased once more to see the boy.

Pen gave his news, and then introduced Mr. Warrington — an old Boniface man — whose chambers he shared.

The Major was quite satisfied when he heard that Mr. Warrington was a younger son of Sir Miles Warrington of Suffolk. He had served with an uncle of his in India and in New South Wales, years ago.

“Took a sheep-farm there, sir, made a fortune — better thing than law or soldiering,” Warrington said. “Think I shall go there too.” And here the expected beer coming in, in a tankard with a glass bottom, Mr. Warrington, with a laugh, said he supposed the Major would not have any, and took a long, deep draught himself, after which he wiped his wrist across his beard with great satisfaction. The young man was perfectly easy and unembarrassed. He was dressed in a ragged old shooting jacket, and had a bristly blue beard. He was drinking beer like a coalheaver, and yet you couldn’t but perceive that he was a gentleman.

When he had sate for a minute or two after his draught he went out of the room, leaving it to Pen and his uncle, that they might talk over family affairs were they so inclined.

“Rough and ready, your chum seems,” the Major said. “Somewhat different from your dandy friends at Oxbridge.”

“Times are altered,” Arthur replied, with a blush. “Warrington is only just called, and has no business, but he knows law pretty well; and until I can afford to read with a pleader, I use his books, and get his help.”

“Is that one of the books?” the Major asked, with a smile. A French novel was lying at the foot of Pen’s chair.

“This is not a working day, sir,” the lad said. “We were out very late at a party last night — at Lady Whiston’s,” Pen added, knowing his uncle’s weakness. “Everybody in town was there except you, sir; Counts, Ambassadors, Turks, Stars and Garters — I don’t know who — it’s all in the paper — and my name, too,” said Pen, with great glee. “I met an old flame of mine there, sir,” he added, with a laugh. “You know whom I mean, sir, — Lady Mirabel — to whom I was introduced over again. She shook hands, and was gracious enough. I may thank you for being out of that scrape, sir. She presented me to the husband, too — an old beau in a star and a blonde wig. He does not seem very wise. She has asked me to call on her, sir: and I may go now without any fear of losing my heart.”

“What, we have had some new loves, have we?” the Major asked in high good-humour.

“Some two or three,” Mr. Pen said, laughing. “But I don’t put on my grand sérieux any more, sir. That goes off after the first flame.”

“Very right, my dear boy. Flames and darts and passion, and that sort of thing, do very well for a lad: and you were but a lad when that affair with the Fotheringill — Fotheringay — (what’s her name?) came off. But a man of the world gives up those follies. You still may do very well. You have been bit, but you may recover. You are heir to a little independence; which everybody fancies is a doosid deal more. You have a good name, good wits, good manners, and a good person — and, begad! I don’t see why you shouldn’t marry a woman with money — get into Parliament — distinguish yourself, and — and, in fact, that sort of thing. Remember, it’s as easy to marry a rich woman as a poor woman: and a devilish deal pleasanter to sit down to a good dinner, than to a scrag of mutton in lodgings. Make up your mind to that. A woman with a good jointure is a doosid deal easier a profession than the law, let me tell you that. Look out; I shall be on the watch for you: and I shall die content, my boy, if I can see you with a good ladylike wife, and a good carriage, and a good pair of horses, living in society, and seeing your friends, like a gentleman. Would you like to vegetate like your dear good mother at Fair Oaks? Dammy, sir! life, without money and the best society isn’t worth having.” It was thus this affectionate uncle spoke, and expounded to Pen his simple philosophy.

“What would my mother and Laura say to this, I wonder?” thought the lad. Indeed old Pendennis’s morals were not their morals, nor was his wisdom theirs.

This affecting conversation between uncle and nephew had scarcely concluded, when Warrington came out of his bedroom, no longer in rags, but dressed like a gentleman, straight and tall and perfectly frank and good-humoured. He did the honours of his ragged sitting-room with as much ease as if it had been the finest apartment in London. And queer rooms they were in which the Major found his nephew. The carpet was full of holes — the table stained with many circles of Warrington’s previous ale-pots. There was a small library of law-books, books of poetry, and of mathematics, of which he was very fond. (He had been one of the hardest livers and hardest readers of his time at Oxbridge, where the name of Stunning Warrington was yet famous for beating bargemen, pulling matches, winning prizes, and drinking milk-punch.) A print of the old college hung up over the mantelpiece, and some battered volumes of Plato, bearing its well-known arms,

were on the book-shelves. There were two easy-chairs; a standing reading-desk piled with bills; a couple of very meagre briefs on a broken-legged study-table. Indeed, there was scarcely any article of furniture that had not been in the wars, and was not wounded. "Look here, sir, here is Pen's room. He is a dandy, and has got curtains to his bed, and wears shiny boots, and a silver dressing-case." Indeed, Pen's room was rather coquettishly arranged, and a couple of neat prints of opera-dancers, besides a drawing of Fair Oaks, hung on the walls. In Warrington's room there was scarcely any article of furniture, save a great shower-bath, and a heap of books by the bedside: where he lay upon straw like Margery Daw, and smoked his pipe, and read half through the night his favourite poetry or mathematics.

When he had completed his simple toilette, Mr. Warrington came out of this room, and proceeded to the cupboard to search for his breakfast.

"Might I offer you a mutton-chop, sir? We cook 'em ourselves hot and hot: and I am teaching Pen the first principles of law, cooking, and morality at the same time. He's a lazy beggar, sir, and too much of a dandy."

And so saying, Mr. Warrington wiped a gridiron with a piece of paper, put it on the fire, and on it two mutton-chops, and took from the cupboard a couple of plates and some knives and silver forks, and castors.

"Say but a word, Major Pendennis," he said; "there's another chop in the cupboard, or Pidgeon shall go out and get you anything you like."

Major Pendennis sat in wonder and amusement, but he said he had just breakfasted, and wouldn't have any lunch. So Warrington cooked the chops, and popped them hissing hot upon the plates.

Pen fell to at his chop with a good appetite, after looking up at his uncle, and seeing that gentleman was still in good-humour.

"You see, sir," Warrington said, "Mrs. Flanagan isn't here to do 'em, and we can't employ the boy, for the little beggar is all day occupied cleaning Pen's boots. And now for another swig at the beer. Pen drinks tea; it's only fit for old women."

"And so you were at Lady Whiston's last night," the Major said, not in truth knowing what observation to make to this rough diamond.

"I at Lady Whiston's! not such a flat, sir. I don't care for female society. In fact it bores me. I spent my evening philosophically at the Back Kitchen."

"The Back Kitchen? indeed!" said the Major.

"I see you don't know what it means," Warrington said. "Ask Pen. He was there after Lady Whiston's. Tell Major Pendennis about the Back Kitchen, Pen — don't be ashamed of yourself."

So Pen said it was a little eccentric society of men of letters and men about town, to which he had been presented; and the Major began to think that the young fellow had seen a good deal of the world since his arrival in London.



CHAPTER XXX

THE KNIGHTS OF THE TEMPLE

Colleges, schools, and inns of courts still have some respect for antiquity, and maintain a great number of the customs and institutions of our ancestors, with which those persons who do not particularly regard their forefathers, or perhaps are not very well acquainted with them; have long since done away. A well-ordained workhouse or prison is much better provided with the appliances of health, comfort, and cleanliness, than a respectable Foundation School a venerable College, or a learned Inn. In the latter place of residence men are contented to sleep in dingy closets, and to pay for the sitting-room and the cupboard which is their dormitory, the price of a good villa and garden in the suburbs, or of a roomy house in the neglected squares of the town. The poorest mechanic in Spitalfields has a cistern and an unbounded supply of water at his command; but the gentlemen of the inns of court, and the gentlemen of the universities, have their supply of this cosmetic fetched in jugs by laundresses and bedmakers, and live in abodes which were erected long before the custom of cleanliness and decency obtained among us. There are individuals still alive who sneer at the people and speak of them with epithets of scorn. Gentlemen, there can be but little doubt that your ancestors were the Great Unwashed: and in the Temple especially, it is pretty certain, that only under the greatest difficulties and restrictions the virtue which has been pronounced to be next to godliness could have been practised at all.

Old Grump, of the Norfolk Circuit, who had lived for more than thirty years in the chambers under those occupied by Warrington and Pendennis, and who used to be awakened by the roaring of the shower-baths which those gentlemen had erected in their apartments — a part of the contents of which occasionally trickled through the roof into Mr. Grump's room — declared that the practice was an absurd, newfangled, dandified folly, and daily cursed the laundress who slopped the staircase by which he had to pass. Grump, now much more than half a century old, had indeed never used the luxury in question. He had done without water very well, and so had our fathers before him. Of all those knights and baronets, lords and gentlemen, bearing arms, whose escutcheons are painted upon the walls of the famous hall of the Upper Temple, was there no philanthropist good-natured enough to devise a set of Hummums for the benefit of the lawyers, his fellows and successors? The Temple historian makes no mention of such a scheme. There is Pump Court and Fountain Court, with their hydraulic apparatus, but one never heard of a bencher disporting in the fountain; and can't but think how many a counsel learned in the law of old days might have benefited by the pump.

Nevertheless, those venerable Inns which have the Lamb and Flag and the Winged Horse for their ensigns, have attractions for persons who inhabit them, and a share of rough comforts and freedom which men always remember with pleasure. I don't know whether the student of law permits himself the refreshment of enthusiasm, or indulges in poetical reminiscences as he passes by historical chambers, and says, "Yonder Eldon lived — upon this site Coke mused upon Littleton — here Chitty toiled — here Barnewall and Alderson joined in their famous labours — here Byles composed his great work upon bills, and Smith compiled his immortal leading cases — here Gustavus still toils, with Solomon to aid him:" but the man of letters can't but love the place which has been inhabited by so many of his brethren, or peopled by their creations as real to us at this day as the authors whose children they were — and Sir Roger de Coverley walking in the Temple Garden, and discoursing with Mr. Spectator about the beauties in hoops and patches who are sauntering over the grass, is just as lively a figure to me as old Samuel Johnson rolling through the fog with the Scotch gentleman at his heels on their way to Dr. Goldsmith's chambers in Brick Court; or Harry Fielding, with inked ruffles and a wet towel round his head, dashing off articles at midnight for the Covent Garden Journal, while the printer's boy is asleep in the passage.

If we could but get the history of a single day as it passed in any one of those four-storied houses in the dingy court where our friends Pen and Warrington dwelt, some Temple Asmodeus might furnish us with a queer volume. There may be a great parliamentary counsel on the ground floor, who drives off to Belgravia at dinner-time, when his clerk, too, becomes a gentleman, and goes away to entertain his friends, and to take his pleasure. But a short time since he was hungry and briefless in some garret of the Inn; lived by stealthy literature; hoped, and waited, and sickened, and no clients came; exhausted his own means and his friends' kindness; had to remonstrate humbly with duns, and to implore the patience of poor creditors. Ruin seemed to be staring him in the face, when, behold, a turn of the wheel of fortune, and the lucky wretch in possession of one of those prodigious prizes which are sometimes drawn in the great lottery of the Bar. Many a

better lawyer than himself does not make a fifth part of the income of his clerk, who, a few months since, could scarcely get credit for blacking for his master's unpaid boots. On the first floor, perhaps, you will have a venerable man whose name is famous, who has lived for half a century in the Inn, whose brains are full of books, and whose shelves are stored with classical and legal lore. He has lived alone all these fifty years, alone and for himself, amassing learning, and compiling a fortune. He comes home now at night alone from the club, where he has been dining freely, to the lonely chambers where he lives a godless old recluse. When he dies, his Inn will erect a tablet to his honour, and his heirs burn a part of his library. Would you like to have such a prospect for your old age, to store up learning and money, and end so? But we must not linger too long by Mr. Doomsday's door. Worthy Mr. Grump lives over him, who is also an ancient inhabitant of the Inn, and who, when Doomsday comes home to read Catullus, is sitting down with three steady seniors of his standing, to a steady rubber at whist, after a dinner at which they have consumed their three steady bottles of Port. You may see the old boys asleep at the Temple Church of a Sunday. Attorneys seldom trouble them, and they have small fortunes of their own. On the other side of the third landing, where Pen and Warrington live, till long after midnight, sits Mr. Paley, who took the highest honours, and who is a fellow of his college, who will sit and read and note cases until two o'clock in the morning; who will rise at seven and be at the pleader's chambers as soon as they are open, where he will work until an hour before dinner-time; who will come home from Hall and read and note cases again until dawn next day, when perhaps Mr. Arthur Pendennis and his friend Mr. Warrington are returning from some of their wild expeditions. How differently employed Mr. Paley has been! He has not been throwing himself away: he has only been bringing a great intellect laboriously down to the comprehension of a mean subject, and in his fierce grasp of that, resolutely excluding from his mind all higher thoughts, all better things, all the wisdom of philosophers and historians, all the thoughts of poets; all wit, fancy, reflection, art, love, truth altogether — so that he may master that enormous legend of the law, which he proposes to gain his livelihood by expounding. Warrington and Paley had been competitors for university honours in former days, and had run each other hard; and everybody said now that the former was wasting his time and energies, whilst all people praised Paley for his industry. There may be doubts, however, as to which was using his time best. The one could afford time to think, and the other never could. The one could have sympathies and do kindnesses; and the other must needs be always selfish. He could not cultivate a friendship or do a charity, or admire a work of genius, or kindle at the sight of beauty or the sound of a sweet song — he had no time, and no eyes for anything but his law-books. All was dark outside his reading-lamp. Love, and Nature, and Art (which is the expression of our praise and sense of the beautiful world of God) were shut out from him. And as he turned off his lonely lamp at night, he never thought but that he had spent the day profitably, and went to sleep alike thankless and remorseless. But he shuddered when he met his old companion Warrington on the stairs, and shunned him as one that was doomed to perdition.

It may have been the sight of that cadaverous ambition and self-complacent meanness, which showed itself in Paley's yellow face, and twinkled in his narrow eyes, or it may have been a natural appetite for pleasure and joviality, of which it must be confessed Mr. Pen was exceedingly fond, which deterred that luckless youth from pursuing his designs upon the Bench or the Woolsack with the ardour, or rather steadiness, which is requisite in gentlemen who would climb to those seats of honour. He enjoyed the Temple life with a great deal of relish: his worthy relatives thought he was reading as became a regular student; and his uncle wrote home congratulatory letters to the kind widow at Fair Oaks, announcing that the lad had sown his wild oats, and was becoming quite steady. The truth is, that it was a new sort of excitement to Pen, the life in which he was now engaged, and having given up some of the dandified pretensions, and fine-gentleman airs which he had contracted among his aristocratic college acquaintances, of whom he now saw but little, the rough pleasures and amusements of a London bachelor were very novel and agreeable to him, and he enjoyed them all. Time was he would have envied the dandies their fine horses in Rotten Row, but he was contented now to walk in the Park and look at them. He was too young to succeed in London society without a better name and a larger fortune than he had, and too lazy to get on without these adjuncts. Old Pendennis fondly thought he was busied with law because he neglected the social advantages presented to him, and, having been at half a dozen balls and evening parties, retreated before their dulness and sameness; and whenever anybody made inquiries of the worthy Major about his nephew the old gentleman said the young rascal was reformed, and could not be got away from his books. But the Major would have been almost as much horrified as Mr. Paley was, had he known what was Mr. Pen's real course of life, and how much pleasure entered into his law studies.

A long morning's reading, a walk in the park, a pull on the river, a stretch up the hill to Hampstead, and a modest tavern dinner; a bachelor night passed here or there, in joviality, not vice (for Arthur Pendennis admired women so

heartily that he never could bear the society of any of them that were not, in his fancy at least, good and pure); a quiet evening at home, alone with a friend and a pipe or two, and a humble potation of British spirits, whereof Mrs. Flanagan, the laundress, invariably tested the quality; — these were our young gentleman's pursuits, and it must be owned that his life was not unpleasant. In term-time, Mr. Pen showed a most praiseworthy regularity in performing one part of the law-student's course of duty, and eating his dinners in Hall. Indeed, that Hall of the Upper Temple is a sight not uninteresting, and with the exception of some trifling improvements and anachronisms which have been introduced into the practice there, a man may sit down and fancy that he joins in a meal of the seventeenth century. The bar have their messes, the students their tables apart; the benchers sit at the high table on the raised platform surrounded by pictures of judges of the law and portraits of royal personages who have honoured its festivities with their presence and patronage. Pen looked about, on his first introduction, not a little amused with the scene which he witnessed. Among his comrades of the student class there were gentlemen of all ages, from sixty to seventeen; stout grey-headed attorneys who were proceeding to take the superior dignity — dandies and men — about town who wished for some reason to be barristers of seven years' standing — swarthy, black-eyed natives of the Colonies, who came to be called here before they practised in their own islands — and many gentlemen of the Irish nation, who make a sojourn in Middle Temple Lane before they return to the green country of their birth. There were little squads of reading students who talked law all dinner-time; there were rowing men, whose discourse was of sculling matches, the Red House, Vauxhall and the Opera; there were others great in politics, and orators of the students' debating clubs; with all of which sets, except the first, whose talk was an almost unknown and a quite uninteresting language to him, Mr. Pen made a gradual acquaintance, and had many points of sympathy.

The ancient and liberal Inn of the Upper Temple provides in its Hall, and for a most moderate price, an excellent wholesome dinner of soup, meat, tarts, and port wine or sherry, for the barristers and students who attend that place of refecton. The parties are arranged in messes of four, each of which quartets has its piece of beef or leg of mutton, its sufficient apple-pie and its bottle of wine. But the honest habitues of the hall, amongst the lower rank of students, who have a taste for good living, have many harmless arts by which they improve their banquet, and innocent 'dodges' (if we may be permitted to use an excellent phrase that has become vernacular since the appearance of the last dictionaries) by which they strive to attain for themselves more delicate food than the common every-day roast meat of the students' tables.

"Wait a bit," said Mr. Lowton, one of these Temple gourmands. "Wait a bit," said Mr. Lowton, tugging at Pen's gown — "the side-tables are very full, and there's only three benchers to eat ten dishes — if we wait, perhaps we shall get something from their table." And Pen looked with some amusement, as did Mr. Lowton with eyes of fond desire, towards the benchers' high table, where three old gentlemen were standing up before a dozen silver dish-covers, while the clerk was quavering out a grace.

Lowton was great in the conduct of the dinner. His aim was to manage so as to be the first, a captain of the mess, and to secure for himself the thirteenth glass of the bottle of port wine. Thus he would have the command of the joint on which he operated his favourite cuts, and made rapid dexterous appropriations of gravy, which amused Pen infinitely. Poor Jack Lowton! thy pleasures in life were very harmless; an eager epicure, thy desires did not go beyond eighteen pence.

Pen was somewhat older than many of his fellow-students, and there was that about his style and appearance, which, as we have said, was rather haughty and impertinent, that stamped him as a man of ton — very unlike those pale students who were talking law to one another, and those ferocious dandies, in rowing shirts and astonishing pins and waistcoats, who represented the idle part of the little community. The humble and good-natured Lowton had felt attracted by Pen's superior looks and presence — and had made acquaintance with him at the mess by opening the conversation.

"This is boiled-beef day, I believe, sir," said Lowton to Pen.

"Upon my word, sir, I'm not aware," said Pen, hardly able to contain his laughter, but added, "I'm a stranger; this is my first term;" on which Lowton began to point out to him the notabilities in the Hall.

"That's Boosey the bencher, the bald one sitting under the picture and aving soup; I wonder whether it's turtle? They often ave turtle. Next is Balls, the King's Counsel, and Swettenham — Hodge and Swettenham, you know. That's old Grump, the senior of the bar; they say he's dined here forty years. They often send 'em down their fish from the benchers to the senior table. Do you see those four fellows seated opposite us? Those are regular swells — tip-top fellows, I can tell you — Mr. Trail, the Bishop of Ealing's son, Honourable Fred. Ringwood, Lord Cinqbar's brother, you know. He'll have a good place, I bet any money; and Bob Suckling, who's always with him — a high fellow too. Ha! ha!" Here Lowton burst into a laugh,

"What is it?" said Pen, still amused.

"I say, I like to mess with those chaps," Lowton said, winking his eye knowingly, and pouring out his glass of wine.

"And why?" asked Pen.

"Why! they don't come down here to dine, you know, they only make believe to dine. They dine here, Law bless you! They go to some of the swell clubs, or else to some grand dinner-party. You see their names in the Morning Post at all the fine parties in London. Why, I bet anything that Ringwood has his cab, or Trail his Brougham (he's a devil of a fellow, and makes the bishop's money spin, I can tell you) at the corner of Essex Street at this minute. They dine! They won't dine these two hours, I dare say."

"But why should you like to mess with them, if they don't eat any dinner?" Pen asked, still puzzled. "There's plenty, isn't there?"

"How green you are," said Lowton. "Excuse me, but you are green. They don't drink any wine, don't you see, and a fellow gets the bottle to himself if he likes it when he messes with those three chaps. That's why Corkoran got in with 'em."

"Ah, Mr. Lowton, I see you are a sly fellow," Pen said, delighted with his acquaintance: on which the other modestly replied, that he had lived in London the better part of his life, and of course had his eyes about him; and went on with his catalogue to Pen.

"There's a lot of Irish here," he said; "that Corkoran's one, and I can't say I like him. You see that handsome chap with the blue neck-cloth, and pink shirt, and yellow waistcoat, that's another; that's Molloy Maloney of Ballymaloney, and nephew to Major-General Sir Hector O'Dowd, he, he," Lowton said, trying to imitate the Hibernian accent. "He's always bragging about his uncle; and came into Hall in silver-striped trousers the day he had been presented. That other near him, with the long black hair, is a tremendous rebel. By Jove, sir, to hear him at the Forum it makes your blood freeze; and the next is an Irishman, too, Jack Finucane, reporter of a newspaper. They all stick together, those Irish. It's your turn to fill your glass. What? you won't have any port? Don't like port with your dinner? Here's your health." And this worthy man found himself not the less attached to Pendennis because the latter disliked port wine at dinner.

It was while Pen was taking his share of one of these dinners with his acquaintance Lowton as the captain of his mess, that there came to join them a gentleman in a barrister's gown, who could not find a seat, as it appeared, amongst the persons of his own degree, and who strode over the table and took his place on the bench where Pen sate. He was dressed in old clothes and a faded gown, which hung behind him, and he wore a shirt which, though clean, was extremely ragged, and very different to the magnificent pink raiment of Mr. Molloy Maloney, who occupied a commanding position in the next mess. In order to notify their appearance at dinner, it is the custom of the gentlemen who eat in the Upper Temple Hall to write down their names upon slips of paper, which are provided for that purpose, with a pencil for each mess. Lowton wrote his name first, then came Arthur Pendennis, and the next was that of the gentleman in the old clothes. He smiled when he saw Pen's name, and looked at him. "We ought to know each other," he said. "We're both Boniface men; my name's Warrington."

"Are you St — Warrington?" Pen said, delighted to see this hero.

Warrington laughed — "Stunning Warrington — yes," he said, "I recollect you in your freshman's term. But you appear to have quite cut me out."

"The college talks about you still," said Pen, who had a generous admiration for talent and pluck. "The bargeman you thrashed, Bill Simes, don't you remember, wants you up again at Oxbridge. The Miss Notleys, the haberdashers —"

"Hush!" said Warrington — "glad to make your acquaintance, Pendennis. Heard a good deal about you."

The young men were friends immediately, and at once deep in college-talk. And Pen, who had been acting rather the fine gentleman on a previous day, when he pretended to Lowton that he could not drink port wine at dinner, seeing Warrington take his share with a great deal of gusto, did not scruple about helping himself any more, rather to the disappointment of honest Lowton. When the dinner was over, Warrington asked Arthur where he was going.

"I thought of going home to dress, and hear Grisi in Norma," Pen said.

"Are you going to meet anybody there?" he asked.

Pen said, "No — only to hear the music," of which he was fond.

"You had much better come home and smoke a pipe with me," said Warrington — "a very short one. Come, I live close

by in Lamb Court, and we'll talk over Boniface and old times."

They went away; Lowton sighed after them. He knew Warrington was a baronet's son, and he looked up with simple reverence to all the aristocracy. Pen and Warrington became sworn friends from that night. Warrington's cheerfulness and jovial temper, his good sense, his rough welcome, and his never-failing pipe of tobacco, charmed Pen, who found it more pleasant to dive into shilling taverns with him, than to dine in solitary state amongst the silent and polite frequenters of the Polyanthus.

Ere long Pen gave up the lodgings in St. James's, to which he had migrated on quitting his hotel, and found it was much more economical to take up his abode with Warrington in Lamb Court, and furnish and occupy his friend's vacant room there. For it must be said of Pen, that no man was more easily led than he to do a thing, when it was a novelty, or when he had a mind to it. And Pidgeon, the youth, and Flanagan, the laundress, divided their allegiance now between Warrington and Pen.



CHAPTER XXXI

OLD AND NEW ACQUAINTANCES

Elated with the idea of seeing life, Pen went into a hundred queer London haunts. He liked to think he was consorting with all sorts of men — so he beheld coalheavers in their tap-rooms; boxers in their inn-parlours; honest citizens disporting in the suburbs or on the river; and he would have liked to hob and nob with celebrated pickpockets, or drink a pot of ale with a company of burglars and cracksmen, had chance afforded him an opportunity of making the acquaintance of this class of society. It was good to see the gravity with which Warrington listened to the Tutbury Pet or the Brighton Stunner at the Champion's Arms, and behold the interest which he took in the coalheaving company assembled at the Fox-under-the-Hill. His acquaintance with the public-houses of the metropolis and its neighbourhood, and with the frequenters of their various parlours, was prodigious. He was the personal friend of the landlord and landlady, and welcome to the bar as to the clubroom. He liked their society, he said, better than that of his own class, whose manners annoyed him, and whose conversation bored him. "In society," he used to say, "everybody is the same, wears the same dress, eats and drinks, and says the same things; one young dandy at the club talks and looks just like another, one Miss at a ball exactly resembles another, whereas there's character here. I like to talk with the strongest man in England, or the man who can drink the most beer in England, or with that tremendous republican of a hatter, who thinks Thistlewood was the greatest character in history. I like better gin-and-water than claret. I like a sanded floor in Carnaby Market better than a chalked one in Mayfair. I prefer Snobs, I own it." Indeed, this gentleman was a social republican; and it never entered his head while conversing with Jack and Tom that he was in any respect their better; although, perhaps, the deference which they paid him might secretly please him.

Pen followed him then to these various resorts of men with great glee and assiduity. But he was considerably younger, and therefore much more pompous and stately than Warrington, in fact a young prince in disguise, visiting the poor of his father's kingdom. They respected him as a high chap, a fine fellow, a regular young swell. He had somehow about him an air of imperious good-humour, and a royal frankness and majesty, although he was only heir-apparent to twopence-halfpenny, and but one in descent from a gallypot. If these positions are made for us, we acquiesce in them very easily; and are always pretty ready to assume a superiority over those who are as good as ourselves. Pen's condescension at this time of his life was a fine thing to witness. Amongst men of ability this assumption and impertinence passes off with extreme youth: but it is curious to watch the conceit of a generous and clever lad — there is something almost touching in that early exhibition of simplicity and folly.,

So, after reading pretty hard of a morning, and, I fear, not law merely, but politics and general history and literature, which were as necessary for the advancement and instruction of a young man as mere dry law, after applying with tolerable assiduity to letters, to reviews, to elemental books of law, and, above all, to the newspaper, until the hour of dinner was drawing nigh, these young gentlemen would sally out upon the town with great spirits and appetite, and bent upon enjoying a merry night as they had passed a pleasant forenoon. It was a jovial time, that of four-and-twenty, when every muscle of mind and body was in healthy action, when the world was new as yet, and one moved over it spurred onwards by good spirits and the delightful capability to enjoy. If ever we feel young afterwards, it is with the comrades of that time: the tunes we hum in our old age, are those we learned then. Sometimes, perhaps, the festivity of that period revives in our memory; but how dingy the pleasure-garden has grown, how tattered the garlands look, how scant and old the company, and what a number of the lights have gone out since that day! Grey hairs have come on like daylight streaming in-daylight and a headache with it. Pleasure has gone to bed with the rouge on her cheeks. Well, friend, let us walk through the day, sober and sad, but friendly.

I wonder what Laura and Helen would have said, could they have seen, as they might not unfrequently have done had they been up and in London, in the very early morning when the bridges began to blush in the sunrise, and the tranquil streets of the city to shine in the dawn, Mr. Pen and Mr. Warrington rattling over the echoing flags towards the Temple, after one of their wild nights of carouse — nights wild, but not so wicked as such nights sometimes are, for Warrington was a woman-hater; and Pen, as we have said, too lofty to stoop to a vulgar intrigue. Our young Prince of Fairoaks never could speak to one of the sex but with respectful courtesy, and shrank from a coarse word or gesture with instinctive delicacy —

for though we have seen him fall in love with a fool, as his betters and inferiors have done, and as it is probable that he did more than once in his life, yet for the time of the delusion it was always as a Goddess that he considered her, and chose to wait upon her. Men serve women kneeling — when they get on their feet, they go away.

That was what an acquaintance of Pen's said to him in his hard homely way; — an old friend with whom he had fallen in again in London — no other than honest Mr. Bows of the Chatteris Theatre, who was now employed as pianoforte player, to accompany the eminent lyrical talent which nightly delighted the public at the Fielding's Head in Covent Garden: and where was held the little club called the Back Kitchen.

Numbers of Pen's friends frequented this very merry meeting. The Fielding's Head had been a house of entertainment, almost since the time when the famous author of 'Tom Jones' presided as magistrate in the neighbouring Bow Street; his place was pointed out, and the chair said to have been his, still occupied by the president of the night's entertainment. The worthy Cutts, the landlord of the Fielding's Head, generally occupied this post when not disabled by gout or other illness. His jolly appearance and fine voice may be remembered by some of my male readers: he used to sing profusely in the course of the harmonic meeting, and his songs were of what may be called the British Brandy-and-Water School of Song — such as 'The Good Old English Gentleman,' 'Dear Tom, this Brown Jug,' and so forth — songs in which pathos and hospitality are blended, and the praises of good liquor and the social affections are chanted in a baritone voice. The charms of our women, the heroic deeds of our naval and military commanders, are often sung in the ballads of this school; and many a time in my youth have I admired how Cutts the singer, after he had worked us all up to patriotic enthusiasm, by describing the way in which the brave Abercrombie received his death-wound, or made us join him in tears, which he shed liberally himself, as in faltering accents he told how autumn's falling leaf "proclaimed the old man he must die"— how Cutts the singer became at once Cutts the landlord, and, before the applause which we were making with our fists on his table, in compliment to his heart-stirring melody, had died away — was calling, "Now, gentlemen, give your orders, the waiter's in the room — John, a champagne cup for Mr. Green. I think, sir, you said sausages and mashed potatoes? John, attend on the gentleman."

"And I'll thank ye give me a glass of punch too, John, and take care the wather boils," a voice would cry not unfrequently, a well-known voice to Pen, which made the lad blush and start when he heard it first — that of the venerable Captain Costigan; who was now established in London, and one of the great pillars of the harmonic meetings at the Fielding's Head.

The Captain's manners and conversation brought very many young men to the place. He was a character, and his fame had begun to spread soon after his arrival in the metropolis, and especially after his daughter's marriage. He was great in his conversation to the friend for the time being (who was the neighbour drinking by his side), about "me daughther." He told of her marriage, and of the events previous and subsequent to that ceremony; of the carriages she kept; of Mirabel's adoration for her and for him; of the hundther pounds which he was at perfect liberty to draw from his son-in-law, whenever necessity urged him. And having stated that it was his firm intention to "dthraw next Sathurday, I give ye me secured word and honour next Sathurday, the fourteenth, when ye'll see the money will be handed over to me at Coutts's, the very instant I present the cheque," the Captain would not unfrequently propose to borrow a half-crown of his friend until the arrival of that day of Greek Calends, when, on the honour of an officer and gentleman, he would reapee the thrifling obligation.

Sir Charles Mirabel had not that enthusiastic attachment to his father-in-law, of which the latter sometimes boasted (although in other stages of emotion Cos would inveigh, with tears in his eyes, against the ingratitude of the child of his bosom, and the stinginess of the wealthy old man who had married her); but the pair had acted not unkindly towards Costigan; had settled a small pension on him, which was paid regularly, and forestalled with even more regularity by poor Cos; and the period of the payments was always well known by his friend at the Fielding's Head, whither the honest Captain took care to repair, bank-notes in hand, calling loudly for change in the midst of the full harmonic meeting. "I think ye'll find that note won't be refused at the Bank of England, Cutts, my boy," Captain Costigan would say. "Bows, have a glass? Ye needn't stint yourself to-night, anyhow; and a glass of punch will make ye play con spirito." For he was lavishly free with his money when it came to him, and was scarcely known to button his breeches pocket, except when the coin was gone, or sometimes, indeed, when a creditor came by.

It was in one of these moments of exultation that Pen found his old friend swaggering at the singers' table at the Back Kitchen of the Fielding's Head, and ordering glasses of brandy-and-water for any of his acquaintances who made their

appearance in the apartment. Warrington, who was on confidential terms with the bass singer, made his way up to this quarter of the room, and Pen walked at his friend's heels.

Pen started and blushed to see Costigan. He had just come from Lady Whiston's party, where he had met and spoken with the Captain's daughter again for the first time after very old days. He came up with outstretched hand, very kindly and warmly to greet the old man; still retaining a strong remembrance of the time when Costigan's daughter had been everything in the world to him. For though this young gentleman may have been somewhat capricious in his attachments, and occasionally have transferred his affections from one woman to another, yet he always respected the place where Love had dwelt, and, like the Sultan of Turkey, desired that honours should be paid to the lady towards whom he had once thrown the royal pocket-handkerchief. The tipsy Captain returning the clasp of Pen's hand with all the strength of a palm which had become very shaky by the constant lifting up of weights of brandy-and-water, looked hard in Pen's face, and said, "Grecious Heavens, is it possible? Me dear boy, me dear fellow, me dear friend;" and then with a look of muddled curiosity, fairly broke down with, "I know your face, me dear dear friend, but, bedad, I've forgot your name." Five years of constant punch had passed since Pen and Costigan met. Arthur was a good deal changed, and the Captain may surly be excused for forgetting him; when a man at the actual moment sees things double, we may expect that his view of the past will be rather muzzy.

Pen saw his condition and laughed, although, perhaps, he was somewhat mortified. "Don't you remember me, Captain?" he said. "I am Pendennis — Arthur Pendennis, of Chatteris."

The sound of the young man's friendly voice recalled and steadied Cos's tipsy remembrance, and he saluted Arthur, as soon as he knew him, with a loud volley of friendly greetings. Pen was his dearest boy, his gallant young friend, his noble collagian, whom he had held in his inmost heart ever since they had parted — how was his fawther, no, his mother, and his guardian, the General, the Major? "I preshoom, from your apparance, you've come into your prawpertee; and, bedad, yee'll spend it like a man of spirit — I'll go bail for that. No? not yet come into your estete? If ye want any thrifle, heark ye, there's poor old Jack Costigan has got a guinea or two in his pocket — and, be heavens! you shall never want, Awthur, me dear boy. What'll ye have? John, come hither, and look aloive; give this gentleman a glass of punch, and I'll pay for't. — Your friend? I've seen him before. Permit me to have the honour of making meself known to ye, sir, and requesting ye'll take a glass of punch."

"I don't envy Sir Charles Mirabel his father-inlaw," thought Pendennis. "And how is my old friend, Mr. Bows, Captain? Have you any news of him, and do you see him still?"

"No doubt he's very well," said the Captain, jingling his money, and whistling the air of a song — "The Little Doodeen" — for the singing of which he was celebrated at the Fielding's Head. "Me dear boy — I've forgot your name again — but my name's Costigan, Jack Costigan, and I'd loike ye to take as many tumblers of punch in my name as ever ye loike. Ye know my name; I'm not ashamed of it." And so the captain went maundering on.

"It's pay-day with the General," said Mr. Hodgen, the bass singer, with whom Warrington was in deep conversation: "and he's a precious deal more than half seas over. He has already tried that 'Little Doodeen' of his, and broke it, too, just before I sang 'King Death.' Have you heard my new song, 'The Body Snatcher,' Mr. Warrington? — angcored at Saint Bartholomew's the other night — composed expressly for me. Per'aps you or your friend would like a copy of the song, sir? John, just 'ave the kyndness to 'and over a 'Body Snatcher' 'ere, will yer? — There's a portrait of me, sir, as I sing it — as the Snatcher — considered rather like."

"Thank you," said Warrington; "heard it nine times — know it by heart, Hodgen."

Here the gentleman who presided at the pianoforte began to play upon his instrument, and Pen, looking in the direction of the music, beheld that very Mr. Bows, for whom he had been asking but now, and whose existence Costigan had momentarily forgotten. The little old man sate before the battered piano (which had injured its constitution wofully by sitting up so many nights, and spoke with a voice, as it were, at once hoarse and faint), and accompanied the singers, or played with taste and grace in the intervals of the songs.

Bows had seen and recollected Pen at once when the latter came into the room, and had remarked the eager warmth of the young man's recognition of Costigan. He now began to play an air, which Pen instantly remembered as one which used to be sung by the chorus of villagers in 'The Stranger,' just before Mrs. Haller came in. It shook Pen as he heard it. He remembered how his heart used to beat as that air was played, and before the divine Emily made her entry. Nobody, save

Arthur, too any notice of old Bows's playing: it was scarcely heard amidst the clatter of knives and forks, the calls for poached eggs and kidneys, and the tramp of guests and waiters.

Pen went up and kindly shook the player by the hand at the end of his performance; and Bows greeted Arthur with great respect and cordiality. "What, you haven't forgot the old tune, Mr. Pendennis?" he said; "I thought you'd remember it. I take it, it was the first tune of that sort you ever heard played — wasn't it, sir? You were quite a young chap then. I fear the Captain's very bad to-night. He breaks out on a pay-day; and I shall have the deuce's own trouble in getting home. We live together. We still hang on, sir, in partnership, though Miss Em — though my lady Mirabel has left the firm. — And so you remember old times, do you? Wasn't she a beauty, sir? — Your health and my service to you," — and he took a sip at the pewter measure of porter which stood by his side as he played.

Pen had many opportunities of seeing his early acquaintance afterwards, and of renewing his relations with Costigan and the old musician.

As they sate thus in friendly colloquy, men of all sorts and conditions entered and quitted the house of entertainment; and Pen had the pleasure of seeing as many different persons of his race, as the most eager observer need desire to inspect. Healthy country tradesmen and farmers, in London for their business, came and recreated themselves with the jolly singing and suppers of the Back Kitchen — squads of young apprentices and assistants, the shutters being closed over the scene of their labours, came hither for fresh air doubtless — rakish young medical students, gallant, dashing, what is called "loudly" dressed, and (must it be owned?) somewhat dirty — were here smoking and drinking, and vociferously applauding the songs; young university bucks were to be found here, too, with that indescribable genteel simper which is only learned at the knees of Alma Mater; — and handsome young guardsmen, and florid bucks from the St. James's Street Clubs — nay, senators English and Irish; and even members of the House of Peers.

The bass singer had made an immense hit with his song of 'The Body Snatcher,' and the town rushed to listen to it. The curtain drew aside, and Mr. Hodgen appeared in the character of the Snatcher, sitting on a coffin, with a flask of gin before him, with a spade, and a candle stuck in a skull. The song was sung with a really admirable terrific humour. The singer's voice went down so low, that its grumbles rumbled into the hearer's awe-stricken soul; and in the chorus he clamped with his spade, and gave a demoniac "Ha! ha!" which caused the very glasses to quiver on the table, as with terror. None of the other singers, not even Cutts himself, as that high-minded man owned, could stand up before the Snatcher, and he commonly used to retire to Mrs. Cutts's private apartments, or into the bar, before that fatal song extinguished him. Poor Cos's ditty, 'The Little Doodeen,' which Bows accompanied charmingly on the piano, was sung but to a few admirers, who might choose to remain after the tremendous resurrectionist chant. The room was commonly emptied after that, or only left in possession of a very few and persevering votaries of pleasure.

Whilst Pen and his friend were sitting here together one night, or rather morning, two habitués of the house entered almost together. "Mr. Hoolan and Mr. Doolan," whispered Warrington to Pen, saluting these gentlemen, and in the latter Pen recognised his friend of the Alacrity coach, who could not dine with Pen on the day on which the latter had invited him, being compelled by his professional duties to decline dinner-engagements on Fridays, he had stated, with his compliments to Mr. Pendennis.

Doolan's paper, the Dawn, was lying on the table much bestained by porter, and cheek-by-jowl with Hoolan's paper, which we shall call the Day; the Dawn was Liberal — the Day was ultra-Conservative. Many of our journals are officered by Irish gentlemen, and their gallant brigade does the penning among us, as their ancestors used to transact the fighting in Europe; and engage under many a flag, to be good friends when the battle is over.

"Kidneys, John, and a glass of stout," says Hoolan. "How are you, Morgan? how's Mrs. Doolan?"

"Doing pretty well, thank ye, Mick, my boy — faith she's accustomed to it," said Doolan. "How's the lady that owns ye? Maybe I'll step down Sunday, and have a glass of punch, Kilburn way."

"Don't bring Patsey with you, Mick, for our Georgy's got the measles," said the friendly Morgan, and they straightway fell to talk about matters connected with their trade — about the foreign mails — about who was correspondent at Paris, and who wrote from Madrid — about the expense the Morning Journal was at in sending couriers, about the circulation of the Evening Star, and so forth.

Warrington, laughing, took the Dawn which was lying before him, and pointed to one of the leading articles in that journal, which commenced thus —

“As rogues of note in former days who had some wicked work to perform — an enemy to be put out of the way, a quantity of false coin to be passed, a lie to be told or a murder to be done — employed a professional perjurer or assassin to do the work, which they were themselves too notorious or too cowardly to execute: our notorious contemporary, the Day, engages smashers out of doors to utter forgeries against individuals, and calls in auxiliary cut-throats to murder the reputation of those who offend him. A black-vizarded ruffian (whom we will unmask), who signs the forged name of Trefoil, is at present one of the chief bravoos and bullies in our contemporary’s establishment. He is the eunuch who brings the bowstring, and strangles at the order of the Day. We can convict this cowardly slave, and propose to do so. The charge which he has brought against Lord Bangbanagher, because he is a Liberal Irish peer, and against the Board of Poor Law Guardians of the Bangbanagher Union, is,” etc.

“How did they like the article at your place, Mick?” asked Morgan; “when the Captain puts his hand to it he’s a tremendous hand at a smasher. He wrote the article in two hours — in-whew — you know where, while the boy was waiting.”

“Our governor thinks the public don’t mind a straw about these newspaper rows, and has told the Docthor to stop answering,” said the other. “Them two talked it out together in my room. The Docthor would have liked a turn, for he says it’s such easy writing, and requires no reading up of a subject: but the governor put a stopper on him.”

“The taste for eloquence is going out, Mick,” said Morgan.

“Deed then it is, Morgan,” said Mick. “That was fine writing when the Docthor wrote in the Phaynix, and he and Condry Rooney blazed away at each other day after day.”

“And with powder and shot, too, as well as paper,” says Morgan, “Faith, the Docthor was out twice, and Condry Rooney winged his man.”

“They are talking about Doctor Boyne and Captain Shandon,” Warrington said, “who are the two Irish controversialists of the Dawn and the Day, Dr. Boyne being the Protestant champion and Captain Shandon the Liberal orator. They are the best friends in the world, I believe, in spite of their newspaper controversies; and though they cry out against the English for abusing their country, by Jove they abuse it themselves more in a single article than we should take the pains to do in a dozen volumes. How are you, Doolan?”

“Your servant, Mr. Warrington — Mr. Pendennis, I am delighted to have the honour of seeing ye again. The night’s journey on the top of the Alacrity was one of the most agreeable I ever enjoyed in my life, and it was your liveliness and urbanity that made the trip so charming. I have often thought over that happy night, sir, and talked over it to Mrs. Doolan. I have seen your elegant young friend, Mr. Foker, too, here, sir, not unfrequently. He is an occasional frequenter of this hostelry, and a right good one it is. Mr. Pendennis, when I saw you I was on the Tom and Jerry Weekly Paper; I have now the honour to be sub-editor of the Dawn, one of the best-written papers of the empire” — and he bowed very slightly to Mr. Warrington. His speech was unctuous and measured, his courtesy oriental, his tone, when talking with the two Englishmen, quite different to that with which he spoke to his comrade.

“Why the devil will the fellow compliment so?” growled Warrington, with a sneer which he hardly took the pains to suppress. “Psha — who comes here? — all Parnassus is abroad to-night: here’s Archer. We shall have some fun. Well, Archer, House up?”

“Haven’t been there. I have been,” said Archer, with an air of mystery, “where I was wanted. Get me some supper, John — something substantial. I hate your grandees who give you nothing to eat. If it had been at Apsley House, it would have been quite different. The Duke knows what I like, and says to the Groom of the Chambers, ‘Martin, you will have some cold beef, not too much done, and a pint bottle of pale ale, and some brown sherry, ready in my study as usual; — Archer is coming here this evening.’ The Duke doesn’t eat supper himself, but he likes to see a man enjoy a hearty meal, and he knows that I dine early. A man can’t live upon air, be hanged to him.”

“Let me introduce you to my friend, Mr. Pendennis,” Warrington said, with great gravity. “Pen, this is Mr Archer, whom you have heard me talk about. You must know Pen’s uncle, the Major, Archer, you who know everybody?”

“Dined with him the day before yesterday at Gaunt House,” Archer said. “We were four — the French Ambassador, Steyne, and we two commoners.”

“Why, my uncle is in Scot —” Pen was going to break out, but Warrington pressed his foot under the table as a signal for him to be quiet.

"It was about the same business that I have been to the palace to-night," Archer went on simply, "and where I've been kept four hours, in an anteroom, with nothing but yesterday's Times, which I knew by heart, as I wrote three of the leading articles myself; and though the Lord Chamberlain came in four times, and once holding the royal teacup and saucer in his hand, he did not so much as say to me, 'Archer, will you have a cup of tea?'"

"Indeed! what is in the wind now?" asked Warrington — and turning to Pen, added, "You know, I suppose, that when there is anything wrong at Court they always send for Archer."

"There is something wrong," said Mr. Archer, "and as the story will be all over the town in a day or two I don't mind telling it. At the last Chantilly races, where I rode Brian Boru for my old friend the Duke de Saint Cloud — the old King said to me, Archer, I'm uneasy about Saint Cloud. I have arranged his marriage with the Princess Marie Cunegonde; the peace of Europe depends upon it — for Russia will declare war if the marriage does not take place, and the young fool is so mad about Madame Massena, Marshal Massena's wife, that he actually refuses to be a party to the marriage. Well, Sir, I spoke to Saint Cloud, and having got him into pretty good humour by winning the race, and a good bit of money into the bargain, he said to me, 'Archer, tell the Governor I'll think of it.'"

"How do you say Governor in French?" asked Pen, who piqued himself on knowing that language.

"Oh, we speak in English — I taught him when we were boys, and I saved his life at Twickenham, when he fell out of a punt," Archer said. "I shall never forget the Queen's looks as I brought him out of the water. She gave me this diamond ring, and always calls me Charles to this day."

"Madame Massena must be rather an old woman, Archer," Warrington said.

"Dev'lish old — old enough to be his grandmother; I told him so," Archer answered at once. "But those attachments for old women are the deuce and all. That's what the King feels: that's what shocks the poor Queen so much. They went away from Paris last Tuesday night, and are living at this present moment at Jaunay's Hotel."

"Has there been a private marriage, Archer?" asked Warrington.

"Whether there has or not I don't know," Mr. Archer replied, "all I know is that I was kept waiting for four hours at the palace; that I never saw a man in such a state of agitation as the King of Belgium when he came out to speak to me, and that I'm devilish hungry — and here comes some supper."

"He has been pretty well to-night," said Warrington, as the pair went home together: "but I have known him in much greater force, and keeping a whole room in a state of wonder. Put aside his archery practice, that man is both able and honest — a good man of business, an excellent friend, admirable to his family as husband, father, and son."

"What is it makes him pull the long bow in that wonderful manner?"

"An amiable insanity," answered Warrington. "He never did anybody harm by his talk, or said evil of anybody. He is a stout politician too, and would never write a word or do an act against his party, as many of us do."

"Of us! Who are we?" asked Pen. "Of what profession is Mr. Archer?"

"Of the Corporation of the Goosequill — of the Press, my boy," said Warrington; "of the fourth estate."

"Are you, too, of the craft, then?" Pendennis said.

"We will talk about that another time," answered the other. They were passing through the Strand as they talked, and by a newspaper office, which was all lighted up and bright. Reporters were coming out of the place, or rushing up to it in cabs; there were lamps burning in the editors' rooms, and above where the compositors were at work: the windows of the building were in a blaze of gas.

"Look at that, Pen," Warrington said. "There she is — the great engine — she never sleeps. She has her ambassadors in every quarter of the world — her couriers upon every road. Her officers march along with armies, and her envoys walk into statesmen's cabinets. They are ubiquitous. Yonder journal has an agent, at this minute, giving bribes at Madrid; and another inspecting the price of potatoes in Covent Garden. Look! here comes the Foreign Express galloping in. They will be able to give news to Downing Street tomorrow: funds will rise or fall, fortunes be made or lost; Lord B. will get up, and, holding the paper in his hand, and seeing the noble marquis in his place, will make a great speech; and — and Mr. Doolan will be called away from his supper at the Back Kitchen; for he is foreign sub-editor, and sees the mail on the newspaper sheet before he goes to his own."

And so talking, the friends turned into their chambers, as the dawn was beginning to peep.

CHAPTER XXXII

IN WHICH THE PRINTER'S DEVIL COMES TO THE DOOR

Pen, in the midst of his revels and enjoyments, humble as they were, and moderate in cost if not in kind, saw an awful sword hanging over him which must drop down before long and put an end to his frolics and feasting. His money was very nearly spent. His club subscription had carried away a third part of it. He had paid for the chief articles of furniture with which he had supplied his little bedroom: in fine, he was come to the last five-pound note in his pocket-book, and could think of no method of providing a successor: for our friend had been bred up like a young prince as yet, or as a child in arms whom his mother feeds when it cries out.

Warrington did not know what his comrade's means were. An only child, with a mother at her country house, and an old dandy of an uncle who dined with a great man every day, Pen might have a large bank at his command for anything that the other knew. He had gold chains and a dressing-case fit for a lord. His habits were those of an aristocrat — not that he was expensive upon any particular point, for he dined and laughed over the pint of porter and the plate of beef from the cook's shop with perfect content and good appetite — but he could not adopt the penny-wise precautions of life. He could not give twopence to a waiter; he could not refrain from taking a cab if he had a mind to do so, or if it rained, and as surely as he took the cab he overpaid the driver. He had a scorn for cleaned gloves and minor economies. Had he been bred to ten thousand a year he could scarcely have been more free-handed; and for a beggar, with a sad story, or a couple of pretty piteous-faced children, he never could resist putting his hand into his pocket. It was a sumptuous nature, perhaps, that could not be brought to regard money; a natural generosity and kindness; and possibly a petty vanity that was pleased with praise, even with the praise of waiters and cabmen. I doubt whether the wisest of us know what our own motives are, and whether some of the actions of which we are the very proudest will not surprise us when we trace them, as we shall one day, to their source.

Warrington then did not know, and Pen had not thought proper to confide to his friend, his pecuniary history. That Pen had been wild and wickedly extravagant at college, the other was aware; everybody at college was extravagant and wild; but how great the son's expenses had been, and how small the mother's means, were points which had not been as yet submitted to Mr. Warrington's examination.

At last the story came out, while Pen was grimly surveying the change for the last five-pound note, as it lay upon the tray from the public-house by Mr. Warrington's pot of ale.

"It is the last rose of summer," said Pen; "its blooming companions have gone long ago; and behold the last one of the garland has shed its leaves;" and he told Warrington the whole story which we know of his mother's means, of his own follies, of Laura's generosity; during which time Warrington smoked his pipe and listened intent.

"Impecuniosity will do you good," Pen's friend said, knocking out the ashes at the end of the narration; "I don't know anything more wholesome for a man — for an honest man, mind you — for another, the medicine loses its effect — than a state of tick. It is an alterative and a tonic; it keeps your moral man in a perpetual state of excitement: as a man who is riding at a fence, or has his opponent's single-stick before him, is forced to look his obstacle steadily in the face, and braces himself to repulse or overcome it; a little necessity brings out your pluck if you have any, and nerves you to grapple with fortune. You will discover what a number of things you can do without when you have no money to buy them. You won't want new gloves and varnished boots, eau de Cologne and cabs to ride in. You have been bred up as a molly-coddle, Pen, and spoilt by the women. A single man who has health and brains, and can't find a livelihood in the world, doesn't deserve to stay there. Let him pay his last halfpenny and jump over Waterloo Bridge. Let him steal a leg of mutton and be transported and get out of the country — he is not fit to live in it. Dixi; I have spoken. Give us another pull at the pale ale.

"You have certainly spoken; but how is one to live?" said Pen. "There is beef and bread in plenty in England, but you must pay for it with work or money. And who will take my work? and what work can I do?"

Warrington burst out laughing. "Suppose we advertise in the Times," he said, "for an usher's place at a classical and commercial academy — A gentleman, B.A. of St. Boniface College, and who was plucked for his degree —"

"Confound you," cried Pen.

“— Wishes to give lessons in classics and mathematics, and the rudiments of the French language; he can cut hair, attend to the younger pupils, and play a second on the piano with the daughters of the principal. Address A. P., Lamb Court, Temple.”

“Go on,” said Pen, growling.

“Men take to all sorts of professions. Why, there is your friend Bloundell-Bloundell is a professional blackleg, and travels the Continent, where he picks up young gentlemen of fashion and fleeces them. There is Bob O’Toole, with whom I was at school, who drives the Ballynafad mail now, and carries honest Jack Finucane’s own correspondence to that city. I know a man, sir, a, doctor’s son, like — well, don’t be angry, I meant nothing offensive — a doctor’s son, I say, who was walking the hospitals here, and quarrelled with his governor on questions of finance, and what did he do when he came to his last five-pound note? he let his mustachios grow, went into a provincial town, where he announced himself as Professor Spineto, chiropodist to the Emperor of All the Russians, and by a happy operation on the editor of the country newspaper, established himself in practice, and lived reputably for three years. He has been reconciled to his family, and has succeeded to his father’s gallypots.”

“Hang gallypots,” cried Pen. “I can’t drive a coach, cut corns, or cheat at cards. There’s nothing else you propose.”

“Yes; there’s our own correspondent,” Warrington said. “Every man has his secrets, look you. Before you told me the story of your money-matters, I had no idea but that you were a gentleman of fortune, for, with your confounded airs and appearance, anybody would suppose you to be so. From what you tell me about your mother’s income, it is clear that you must not lay any more hands on it. You can’t go on spunging upon the women. You must pay off that trump of a girl. Laura is her name? — here is your health, Laura! — and carry a hod rather than ask for a shilling from home.”

“But how earn one?” asked Pen.

“How do I live, think you?” said the other. “On my younger brother’s allowance, Pendennis? I have secrets of my own, my boy;” and here Warrington’s countenance fell. “I made away with that allowance five years ago: if I had made away with myself a little time before, it would have been better. I have played off my own bat, ever since. I don’t want much money. When my purse is out, I go to work and fill it, and then lie idle like a serpent or an Indian, until I have digested the mass. Look, I begin to feel empty,” Warrington said, and showed Pen a long lean purse, with but a few sovereigns at one end of it.

“But how do you fill it?” said Pen.

“I write,” said Warrington. “I don’t tell the world that I do so,” he added, with a blush. “I do not choose that questions should be asked: or, perhaps, I am an ass, and don’t wish it to be said that George Warrington writes for bread. But I write in the Law Reviews: look here, these articles are mine.” And he turned over some sheets. “I write in a newspaper now and then, of which a friend of mine is editor.” And Warrington, going with Pendennis to the club one day, called for a file of the Dawn, and pointed with his finger silently to one or two articles, which Pen read with delight. He had no difficulty in recognising the style afterwards — the strong thoughts and curt periods, the sense, the satire, and the scholarship.

“I am not up to this,” said Pen, with a genuine admiration of his friend’s powers. “I know very little about politics or history, Warrington; and have but a smattering of letters. I can’t fly upon such a wing as yours.”

“But you can on your own, my boy, which is lighter, and soars higher, perhaps,” the other said, good-naturedly. “Those little scraps and verses which I have seen of yours show me, what is rare in these days, a natural gift, sir. You needn’t blush, you conceited young jackanapes. You have thought so yourself any time these ten years. You have got the sacred flame — a little of the real poetical fire, sir, I think; and all our oil-lamps are nothing compared to that, though ever so well trimmed. You are a poet, Pen, my boy,” and so speaking, Warrington stretched out his broad hand, and clapped Pen on the shoulder.

Arthur was so delighted that the tears came into his eyes. “How kind you are to me, Warrington!” he said.

“I like you, old boy,” said the other. “I was dev’lish lonely in chambers, and wanted somebody, and the sight of your honest face somehow pleased me. I liked the way you laughed at Lowton — that poor good little snob. And, in fine, the reason why I cannot tell — but so it is, young ’un. I’m alone in the world, sir; and I wanted some one to keep me company;” and a glance of extreme kindness and melancholy passed out of Warrington’s dark eyes.

Pen was too much pleased with his own thoughts to perceive the sadness of the friend who was complimenting him. “Thank you, Warrington,” he said, “thank you for your friendship to me, and — and what you say about me. I have often thought I was a poet. I will be one — I think I am one, as you say so, though the world mayn’t. Is it — is it the Ariadne on Naxos which you liked (I was only eighteen when I wrote it), or the Prize Poem?”

Warrington burst into a roar of laughter. "Why, young goose," he yelled out — "of all the miserable weak rubbish I ever tried, Ariadne in Naxos is the most mawkish and disgusting. The Prize Poem is so pompous and feeble, that I'm positively surprised, sir, it didn't get the medal. You don't suppose that you are a serious poet, do you, and are going to cut out Milton and Aeschylus? Are you setting up to be a Pindar, you absurd little tom-tit, and fancy you have the strength and pinion which the Theban eagle bear, sailing with supreme dominion through the azure fields of air? No, my boy, I think you can write a magazine article, and turn a pretty copy of verses; that's what I think of you."

"By Jove!" said Pen, bouncing up and stamping his foot, "I'll show you that I am a better man than you think for."

Warrington only laughed the more, and blew twenty-four puffs rapidly out of his pipe by way of reply to Pen.

An opportunity for showing his skill presented itself before very long. That eminent publisher, Mr. Bacon (formerly Bacon and Bungay) of Paternoster Row, besides being the proprietor of the legal Review, in which Mr. Warrington wrote, and of other periodicals of note and gravity, used to present to the world every year a beautiful gilt volume called the Spring Annual, edited by the Lady Violet Lebas, and numbering amongst its contributors not only the most eminent, but the most fashionable, poets of our time. Young Lord Dodo's poems first appeared in this miscellany — the Honourable Percy Popjoy, whose chivalrous ballads have obtained him such a reputation — Bedwin Sands's Eastern Ghazuls, and many more of the works of our young nobles, were fast given to the world in the Spring Annual, which has since shared the fate of other vernal blossoms, and perished out of the world. The book was daintily illustrated with pictures of reigning beauties, or other prints of a tender and voluptuous character; and, as these plates were prepared long beforehand, requiring much time in engraving, it was the eminent poets who had to write to the plates, and not the painters who illustrated the poems.

One day, just when this volume was on the eve of publication, it chanced that Mr. Warrington called in Paternoster Row to talk with Mr. Hack, Mr. Bacon's reader and general manager of publications — for Mr. Bacon, not having the least taste in poetry or in literature of any kind, wisely employed the services of a professional gentleman. Warrington, then, going into Mr. Hack's room on business of his own, found that gentleman with a bundle of proof plates and sheets of the Spring Annual before him, and glanced at some of them.

Percy Popjoy had written some verses to illustrate one of the pictures, which was called The Church Porch. A Spanish damsel was hastening to church with a large prayer-book; a youth in a cloak was hidden in a niche watching this young woman. The picture was pretty: but the great genius of Percy Popjoy had deserted him, for he had made the most execrable verses which ever were perpetrated by a young nobleman.

Warrington burst out laughing as he read the poem: and Mr. Hack laughed too but with rather a rueful face. — "It won't do," he said, "the public won't stand it. Bungay's people are going to bring out a very good book, and have set up Miss Bunyan against Lady Violet. We have most titles to be sure — but the verses are too bad. Lady Violet herself owns it; she's busy with her own poem; what's to be done? We can't lose the plate. The governor gave sixty pounds for it."

"I know a fellow who would do some verses, I think," said Warrington. "Let me take the plate home in my pocket: and send to my chambers in the morning for the verses. You'll pay well, of course."

"Of course," said Mr. Hack; and Warrington, having despatched his own business, went home to Mr. Pen, plate in hand.

"Now, boy, here's a chance for you. Turn me off a copy of verses to this."

"What's this? A Church Porch — A lady entering it, and a youth out of a wine-shop window ogling her. — What the deuce am I to do with it?"

"Try," said Warrington. "Earn your livelihood for once, you who long so to do it."

"Well, I will try," said Pen.

"And I'll go out to dinner," said Warrington, and left Mr. Pen in a brown study.

When Warrington came home that night, at a very late hour, the verses were done. "There they are," said Pen. "I've screwed 'em out at last. I think they'll do."

"I think, they will," said Warrington, after reading them; they ran as follows:—

The Church Porch

Although I enter not,
Yet round about the spot

Sometimes I hover,
And at the sacred gate,
With longing eyes I wait,
Expectant of her.

The Minster bell tolls out
Above the city's rout
And noise and humming
They've stopp'd the chiming bell,
I hear the organ's swell
She's coming, she's coming!

My lady comes at last,
Timid and stepping fast,
And hastening hither,
With modest eyes downcast.
She comes — she's here — she's past.
May Heaven go with her!

Kneel undisturb'd, fair saint,
Pour out your praise or plaint
Meekly and duly.
I will not enter there,
To sully your pure prayer
With thoughts unruly.

But suffer me to pace
Round the forbidden place,
Lingering a minute,
Like outcast spirits, who wait
And see through Heaven's gate
Angels within it.

“Have you got any more, young fellow?” asked Warrington. “We must make them give you a couple of guineas a page; and if the verses are liked, why, you'll get an entree into Bacon's magazines, and may turn a decent penny.”

Pen examined his portfolio and found another ballad which he thought might figure with advantage in the Spring Annual, and consigning these two precious documents to Warrington, the pair walked from the Temple to the famous haunt of the Muses and their masters, Paternoster Row. Bacon's shop was an ancient low-browed building, with a few of the books published by the firm displayed in the windows, under a bust of my Lord of Verulam, and the name of Mr. Bacon in brass on the private door. Exactly opposite to Bacon's house was that of Mr. Bungay, which was newly painted and elaborately decorated in the style of the seventeenth century, so that you might have fancied stately Mr. Evelyn passing over the threshold, or curious Mr. Pepys examining the books in the window. Warrington went into the shop of Mr. Bacon, but Pen stayed without. It was agreed that his ambassador should act for him entirely; and the young fellow paced up and down the street in a very nervous condition, until he should learn the result of the negotiation. Many a poor devil before him has trodden those flags, with similar cares and anxieties at his heels, his bread and his fame dependent upon the sentence of his magnanimous patrons of the Row. Pen looked at all the wonders of all the shops, and the strange variety of literature which they exhibit. In this were displayed black-letter volumes and books in the clear pale types of Aldus and Elzevir: in the next, you might see the Penny Horrific Register; the Halfpenny Annals of Crime and History of the most celebrated murderers of all countries, The Raff's Magazine, The Larky Swell, and other publications of the penny press; whilst at the next window, portraits of ill-favoured individuals, with fac-similes of the venerated signatures of the Reverend Grimes Wapshot, the Reverend Elias Howle, and the works written and the sermons preached by them, showed the British Dissenter where he could find mental pabulum. Hard by would be a little casement hung with emblems, with medals and rosaries with little paltry prints of saints gilt and painted, and books of controversial theology, by which the faithful of the Roman opinion might learn a short way to deal with Protestants, at a penny apiece, or ninepence the dozen for distribution; whilst in the very next window you might see 'Come out of Rome,' a sermon preached at the opening of the Shepherd's Bush College, by John Thomas Lord Bishop of Ealing. Scarce an opinion but has its expositor and its place of exhibition in this peaceful old Paternoster Row, under the toll of the bells of Saint Paul.

Pen looked in at all the windows and shops, as a gentleman who is going to have an interview with the dentist examines the books on the waiting-room table. He remembered them afterwards. It seemed to him that Warrington would never come out; and indeed the latter was engaged for some time in pleading his friend's cause.

Pen's natural conceit would have swollen immensely if he could but have heard the report which Warrington gave of

him. It happened that Mr. Bacon himself had occasion to descend to Mr. Hack's room whilst Warrington was talking there, and Warrington, knowing Bacon's weaknesses, acted upon them with great adroitness in his friend's behalf. In the first place, he put on his hat to speak to Bacon, and addressed him from the table on which he seated himself. Bacon liked to be treated with rudeness by a gentleman, and used to pass it on to his inferiors as boys pass the mark. "What! not know Mr. Pendennis, Mr. Bacon?" Warrington said. "You can't live much in the world, or you would know him. A man of property in the West, of one of the most ancient families in England, related to half the nobility in the empire — he's cousin to Lord Pontypool — he was one of the most distinguished men at Oxbridge; he dines at Gaunt House every week."

"Law bless me, you don't say so, sir. Well — really — Law bless me now," said Mr. Bacon.

"I have just been showing Mr. Hack some of his verses, which he sat up last night, at my request, to write; and Hack talks about giving him a copy of the book — the what-d'-you-call-'em."

"Law bless me now, does he? The what-d'-you-call-'em. Indeed!"

"The 'Spring Annual' is its name — as payment for those verses. You don't suppose that such a man as Mr. Arthur Pendennis gives up a dinner at Gaunt House for nothing? You know as well as anybody, that the men of fashion want to be paid."

"That they do, Mr. Warrington, sir," said the publisher.

"I tell you he's a star; he'll make a name, sir. He's a new man, sir."

"They've said that of so many of those young swells, Mr. Warrington," the publisher interposed, with a sigh. "There was Lord Viscount Dodo, now; I gave his Lordship a good bit of money for his poems, and only sold eighty copies. Mr. Popjoy's Hadgincourt, sir, fell dead."

"Well, then, I'll take my man over to Bungay," Warrington said, and rose from the table. This threat was too much for Mr. Bacon, who was instantly ready to accede to any reasonable proposal of Mr. Warrington's, and finally asked his manager what those proposals were? When he heard that the negotiation only related as yet to a couple of ballads, which Mr. Warrington offered for the Spring Annual, Mr. Bacon said, "Law bless you, give him a check directly;" and with this paper Warrington went out to his friend, and placed it, grinning, in Pen's hands. Pen was as elated as if somebody had left him a fortune. He offered Warrington a dinner at Richmond instantly. "What should he go and buy for Laura and his mother? He must buy something for them."

"They'll like the book better than anything else," said Warrington, "with the young one's name to the verses, printed among the swells."

"Thank God! thank God!" cried Arthur, "I needn't be a charge upon the old mother. I can pay off Laura now. I can get my own living. I can make my own way."

"I can marry the grand vizier's daughter: I can purchase a house in Belgrave Square; I can build a fine castle in the air!" said Warrington, pleased with the other's exultation. "Well, you may get bread and cheese, Pen: and I own it tastes well, the bread which you earn yourself."

They had a magnum of claret at dinner at the club that day, at Pen's charges. It was long since he had indulged in such a luxury, but Warrington would not baulk him: and they drank together to the health of the Spring Annual.

It never rains but it pours, according to the proverb; so very speedily another chance occurred, by which Mr. Pen was to be helped in his scheme of making a livelihood. Warrington one day threw him a letter across the table, which was brought by a printer's boy, "from Captain Shandon, sir" — the little emissary said: and then went and fell asleep on his accustomed bench in the passage. He paid many a subsequent visit there, and brought many a message to Pen.

F. P. Tuesday Morning.

"MY DEAR SIR — Bungay will be here today, about the Pall Mall Gazette. You would be the very man to help us with a genuine West-end article — you understand — dashing, trenchant, and d — aristocratic. Lady Hipshaw will write; but she's not much you know, and we've two lords; but the less they do the better. We must have you. We'll give you your own terms, and we'll make a hit with the Gazette."

"Shall B. come and see you, or can you look in upon me here? — Ever yours,

C. S."

"Some more opposition," Warrington said, when Pen had read the note. "Bungay and Bacon are at daggers drawn; each

married the sister of the other, and they were for some time the closest friends and partners. Hack says it was Mrs. Bungay who caused all the mischief between the two; whereas Shandon, who reads for Bungay a good deal, says Mrs. Bacon did the business; but I don't know which is right, Peachum or Lockit. But since they have separated, it is a furious war between the two publishers; and no sooner does one bring out a book of travels, or poems, a magazine or periodical, quarterly, or monthly, or weekly, or annual, but the rival is in the field with something similar. I have heard poor Shandon tell with great glee how he made Bungay give a grand dinner at Blackwall to all his writers, by saying that Bacon had invited his corps to an entertainment at Greenwich. When Bungay engaged your celebrated friend Mr. Wagg to edit the 'Londoner,' Bacon straightway rushed off and secured Mr. Grindle to give his name to the 'Westminster Magazine.' When Bacon brought out his comic Irish novel of 'Barney Brallaghan,' off went Bungay to Dublin, and produced his rollicking Hibernian story of 'Looney MacTwolter.' When Doctor Hicks brought out his 'Wanderings in Mesopotamia' under Bacon's auspices, Bungay produced Professor Sandiman's 'Researches in Zahara;' and Bungay is publishing his 'Pall Mall Gazette' as a counterpoise to Bacon's 'Whitehall Review.' Let us go and hear about the 'Gazette.' There may be a place for you in it, Pen, my boy. We will go and see Shandon. We are sure to find him at home."

"Where does he live?" asked Pen.

"In the Fleet Prison," Warrington said. "And very much at home he is there, too. He is the king of the place."

Pen had never seen this scene of London life, and walked with no small interest in at the grim gate of that dismal edifice. They went through the anteroom, where the officers and janitors of the place were seated, and passing in at the wicket, entered the prison. The noise and the crowd, the life and the shouting, the shabby bustle of the place, struck and excited Pen. People moved about ceaselessly and restless, like caged animals in a menagerie. Men were playing at fives. Others pacing and tramping: this one in colloquy with his lawyer in dingy black — that one walking sadly, with his wife by his side, and a child on his arm. Some were arrayed in tattered dressing-gowns, and had a look of rakish fashion. Everybody seemed to be busy, humming, and on the move. Pen felt as if he choked in the place, and as if the door being locked upon him they never would let him out.

They went through a court up a stone staircase, and through passages full of people, and noise, and cross lights, and black doors clapping and banging; — Pen feeling as one does in a feverish morning dream. At last the same little runner who had brought Shandon's note, and had followed them down Fleet Street munching apples, and who showed the way to the two gentlemen through the prison, said, "This is the Captain's door," and Mr. Shandon's voice from within bade them enter.

The room, though bare, was not uncheerful. The sun was shining in at the window — near which sate a lady at work, who had been gay and beautiful once, but in whose faded face kindness and tenderness still beamed. Through all his errors and reckless mishaps and misfortunes, this faithful creature adored her husband, and thought him the best and cleverest, as indeed he was one of the kindest of men. Nothing ever seemed to disturb the sweetness of his temper; not debts: not duns: not misery: not the bottle, not his wife's unhappy position, or his children's ruined chances. He was perfectly fond of wife and children after his fashion: he always had the kindest words and smiles for them, and ruined them with the utmost sweetness of temper. He never could refuse himself or any man any enjoyment which his money could purchase; he would share his last guinea with Jack and Tom, and we may be sure he had a score of such retainers. He would sign his name at the back of any man's bill, and never pay any debt of his own. He would write on any side, and attack himself or another man with equal indifference. He was one of the wittiest, the most amiable, and the most incorrigible of Irishmen. Nobody could help liking Charley Shandon who saw him once, and those whom he ruined could scarcely be angry with him.

When Pen and Warrington arrived, the Captain (he had been in an Irish militia regiment once, and the title remained with him) was sitting on his bed in a torn dressing-gown, with a desk on his knees, at which he was scribbling as fast as his rapid pen could write. Slip after slip of paper fell off the desk wet on to the ground. A picture of his children was hung up over his bed, and the youngest of them was pattering about the room.

Opposite the Captain sate Mr. Bungay, a portly man of stolid countenance, with whom the little child had been trying a conversation.

"Papa's a very clever man," said she; "mamma says so."

"Oh, very," said Mr. Bungay.

"And you're a very rich man, Mr. Bundy," cried the child, who could hardly speak plain.

“Mary!” said Mamma, from her work.

“Oh, never mind,” Bungay roared out with a great laugh; no harm in saying I’m rich — he, he — I am pretty well off, my little dear.”

“If you’re rich, why don’t you take papa out of piz’n?” asked the child.

Mamma at this began to wipe her eyes with the work on which she was employed. (The poor lady had hung curtains up in the room, had brought the children’s picture and placed it there, and had made one or two attempts to ornament it.) Mamma began to cry; Mr. Bungay turned red, and looked fiercely out of his bloodshot little eyes; Shandon’s pen went on, and Pen and Warrington arrived with their knock.

Captain Shandon looked up from his work. “How do you do, Mr. Warrington,” he said. “I’ll speak to you in a minute. Please sit down, gentlemen, if you can find places,” and away went the pen again.

Warrington pulled forward an old portmanteau — the only available seat — and sate down on it, with a bow to Mrs. Shandon and a nod to Bungay: the child came and looked at Pen solemnly and in a couple of minutes the swift scribbling ceased; and Shandon, turning the desk over on the bed, stooped and picked up the papers.

“I think this will do,” said he. “It’s the prospectus for the Pall Mall Gazette.”

“And here’s the money for it,” Mr. Bungay said, laying down a five-pound note. “I’m as good as my word, I am. When I say I’ll pay, I pay.”

“Faith that’s more than some of us can say,” said Shandon, and he eagerly clapped the note into his pocket.



CHAPTER XXXIII

WHICH IS PASSED IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF LUDGATE HILL

Our imprisoned Captain announced, in smart and emphatic language in his prospectus, that the time had come at last when it was necessary for the gentlemen of England to band together in defence of their common rights and their glorious order, menaced on all sides by foreign revolutions, by intestine radicalism, by the artful calumnies of mill-owners and cotton-lords, and the stupid hostility of the masses whom they gulled and led. "The ancient monarchy was insulted," the Captain said, "by a ferocious republican rabble. The Church was deserted by envious dissent, and undermined by stealthy infidelity. The good institutions, which had made our country glorious, and the name of English Gentleman the proudest in the world, were left without defence, and exposed to assault and contumely from men to whom no sanctuary was sacred, for they believed in nothing holy; no history venerable, for they were too ignorant to have heard of the past; and no law was binding which they were strong enough to break, when their leaders gave the signal for plunder. It was because the kings of France mistrusted their gentlemen," Mr. Shandon remarked, "that the monarchy of Saint Louis went down: it was because the people of England still believed in their gentlemen, that this country encountered and overcame the greatest enemy a nation ever met: it was because we were headed by gentlemen, that the Eagles retreated before us from the Donro to the Garonne: it was a gentleman who broke the line at Trafalgar, and swept the plain of Waterloo."

Bungay nodded his head in a knowing manner, and winked his eyes when the Captain came to the Waterloo passage: and Warrington burst out laughing.

"You see how our venerable friend Bungay is affected," Shandon said, slyly looking up from his papers — "that's your true sort of test. I have used the Duke of Wellington and the battle of Waterloo a hundred times, and I never knew the Duke to fail."

The Captain then went on to confess, with much candour, that up to the present time the gentlemen of England, confident of their right, and careless of those who questioned it, had left the political interest of their order as they did the management of their estates, or the settlement of their legal affairs, to persons affected to each peculiar service, and had permitted their interests to be represented in the press by professional proctors and advocates. That time Shandon professed to consider was now gone by: the gentlemen of England must be their own champions: the declared enemies of their order were brave, strong, numerous, and uncompromising. They must meet their foes in the field: they must not be belied and misrepresented by hireling advocates: they must not have Grub Street publishing Gazettes from Whitehall; "that's a dig at Bacon's people, Mr. Bungay," said Shandon, turning round to the publisher. Bungay clapped his stick on the floor. "Hang him, pitch into him, Capting," he said with exultation: and turning to Warrington, wagged his dull head more vehemently than ever, and said, "For a slashing article, sir, there's nobody like the Capting — no-obody like him."

The prospectus-writer went on to say that some gentlemen, whose names were, for obvious reasons, not brought before the public (at which Mr. Warrington began to laugh again), had determined to bring forward a journal, of which the principles were so-and-so. "These men are proud of their order, and anxious to uphold it," cried out Captain Shandon, flourishing his paper with a grin. "They are loyal to their Sovereign, by faithful conviction and ancestral allegiance; they love their Church, where they would have their children worship, and for which their forefathers bled; they love their country, and would keep it what the gentlemen of England — yes, the gentlemen of England (we'll have that in large caps, Bungay, my boy) have made it — the greatest and freest in the world: and as the names of some of them are appended to the deed which secured our liberties at Runnymede —"

"What's that?" asked Mr. Bungay.

"An ancestor of mine sealed it with his sword-hilt," Pen said, with great gravity.

"It's the Habeas Corpus, Mr. Bungay," Warrington said, on which the publisher answered, "All right, I dare say," and yawned, though he said, "Go on, Capting."

"— at Runnymede; they are ready to defend that freedom today with sword and pen, and now, as then, to rally round the old laws and liberties of England."

“Bravo!” cried Warrington. The little child stood wondering; the lady was working silently, and looking with fond admiration. “Come here, little Mary,” said Warrington, and patted the child’s fair curls with his large hand. But she shrank back from his rough caress, and preferred to go and take refuge at Pen’s knee, and play with his fine watch-chain: and Pen was very much pleased that she came to him; for he was very soft-hearted and simple, though he concealed his gentleness under a shy and pompous demeanour. So she clambered up on his lap, whilst her father continued to read his programme.

“You were laughing,” the Captain said to Warrington, “about ‘the obvious reasons’ which I mentioned. Now, I’ll show ye what they are, ye unbelieving heathen. ‘We have said,’” he went on, ““that we cannot give the names of the parties engaged in this undertaking, and that there were obvious reasons for that concealment. We number influential friends in both Houses of the Senate, and have secured allies in every diplomatic circle in Europe. Our sources of intelligence are such as cannot, by any possibility, be made public — and, indeed, such as no other London or European journal could, by any chance, acquire. But this we are free to say, that the very earliest information connected with the movement of English and Continental politics will be found only in the columns of the Pall Mall Gazette, The Statesman and the Capitalist, the Country Gentleman and the Divine, will be amongst our readers, because our writers are amongst them. We address ourselves to the higher circles of society: we care not to disown it — the Pall Mall Gazette is written by gentlemen for gentlemen; its conductors speak to the classes in which they live and were born. The field-preacher has his journal, the radical free-thinker has his journal: why should the Gentlemen of England be unrepresented in the Press?”

Mr. Shandon then went on with much modesty to descant upon the literary and fashionable departments of the Pall Mall Gazette, which were to be conducted by gentlemen of acknowledged reputation; men famous at the Universities (at which Mr Pendennis could scarcely help laughing and blushing), known at the Clubs, and of the Society which they described. He pointed out delicately to advertisers that there would be no such medium as the Pall Mall Gazette for giving publicity to their sales; and he eloquently called upon the nobility of England, the baronetage of England, the revered clergy of England, the bar of England, the matrons, the daughters, the homes and hearths of England, to rally round the good old cause; and Bungay at the conclusion of the reading woke up from a second snooze in which he had indulged himself, and again said it was all right.

The reading of the prospectus concluded, the gentlemen present entered into some details regarding the political and literary management of the paper, and Mr. Bungay sate by listening and nodding his head, as if he understood what was the subject of their conversation, and approved of their opinions. Bungay’s opinions, in truth, were pretty simple. He thought the Captain could write the best smashing article in England. He wanted the opposition house of Bacon smashed, and it was his opinion that the Captain could do that business. If the Captain had written a letter of Junius on a sheet of paper, or copied a part of the Church Catechism, Mr. Bungay would have been perfectly contented, and have considered that the article was a smashing article. And he pocketed the papers with the greatest satisfaction: and he not only paid for the MS., as we have seen, but he called little Mary to him, and gave her a penny as he went away.

The reading of the manuscript over, the party engaged in general conversation, Shandon leading with a jaunty fashionable air in compliment to the two guests who sate with him and, and who, by their appearance and manner, he presumed to be persons of the beau monde. He knew very little indeed of the great world, but he had seen it, and made the most of what he had seen. He spoke of the characters of the day, and great personages of the fashion, with easy familiarity and jocular allusions, as if it had been his habit to live amongst them. He told anecdotes of their private life, and of conversations he had had, and entertainments at which he had been present, and at which such and such a thing occurred. Pen was amused to hear the shabby prisoner in a tattered dressing-gown talking glibly about the great of the land. Mrs. Shandon was always delighted when her husband told these tales, and believed in them fondly every one. She did not want to mingle in the fashionable world herself, she was not clever enough; but the great Society was the very place for her Charles: he shone in it: he was respected in it. Indeed, Shandon had once been asked to dinner by the Earl of X; his wife treasured the invitation-card in her workbox at that very day.

Mr. Bungay presently had enough of this talk and got up to take leave, whereupon Warrington and Pen rose to depart with the publisher, though the latter would have liked to stay to make a further acquaintance with this family, who interested him and touched him. He said something about hoping for permission to repeat his visit, upon which Shandon, with a rueful grin, said he was always to be found at home, and should be delighted to see Mr. Pennington.

“I’ll see you to my park-gate, gentlemen,” said Captain Shandon, seizing his hat, in spite of a deprecatory look and a faint cry of “Charles” from Mrs. Shandon. And the Captain, in shabby slippers, shuffled out before his guests, leading the

way through the dismal passages of the prison. His hand was already fiddling with his waistcoat pocket, where Bungay's five-pound note was, as he took leave of the three gentlemen at the wicket; one of them, Mr. Arthur Pendennis, being greatly relieved when he was out of the horrid place, and again freely treading the flags of Farringdon Street.

Mrs. Shandon sadly went on with her work at the window looking into the court. She saw Shandon with a couple of men at his heels run rapidly in the direction of the prison tavern. She had hoped to have had him to dinner herself that day: there was a piece of meat, and some salad in a basin, on the ledge outside of the window of their room which she had expected that she and little Mary were to share with the child's father. But there was no chance of that now. He would be in that tavern until the hours for closing it; then he would go and play at cards or drink in some other man's room and come back silent, with glazed eyes, reeling a little on his walk, that his wife might nurse him. Oh, what varieties of pain do we not make our women suffer!

So Mrs. Shandon went to the cupboard, and, in lieu of a dinner, made herself some tea. And in those varieties of pain of which we spoke anon, what a part of confidante has that poor tea-pot played ever since the kindly plant was introduced among us! What myriads of women have cried over it, to be sure! What sick-beds it has smoked by! What fevered lips have received refreshment from out of it! Nature meant very gently by women when she made that tea-plant; and with a little thought what a series of pictures and groups the fancy may conjure up and assemble round the tea-pot and cup! Melissa and Sacharissa are talking love-secrets over it. Poor Polly has it and her lover's letters upon the table; his letters who was her lover yesterday, and when it was with pleasure, not despair, she wept over them. Mary tripping noiselessly comes into her mother's bedroom, bearing a cup of the consoler to the widow who will take no other food, Ruth is busy concocting it for her husband, who is coming home from the harvest-field — one could fill a page with hints for such pictures; — finally, Mrs. Shandon and little Mary sit down and drink their tea together, while the Captain goes out and takes his pleasure. She cares for nothing else but that, when her husband is away.

A gentleman with whom we are already slightly acquainted, Mr. Jack Finucane, a townsman of Captain Shandon's, found the Captain's wife and little Mary (for whom Jack always brought a sweetmeat in his pocket) over this meal. Jack thought Shandon the greatest of created geniuses, had had one or two helps from the good-natured prodigal, who had always a kind word, and sometimes a guinea for any friend in need; and never missed a day in seeing his patron. He was ready to run Shandon's errands and transact his money-business with publishers and newspaper editors, duns, creditors, holders of Shandon's acceptances, gentlemen disposed to speculate in those securities, and to transact the thousand little affairs of an embarrassed Irish gentleman. I never knew an embarrassed Irish gentleman yet, but he had an aide-de-camp of his own nation, likewise in circumstances of pecuniary discomfort. That aide-de-camp has subordinates of his own, who again may have other insolvent dependents — all through his life our Captain marched at the head of a ragged staff, who shared in the rough fortunes of their chieftain.

"He won't have that five-pound note very long, I bet a guinea," Mr. Bungay said of the Captain, as he and his two companions walked away from the prison; and the publisher judged rightly, for when Mrs. Shandon came to empty her husband's pockets, she found but a couple of shillings, and a few halfpence out of the morning's remittance. Shandon had given a pound to one follower; had sent a leg of mutton and potatoes and beer to an acquaintance in the poor side of the prison; had paid an outstanding bill at the tavern where he had changed his five-pound note; had had a dinner with two friends there, to whom he lost sundry half-crowns at cards afterwards; so that the night left him as poor as the morning had found him.

The publisher and the two gentlemen had had some talk together after quitting Shandon, and Warrington reiterated to Bungay what he had said to his rival, Bacon, viz., that Pen was a high fellow, of great genius, and what was more, well with the great world, and related to "no end" of the peerage. Bungay replied that he should be happy to have dealings with Mr. Pendennis, and hoped to have the pleasure of seeing both gents to cut mutton with him before long, and so, with mutual politeness and protestations, they parted.

"It is hard to see such a man as Shandon," Pen said, musing, and talking that night over the sight which he had witnessed, "of accomplishments so multifarious, and of such an undoubted talent and humour, an inmate of a gaol for half his time, and a bookseller's hanger-on when out of prison."

"I am a bookseller's hanger-on — you are going to try your paces as a hack," Warrington said with a laugh. "We are all hacks upon some road or other. I would rather be myself, than Paley our neighbour in chambers: who has as much enjoyment of his life as a mole. A deuced deal of undeserved compassion has been thrown away upon what you call your

bookseller's drudge."

"Much solitary pipes and ale make a cynic of you," said Pen "You are a Diogenes by a beer-barrel, Warrington. No man shall tell me that a man of genius, as Shandon is, ought to be driven by such a vulgar slave-driver, as yonder Mr. Bungay, whom we have just left, who fattens on the profits of the other's brains, and enriches himself out of his journeyman's labour. It makes me indignant to see a gentleman the serf of such a creature as that, of a man who can't speak the language that he lives by, who is not fit to black Shandon's boots."

"So you have begun already to gird at the publishers, and to take your side amongst our order. Bravo, Pen, my be boy!" Warrington answered, laughing still. "What have you got to say against Bungay's relations with Shandon? Was it the publisher, think you, who sent the author to prison? Is it Bungay who is tipping away the five-pound note which we saw just now, or Shandon?"

"Misfortune drives a man into bad company," Pen said. "It is easy to cry 'Fie!' against a poor fellow who has no society but such as he finds in a prison; and no resource except forgetfulness and the bottle. We must deal kindly with the eccentricities of genius, and remember that the very ardour and enthusiasm of temperament which makes the author delightful often leads the man astray."

"A fiddlestick about men of genius!" Warrington cried out, who was a very severe moralist upon some points, though possibly a very bad practitioner. "I deny that there are so many geniuses as people who whimper about the fate of men of letters assert there are. There are thousands of clever fellows in the world who could, if they would, turn verses, write articles, read books, and deliver a judgment upon them; the talk of professional critics and writers is not a whit more brilliant, or profound, or amusing, than that of any other society of educated people. If a lawyer, or a soldier, or a parson, outruns his income, and does not pay his bills, he must go to gaol; and an author must go, too. If an author fuddles himself, I don't know why he should be let off a headache the next morning — if he orders a coat from the tailor's, why he shouldn't pay for it."

"I would give him more money to buy coats," said Pen, smiling. I suppose I should like to belong to a well-dressed profession. I protest against that wretch of a middle-man whom I see between Genius and his great landlord, the Public, and who stops more than half of the labourer's earnings and fame."

"I am a prose labourer," Warrington said; "you, my boy, are a poet in a small way, and so, I suppose, consider you are authorised to be flighty. What is it you want? Do you want a body of capitalists that shall be forced to purchase the works of all authors, who may present themselves, manuscript in hand? Everybody who writes his epic, every driveller who can or can't spell, and produces his novel or his tragedy — are they all to come and find a bag of sovereigns in exchange for their worthless reams of paper? Who is to settle what is good or bad, saleable or otherwise? Will you give the buyer leave, in fine, to purchase or not? Why, sir, when Johnson sate behind the screen at Saint John's Gate, and took his dinner apart, because he was too shabby and poor to join the literary bigwigs who were regaling themselves, round Mr. Cave's best table-cloth, the tradesman was doing him no wrong. You couldn't force the publisher to recognise the man of genius in the young man who presented himself before him, ragged, gaunt, and hungry. Rags are not a proof of genius; whereas capital is absolute, as times go, and is perforce the bargain-master. It has a right to deal with the literary inventor as with any other; — if I produce a novelty in the book trade, I must do the best I can with it; but I can no more force Mr. Murray to purchase my book of travels or sermons, than I can compel Mr. Tattersall to give me a hundred guineas for my horse. I may have my own ideas of the value of my Pegasus, and think him the most wonderful of animals; but the dealer has a right to his opinion, too, and may want a lady's horse, or a cob for a heavy timid rider, or a sound hack for the road, and my beast won't suit him."

"You deal in metaphors, Warrington," Pen said; "but you rightly say that you are very prosaic. Poor Shandon! There is something about the kindness of that man, and the gentleness of that sweet creature of a wife, which touches me profoundly. I like him, I am afraid, better than a better man"

"And so do I," Warrington said. "Let us give him the benefit of our sympathy, and the pity that is due to his weakness: though I fear that sort of kindness would be resented as contempt by a more high-minded man. You see he takes his consolation along with his misfortune, and one generates the other or balances it, as the way of the world. He is a prisoner, but he is not unhappy."

"His genius sings within his prison bars," Pen said.

"Yes," Warrington said, bitterly; "Shandon accommodates himself to a cage pretty well. He ought to be wretched, but he has Jack and Tom to drink with, and that consoles him: he might have a high place, but, as he can't, why, he can drink with Tom and Jack; — he might be providing for his wife and children, but Thomas and John have got a bottle of brandy which they want him to taste; — he might pay poor Snip, the tailor, the twenty pounds which the poor devil wants for his landlord, but John and Thomas lay their hands upon his purse; — and so he drinks whilst his tradesman goes to gaol and his family to ruin. Let us pity the misfortunes of genius, and conspire against the publishing tyrants who oppress men of letters."

"What! are you going to have another glass of brandy-and-water?" Pen said, with a humorous look. It was at the Black Kitchen that the above philosophical conversation took place between the two young men.

Warrington began to laugh as usual. "Video meliora proboque — I mean, bring it me hot, with sugar, John," he said to waiter.

"I would have some more, too, only I don't want it," said Pen. "It does not seem to me, Warrington, that we are much better than our neighbours." And Warrington's last glass having been despatched, the pair returned to their chambers.

They found a couple of notes in the letter-box, on their return, which had been sent by their acquaintance of the morning, Mr. Bungay. That hospitable gentleman presented his compliments to each of the gentlemen, and requested their pleasure of company at dinner on an early day, to meet a few literary friends.

"We shall have a grand spread, Warrington. We shall meet all Bungay's corps."

"All except poor Shandon," said Pen, nodding a good-night to his friend, and he went into his own little room. The events and acquaintances of the day had excited him a good deal, and he lay for some time awake thinking over them, as Warrington's vigorous and regular snore from the neighbouring apartment pronounced that that gentleman was engaged in deep slumber.

Is it true, thought Pendennis, lying on his bed and gazing at a bright moon without, that lighted up a corner of his dressing-table, and the frame of a little sketch of Fairoaks drawn by Laura, and hung over his drawers — is it true that I am going to earn my bread at last, and with my pen? that I shall impoverish the dear mother no longer; and that I may gain a name and reputation in the world, perhaps? These are welcome if they come, thought the young visionary, laughing and blushing to himself, though alone and in the night, as he thought how dearly he would relish honour and fame if they could be his. If fortune favours me, I laud her; if she frowns, I resign her. I pray Heaven I may be honest if I fail, or if I succeed. I pray Heaven I may tell the truth as far as I know it: that I mayn't swerve from it through flattery, or interest, or personal enmity, or party prejudice. Dearest old mother, what a pride will you have, if I can do anything worthy of our name I and you, Laura, you won't scorn me as the worthless idler and spendthrift, when you see that I — when I have achieved a — psha! what an Alnaschar I am because I have made five pounds by my poems, and am engaged to write half a dozen articles for a newspaper. He went on with these musings, more happy and hopeful, and in a humbler frame of mind, than he had felt to be for many a day. He thought over the errors and idleness, the passions, extravagances, disappointments, of his wayward youth: he got up from the bed: threw open the window, and looked out into the night: and then, by some impulse, which we hope was a good one, he went up and kissed the picture of Fairoaks, and flinging himself down on his knees by the bed, remained for some time in that posture of hope and submission. When he rose, it was with streaming eyes. He had found himself repeating, mechanically, some little words which he had been accustomed to repeat as a child at his mother's side, after the saying of which she would softly take him to his bed and close the curtains round him, hushing him with a benediction.

The next day, Mr. Pidgeon, their attendant, brought in a large brown-paper parcel, directed to G. Warrington, Esq., with Mr. Trotter's compliments, and a note which Warrington read.

"Pen, you beggar!" roared Warrington to Pen, who was in his own room.

"Hullo!" sung out Pen.

"Come here, you're wanted," cried the other, and Pen came out.

"What is it?" said he.

"Catch!" cried Warrington, and flung the parcel at Pen's head, who would have been knocked down had he not caught it.

"It's books for review for the Pall Mall Gazette: pitch into 'em," Warrington said. As for Pen, he never had been so

delighted in his life: his hand trembled as he cut the string of the packet, and beheld within a smart set of new neat calico-bound books — travels, and novels, and poems.

“Sport the oak, Pidgeon,” said he. “I’m not at home to anybody today.” And he flung into his easy-chair, and hardly gave himself time to drink his tea, so eager was he to begin to read and to review.



CHAPTER XXXIV

IN WHICH THE HISTORY STILL HOVERS ABOUT FLEET STREET

Captain Shandon, urged on by his wife, who seldom meddled in business matters, had stipulated that John Finucane, Esquire, of the Upper Temple, should be appointed sub-editor of forthcoming Pall Mall Gazette, and this post was accordingly conferred upon Mr. Finucane by the spirited proprietor of the Journal. Indeed he deserved any kindness at the hands of Shandon, so fondly attached was he, as we have said, to the Captain and his family, and so eager to do him a service. It was in Finucane's chambers that Shandon in former days used to hide when danger was near and bailiffs abroad: until at length his hiding-place was known, and the sheriff's officers came as regularly to wait for the Captain on Finucane's staircase as at his own door. It was to Finucane's chambers that poor Mrs. Shandon came often and often to explain her troubles and griefs, and devise means of rescue for her adored Captain. Many a meal did Finucane furnish for her and the child there. It was an honour to his little rooms to be visited by such a lady; and as she went down the staircase with her veil over her face, Fin would lean over the balustrade looking after her, to see that no Temple Lovelace assailed her upon the road, perhaps hoping that some rogue might be induced to waylay her, so that he, Fin, might have the pleasure of rushing to her rescue, and breaking the rascal's bones. It was a sincere pleasure to Mrs. Shandon when the arrangements were made by which her kind honest champion was appointed her husband's aide-de-camp in the newspaper.

He would have sate with Mrs. Shandon as late as the prison hours permitted, and had indeed many a time witnessed the putting to bed of little Mary, who occupied a crib in the room; and to whose evening prayers that God might bless papa, Finucane, although of the Romish faith himself, had said Amen with a great deal of sympathy — but he had an appointment with Mr. Bungay regarding the affairs of the paper which they were to discuss over a quiet dinner. So he went away at six o'clock from Mrs. Shandon, but made his accustomed appearance at the Fleet Prison next morning, having arrayed himself in his best clothes and ornaments, which, though cheap as to cost, were very brilliant as to colour and appearance, and having in his pocket four pounds two shillings, being the amount of his week's salary at the Daily Journal, minus two shillings expended by him in the purchase of a pair of gloves on his way to the prison.

He had cut his mutton with Mr. Bungay, as the latter gentleman phrased it, and Mr. Trotter, Bungay's reader and literary man of business, at Dick's Coffee-house on the previous day, and entered at large into his views respecting the conduct of the Pall Mall Gazette. In a masterly manner he had pointed out what should be the sub-editorial arrangements of the paper: what should be the type for the various articles: who should report the markets; who the turf and ring; who the Church intelligence; and who the fashionable chit-chat. He was acquainted with gentlemen engaged in cultivating these various departments of knowledge, and in communicating them afterwards to the public — in fine, Jack Finucane was, as Shandon had said of him, and as he proudly owned himself to be, one of the best sub-editors of a paper in London. He knew the weekly earnings of every man connected with the Press, and was up to a thousand dodges, or ingenious economic contrivances, by which money could be saved to spirited capitalists, who were going to set up a paper. He at once dazzled and mystified Mr. Bungay, who was slow of comprehension, by the rapidity of the calculations which he exhibited on paper, as they sate in the box. And Bungay afterwards owned to his subordinate Mr. Trotter, that that Irishman seemed a clever fellow.

And now having succeeded in making this impression upon Mr. Bungay, the faithful fellow worked round to the point which he had very near at heart, viz., the liberation from prison of his admired friend and chief, Captain Shandon. He knew to a shilling the amount of the detainers which were against the Captain at the porter's lodge of the Fleet; and, indeed, professed to know all his debts, though this was impossible, for no man in England, certainly not the Captain himself, was acquainted with them. He pointed out what Shandon's engagements already were; and how much better he would work if removed from confinement (though this Mr. Bungay denied, for, "when the Captain's locked up," he said, "we are sure to find him at home; whereas, when he's free, you can never catch hold of him"); finally, he so worked on Mr. Bungay's feelings, by describing Mrs. Shandon pining away in the prison, and the child sickening there, that the publisher was induced to promise that, if Mrs. Shandon would come to him in the morning, he would see what could be done. And the colloquy ending at this time with the second round of brandy-and-water, although Finucane, who had four guineas in his

pocket, would have discharged the tavern reckoning with delight, Bungay said, "No, sir — this is my affair, sir, if you please. James, take the bill, and eighteenpence for yourself," and he handed over the necessary funds to the waiter. Thus it was that Finucane, who went to bed at the Temple after the dinner at Dick's, found himself actually with his week's salary intact upon Saturday morning.

He gave Mrs. Shandon a wink so knowing and joyful, that that kind creature knew some good news was in store for her, and hastened to get her bonnet and shawl, when Fin asked if he might have the honour of taking her a walk, and giving her a little fresh air. And little Mary jumped for joy at the idea of this holiday, for Finucane never neglected to give her a toy, or to take her to a show, and brought newspaper orders in his pocket for all sorts of London diversions to amuse the child. Indeed, he loved them with all his heart, and would cheerfully have dashed out his rambling brains to do them, or his adored Captain, a service.

"May I go, Charley? or shall I stay with you, for you're poorly, dear, this morning? He's got a headache, Mr. Finucane. He suffers from headaches, and I persuaded him to stay in bed," Mrs. Shandon said.

"Go along with you, and Polly. Jack, take care of 'em. Hand me over the Burton's Anatomy, and leave me to my abominable devices," Shandon said, with perfect good-humour. He was writing, and not uncommonly took his Greek and Latin quotations (of which he knew the use as a public writer) from that wonderful repertory of learning.

So Fin gave his arm to Mrs. Shandon, and Mary went skipping down the passages of the prison, and through the gate into the free air. From Fleet Street to Paternoster Row is not very far. As the three reached Mr. Bungay's shop, Mrs. Bungay was also entering at the private door, holding in her hand a paper parcel and a manuscript volume bound in red, and, indeed, containing an account of her transactions with the butcher in the neighbouring market. Mrs. Bungay was in a gorgeous shot-silk dress, which flamed with red and purple; she wore a yellow shawl, and had red flowers inside her bonnet, and a brilliant light blue parasol.

Mrs. Shandon was in an old black watered silk; her bonnet had never seen very brilliant days of prosperity any more than its owner, but she could not help looking like a lady whatever her attire was. The two women curtsied to each other, each according to her fashion.

"I hope you're pretty well, mum?" said Mrs. Bungay.

"It's a very fine day," said Mrs. Shandon.

"Won't you step in, mum?" said Mrs. Bungay, looking so hard at the child as almost to frighten her.

"I—I came about business with Mr. Bungay — I—I hope he's pretty well?" said timid Mrs. Shandon.

"If you go to see him in the counting-house, couldn't you, couldn't you leave your little gurl with me?" said Mrs. Bungay, in a deep voice, and with a tragic look, as she held out one finger towards the child.

"I want to stay with mamma," cried little Mary, burying her face in her mother's dress.

"Go with this lady, Mary, my dear," said the mother.

"I'll show you some pretty pictures," said Mrs. Bungay, with the voice of an ogress, "and some nice things besides; look here,"— and opening her brown-paper parcel, Mrs. Bungay displayed some choice sweet biscuits, such as her Bungay loved after his wine. Little Mary followed after this attraction, the whole party entering at the private entrance, from which a side door led into Mr. Bungay's commercial apartments. Here, however, as the child was about to part from her mother, her courage again failed her, and again she ran to the maternal petticoat; upon which the kind and gentle Mrs. Shandon, seeing the look of disappointment in Mrs. Bungay's face, good-naturedly said, "If you will let me, I will come up too, and sit for a few minutes," and so the three females ascended the stairs together. A second biscuit charmed little Mary into perfect confidence, and in a minute or two she prattled away without the least restraint.

Faithful Finucane meanwhile found Mr. Bungay in a severer mood than he had been on the night previous, when two-thirds of a bottle of port, and two large glasses of brandy-and-water, had warmed his soul into enthusiasm, and made him generous in his promises towards Captain Shandon. His impetuous wife had rebuked him on his return home. She had ordered that he should give no relief to the Captain; he was a good-for-nothing fellow, whom no money would help; she disapproved of the plan of the Pall Mall Gazette, and expected that Bungay would only lose his money in it as they were losing over the way (she always called her brother's establishment "over the way") by the Whitehall Journal. Let Shandon stop in prison and do his work; it was the best place for him. In vain Finucane pleaded and promised and implored, for his friend Bungay had had an hour's lecture in the morning and was inexorable.

But what honest Jack failed to do below-stairs in the counting-house, the pretty faces and manners of the mother and child were effecting in the drawing-room, where they were melting the fierce but really soft Mrs. Bungay. There was an artless sweetness in Mrs. Shandon's voice, and a winning frankness of manner, which made most people fond of her, and pity her: and taking courage by the rugged kindness with which her hostess received her, the Captain's lady told her story, and described her husband's goodness and virtues, and her child's failing health (she was obliged to part with two of them, she said, and send them to school, for she could not have them in that horrid place)—that Mrs. Bungay, though as grim as Lady Macbeth, melted under the influence of the simple tale, and said she would go down and speak to Bungay. Now in this household to speak was to command, with Mrs. Bungay; and with Bungay, to hear was to obey.

It was just when poor Finucane was in despair about his negotiation, that the majestic Mrs. Bungay descended upon her spouse, politely requested Mr. Finucane to step up to his friends in her drawing-room, while she held a few minutes' conversation with Mr. B., and when the pair were alone the publisher's better half informed him of her intentions towards the Captain's lady.

"What's in the wind now, my dear?" Maecenas asked, surprised at his wife's altered tone. "You wouldn't hear of my doing anything for the Captain this morning: I wonder what has been a changing of you.

"The Capting is an Irishman," Mrs. Bungay replied; "and those Irish I have always said I couldn't abide. But his wife is a lady, as any one can see; and a good woman, and a clergyman's daughter, and a West of England woman, B., which I am myself, by my mother's side — and, O Marmaduke! didn't you remark the little gurl?"

"Yes, Mrs. B., I saw the little girl."

"And didn't you see how like she was to our angel, Bessy, Mr. B.?" — and Mrs. Bungay's thoughts flew back to a period eighteen years back, when Bacon and Bungay had just set up in business as small booksellers in a country town, and when she had had a child, named Bessy, something like the little Mary who had moved her compassion.

"Well, well, my dear," Mr. Bungay said, seeing the little eyes of his wife begin to twinkle and grow red; "the Captain ain't in for much. There's only a hundred and thirty pound against him. Half the money will take him out of the Fleet, Finucane says, and we'll pay him half salaries till he has made the account square. When the little 'un said, 'Why don't you take Par out of prizm?' I did feel it, Flora, upon my honour I did, now." And the upshot of this conversation was, that Mr. and Mrs. Bungay both ascended to the drawing-room, and Mr. Bungay made a heavy and clumsy speech, in which he announced to Mrs. Shandon, that, hearing sixty-five pounds would set her husband free, he was ready to advance that sum of money, deducting it from the Captain's salary, and that he would give it to her on condition that she would personally settle with the creditors regarding her husband's liberation.

I think this was the happiest day that Mrs. Shandon and Mr. Finucane had had for a long time. "Bedad, Bungay, you're a trump!" roared out Fin, in an overpowering brogue and emotion. "Give us your fist, old boy: and won't we send the Pall Mall Gazette up to ten thousand a week, that's all!" and he jumped about the room, and tossed up little Mary, with a hundred frantic antics.

"If I could drive you anywhere in my carriage, Mrs. Shandon — I'm sure it's quite at your service," Mrs. Bungay said, looking out at a one-horsed vehicle which had just driven up, and in which this lady took the air considerably — and the two ladies, with little Mary between them (whose tiny hand Maecenas's wife kept fixed in her great grasp), with the delighted Mr. Finucane on the back seat, drove away from Paternoster Row, as the owner of the vehicle threw triumphant glances at the opposite windows at Bacon's.

"It won't do the Captain any good," thought Bungay, going back to his desk and accounts, "but Mrs. B. becomes reglar upset when she thinks about her misfortune. The child would have been of age yesterday, if she'd lived. Flora told me so:" and he wondered how women did remember things.

We are happy to say that Mrs. Shandon sped with very good success upon her errand. She who had had to mollify creditors when she had no money at all, and only tears and entreaties wherewith to soothe them, found no difficulty in making them relent by means of a bribe of ten shillings in the pound; and the next Sunday was the last, for some time at least, which the Captain spent in prison.



CHAPTER XXXV

DINNER IN THE ROW

Upon the appointed day our two friends made their appearance at Mr. Bungay's door in Paternoster Row; not the public entrance through which booksellers' boys issued with their sacks full of Bungay's volumes, and around which timid aspirants lingered with their virgin manuscripts ready for sale to Sultan Bungay, but at the private door of the house, whence the splendid Mrs. Bungay would come forth to step into her chaise and take her drive, settling herself on the cushions, and casting looks of defiance at Mrs. Bacon's opposite windows — at Mrs. Bacon, who was as yet a chaiseless woman.

On such occasions, when very much wroth at her sister-inlaw's splendour Mrs. Bacon would fling up the sash of her drawing-room window, and look out with her four children at the chaise, as much as to say, "Look at these four darlings. Flora Bungay! this is why I can't drive in my carriage; you would give a coach-and-four to have the same reason." And it was with these arrows out of her quiver that Emma Bacon shot Flora Bungay as she sate in her chariot envious and childless.

As Pen and Warrington came to Bungay's door, a carriage and a cab drove up to Bacon's. Old Dr. Slocum descended heavily from the first; the Doctor's equipage was as ponderous as his style, but both had a fine sonorous effect upon the publishers in the Row. A couple of dazzling white waistcoats stepped out of the cab.

Warrington laughed. "You see Bacon has his dinner-party too. That is Dr. Slocum, author of 'Memoirs of the Poisoners.' You would hardly have recognised our friend Hoolan in that gallant white waistcoat. Doolan is one of Bungay's men, and faith, here he comes." Indeed, Messrs. Hoolan and Doolan had come from the Strand in the same cab, tossing up by the way which should pay the shilling; and Mr. D. stepped from the other side of the way, arrayed in black, with a large pair of white gloves which were spread out on his hands, and which the owner could not help regarding with pleasure.

The house porter in an evening coat, and gentlemen with gloves as large as Doolan's, but of the famous Berlin web, were on the passage of Mr. Bungay's house to receive the guests' hats and coats, and bawl their names up the stair. Some of the latter had arrived when the three new visitors made their appearance; but there was only Mrs. Bungay in red satin and a turban to represent her own charming sex. She made curtsies to each new-comer as he entered the drawing-room, but her mind was evidently pre-occupied by extraneous thoughts. The fact is, Mrs. Bacon's dinner-party was disturbing her, and as soon as she had received each individual of her own company, Flora Bungay flew back to the embrasure of the window, whence she could rake the carriages of Emma Bacon's friends as they came rattling up the Row. The sight of Dr. Slocum's large carriage, with the gaunt job-horses, crushed Flora: none but hack cabs had driven up to her own door on that day.

They were all literary gentlemen, though unknown as yet to Pen. There was Mr. Bole, the real editor of the magazine, of which Mr. Wagg was the nominal chief; Mr. Trotter, who, from having broken out on the world as a poet of a tragic and suicidal cast, had now subsided into one of Mr. Bungay's back shops as reader for that gentleman; and Captain Sumph, an ex-beau reader about town, and related in some indistinct manner to Literature and the Peerage. He was said to have written a book once, to have been a friend of Lord Byron, to be related to Lord Sumphington; in fact, anecdotes of Byron formed his staple, and he seldom spoke but with the name of that poet or some of his contemporaries in his mouth, as thus: "I remember poor Shelley, at school being sent up for good for a copy of verses, every line of which I wrote, by Jove;" or, "I recollect, when I was at Missolonghi with Byron, offering to bet gamba," and so forth. This gentleman, Pen remarked, was listened to with great attention by Mrs. Bungay; his anecdotes of the aristocracy, of which he was a middle-aged member, delighted the publisher's lady; and he was almost a greater man than the great Mr. Wagg himself in her eyes. Had he but come in his own carriage, Mrs. Bungay would have made her Bungay purchase any given volume from his pen.

Mr. Bungay went about to his guests as they arrived, and did the honours of his house with much cordiality. "How are you, sir? Fine day, sir. Glad to see you year, sir. Flora, my love, let me ave the honour of introducing Mr. Warrington to you. Mr. Warrington, Mrs. Bungay; Mr. Pendennis, Mrs. Bungay. Hope you've brought good appetites with you, gentlemen. You, Doolan, I know ave, for you've always ad a deuce of a twist."

“Lor, Bungay!” said Mrs. Bungay.

“Faith, a man must be hard to please, Bungay, who can’t eat a good dinner in this house,” Doolan said, and he winked and stroked his lean chops with his large gloves; and made appeals of friendship to Mrs. Bungay, which that honest woman refused with scorn from the timid man. “She couldn’t abide that Doolan,” she said in confidence to her friends. Indeed, all his flatteries failed to win her.

As they talked, Mrs. Bungay surveying mankind from her window, a magnificent vision of an enormous grey cab-horse appeared, and neared rapidly. A pair of white reins, held by small white gloves, were visible behind it; a face pale, but richly decorated with a chin-tuft, the head of an exiguous groom bobbing over the cab-head — these bright things were revealed to the delighted Mrs. Bungay. “The Honourable Percy Popjoy’s quite punctual, I declare,” she said, and sailed to the door to be in waiting at the nobleman’s arrival.

“It’s Percy Popjoy,” said Pen, looking out of window, and seeing an individual, in extremely lacquered boots, descend from the swinging cab: and, in fact, it was that young nobleman Lord Falconet’s eldest son, as we all very well know, who was come to dine with the publisher — his publisher of the Row.

“He was my fag at Eton,” Warrington said. “I ought to have licked him a little more.” He and Pen had had some bouts at the Oxbridge Union debates, in which Pen had had very much the better of Percy: who presently appeared, with his hat under his arm, and a look of indescribable good-humour and fatuity in his round dimpled face: upon which Nature had burst out with a chin-tuft, but, exhausted with the effort, had left the rest of the countenance bare of hair.

The temporary groom of the chambers bawled out, “The Honourable Percy Popjoy,” much to that gentleman’s discomposure at hearing his titles announced.

“What did the man want to take away my hat for, Bungay?” he asked of the publisher. “Can’t do without my hat — want it to make my bow to Mrs. Bungay. How well you look. Mrs. Bungay, today. Haven’t seen your carriage in the Park: why haven’t you been there? I missed you; indeed, I did.”

“I’m afraid you’re a sad quiz,” said Mrs. Bungay.

“Quiz! Never made a joke in my — hullo! who’s here? How d’ye do, Pendennis? How d’ye do, Warrington? These are old friends of mine, Mrs. Bungay. I say, how the doose did you come here?” he asked of the two young men, turnip his lacquered heels upon Mrs. Bungay, who respected her husband’s two young guests, now that she found they were intimate with a lord’s son.

“What! do they know him?” she asked rapidly of Mr. B.

“High fellers, I tell you — the young one related to all the nobility,” said the publisher; and both ran forward, smiling and bowing, to greet almost as great personages as the young lord — no less characters, indeed, than the great Mr. Wenham and the great Mr. Wagg, who were now announced.

Mr. Wenham entered, wearing the usual demure look and stealthy smile with which he commonly surveyed the tips of his neat little shining boots, and which he but seldom brought to bear upon the person who addressed him. Wagg’s white waistcoat spread out, on the contrary, with profuse brilliancy; his burly, red face shone resplendent over it, lighted up with the thoughts of good jokes and a good dinner. He liked to make his entree into a drawing-room with a laugh, and, when he went away at night, to leave a joke exploding behind him. No personal calamities or distresses (of which that humourist had his share in common with the unjocular part of mankind) could altogether keep his humour down. Whatever his griefs might be, the thought of a dinner rallied his great soul; and when he saw a lord, he saluted him with a pun.

Wenham went up, then, with a smug smile and whisper, to Mrs. Bungay, and looked at her from under his eyes, and showed her the tips of his shoes. Wagg said she looked charming, and pushed on straight at the young nobleman, whom he called Pop, and to whom he instantly related a funny story, seasoned with what the French call *gros sel*. He was delighted to see Pen, too, and shook hands with him, and slapped him on the back cordially; for he was full of spirits and good-humour. And he talked in a loud voice about their last place and occasion of meeting at Baymouth; and asked how their friends of Clavering Park were, and whether Sir Francis was not coming to London for the season; and whether Pen had been to see Lady Rockminster, who had arrived — fine old lady, Lady Rockminster! These remarks Wagg made not for Pen’s ear so much as for the edification of the company, whom he was glad to inform that he paid visits to gentlemen’s country seats, and was on intimate terms with the nobility.

Wenham also shook hands with our young friend — all of which scenes Mrs. Bungay remarked with respectful

pleasure, and communicated her ideas to Bungay, afterwards, regarding the importance of Mr. Pendennis — ideas by which Pen profited much more than he was aware.

Pen, who had read, and rather admired some of her works (and expected to find in Miss Bunion a person somewhat resembling her own description of herself in the 'Passion-Flower,' in which she stated that her youth resembled —

"A violet, shrinking meanly
When blows the March wind keenly;
A timid fawn, on wild-wood lawn,
Where oak-boughs rustle greenly — "

and that her maturer beauty was something very different, certainly, to the artless loveliness of her prime, but still exceedingly captivating and striking), beheld, rather to his surprise and amusement, a large and bony woman in a crumpled satin dress, who came creaking into the room with a step as heavy as a grenadier's. Wagg instantly noted the straw which she brought in at the rumpled skirt of her dress, and would have stooped to pick it up: but Miss Bunion disarmed all criticism by observing this ornament herself, and, putting her own large foot upon it, so as to separate it from her robe, she stooped and picked up the straw, saying to Mrs. Bungay, that she was very sorry to be a little late, but that the omnibus was very slow, and what a comfort it was to get a ride all the way from Brompton for sixpence. Nobody laughed at the poetess's speech, it was uttered so simply. Indeed, the worthy woman had not the least notion of being ashamed of an action incidental upon her poverty.

"Is that 'Passion-Flowers?'" Pen said to Wenham, by whom he was standing. "Why, her picture in the volume represents her as a very well-looking young woman."

"You know passion-flowers, like all others, will run to seed," Wenham said; "Miss Bunion's portrait was probably painted some years ago."

"Well, I like her for not being ashamed of her poverty."

"So do I," said Mr. Wenham, who would have starved rather than have come to dinner in an omnibus, "but I don't think that she need flourish the straw about, do you, Mr. Pendennis? My dear Miss Bunion, how do you do? I was in a great lady's drawing-room this morning, and everybody was charmed with your new volume. Those lines on the christening of Lady Fanny Fantail brought tears into the Duchess's eyes. I said that I thought I should have the pleasure of meeting you today, and she begged me to thank you, and say how greatly she was pleased."

This history, told in a bland smiling manner, of a Duchess whom Wenham had met that very morning, too, quite put poor Wagg's dowager and baronet out of court, and placed Wenham beyond Wagg as a man of fashion. Wenham kept this inestimable advantage, and having the conversation to himself, ran on with a number of anecdotes regarding the aristocracy. He tried to bring Mr. Popjoy into the conversation by making appeals to him, and saying, "I was telling your father this morning," or, "I think you were present at W. house the other night when the Duke said so-and-so," but Mr. Popjoy would not gratify him by joining in the talk, preferring to fall back into the window recess with Mrs. Bungay, and watch the cabs that drove up to the opposite door. At least, if he would not talk, the hostess hoped that those odious Bacons would see how she had secured the noble Percy Popjoy for her party.

And now the bell of Saint Paul's tolled half an hour later than that for which Mr. Bungay had invited his party, and it was complete with the exception of two guests, who at last made their appearance, and in whom Pen was pleased to recognise Captain and Mrs. Shandon.

When these two had made their greetings to the master and mistress of the house, and exchanged nods of more or less recognition with most of the people present, Pen and Warrington went up, and shook hands very warmly with Mrs. Shandon, who, perhaps, was affected to meet them, and think where it was she had seen them but a few days before. Shandon was brushed up, and looked pretty smart, in a red velvet waistcoat, and a frill, into which his wife had stuck her best brooch. In spite of Mrs. Bungay's kindness, perhaps in consequence of it, Mrs. Shandon felt great terror and timidity in approaching her: indeed, she was more awful than ever in her red satin and bird of paradise, and it was not until she had asked in her great voice about the dear little gurl, that the latter was somewhat encouraged, and ventured to speak.

"Nice-looking woman," Popjoy whispered to Warrington. "Do introduce me to Captain Shandon, Warrington. I'm told he's a tremendous clever fellow; and, dammy, I adore intellect, by Jove I do!" This was the truth: Heaven had not endowed young Mr. Popjoy with much intellect of his own, but had given him a generous faculty for admiring, if not for appreciating, the intellect of others. "And introduce me to Miss Bunion. I'm told she's very clever too. She's rum to look at,

certainly, but that don't matter. Dammy, I consider myself a literary man, and I wish to know all the clever fellows." So Mr. Popjoy and Mr. Shandon had the pleasure of becoming acquainted with one another; and now the doors of the adjoining dining-room being flung open, the party entered and took their seats at table. Pen found himself next to Bunion on one side, and to Mr. Wagg — the truth is, Wagg fled alarmed from the vacant place by the poetess, and Pen was compelled to take it.

The gifted being did not talk much during dinner, but Pen remarked that she ate with a vast appetite, and never refused any of the supplies of wine which were offered to her by the butler. Indeed, Miss Bunion having considered Mr. Pendennis for a minute, who gave himself rather grand airs, and who was attired in an extremely fashionable style, with his very best chains, shirt studs, and cambric fronts, he was set down, and not without reason, as a prig by the poetess; who thought it was much better to attend to her dinner than to take any notice of him. She told him as much in after days with her usual candour. "I took you for one of the little Mayfair dandies," she said to Pen. "You looked as solemn as a little undertaker; and as I disliked, beyond measure, the odious creature who was on the other side of me, I thought it was best to eat my dinner and hold my tongue."

"And you did both very well, my dear Miss Bunion," Pen said with a laugh.

"Well, so I do, but I intend to talk to you the next time a great deal: for you are neither so solemn, nor so stupid, nor so pert as you look."

"Ah, Miss Bunion, how I pine for that 'next time' to come," Pen said with an air of comical gallantry:— But we must return to the day, and the dinner at Paternoster Row.

The repast was of the richest description — "What I call of the florid Gothic style," Wagg whispered to Penn, who sate beside the humourist, in his side-wing voice. The men in creaking shoes and Berlin gloves were numerous and solemn, carrying on rapid conversations behind the guests, as they moved to and fro with the dishes. Doolan called out, "Waither," to one of them, and blushed when he thought of his blunder. Mrs. Bungay's footboy was lost amidst those large and black-coated attendants.

"Look at that very bow-windowed man," Wagg said. "He's an undertaker in Amen Corner, and attends funerals and dinners. Cold meat and hot, don't you perceive? He's the sham butler here, and I observe, my dear Mr. Pendennis, as you will through life, that wherever there is a sham butler at a London dinner there is sham wine — this sherry is filthy. Bungay, my boy, where did you get this delicious brown sherry?"

"I'm glad you like it, Mr. Wagg; glass with you," said the publisher. "It's some I got from Alderman Benning's store, and gave a good figure for it, I can tell you. Mr. Pendennis, will you join us? Your 'ealth, gentlemen."

"The old rogue, where does he expect to go to? It came from the public-house," Wagg said. "It requires two men to carry off that sherry, 'tis so uncommonly strong. I wish I had a bottle of old Steyne's wine here, Pendennis: your uncle and I have had many a one. He sends it about to people where he is in the habit of dining. I remember at poor Rawdon Crawley's, Sir Pitt Crawley's brother — he was Governor of Coventry Island — Steyne's chef always came in the morning, and the butler arrived wit the champagne from Gaunt House, in the ice-pails ready."

"How good this is!" said Popjoy, good-naturedly. "You must have a cordon bleu in your kitchen."

"O yes," Mrs. Bungay said, thinking he spoke of a jack-chain very likely.

"I mean a French chef," said the polite guest.

"O yes, your lordship," again said the lady.

"Does your artist say he's a Frenchman, Mrs. B.?" called out Wagg.

"Well, I'm sure I don't know," answered the publisher's lady.

"Because, if he does, he's a quizzin yer," cried Mr. Wagg; but nobody saw the pun, which disconcerted somewhat the bashful punster. "The dinner is from Griggs, in St. Paul's Churchyard; so is Bacon's," he whispered Pen. "Bungay writes to give half-a-crown a head more than Bacon, so does Bacon. They would poison each other's ices if they could get near them; and as for the made-dishes — they are poison. This — hum — ha — this Brimborion a la Sevigne is delicious, Mrs. B.," he said, helping himself to a dish which the undertaker handed to him.

"Well, I'm glad you like it," Mrs. Bungay answered, blushing and not knowing whether the name of the dish was actually that which Wagg gave to it, but dimly conscious that that individual was quizzing her. Accordingly she hated Mr.

Wagg with female ardour; and would have deposed him from his command over Mr. Bungay's periodical, but that his name was great in the trade, and his reputation in the land considerable.

By the displacement of persons, Warrington had found himself on the right hand of Mrs. Shandon, who sate in plain black silk and faded ornaments by the side of the florid publisher. The sad smile of the lady moved his rough heart to pity. Nobody seemed to interest himself about her: she sate looking at her husband, who himself seemed rather abashed in the presence of some of the company. Wenham and Wagg both knew him and his circumstances. He had worked with the latter, and was immeasurably his superior in wit, genius, and acquirement; but Wagg's star was brilliant in the world, and poor Shandon was unknown there. He could not speak before the noisy talk of the coarser and more successful man; but drank his wine in silence, and as much of it as the people would give him. He was under surveillance. Bungay had warned the undertaker not to fill the Captain's glass too often or too full. It was a melancholy precaution that, and the more melancholy that it was necessary. Mrs. Shandon, too, cast alarmed glances across the table to see that her husband did not exceed.

Abashed by the failure of his first pun, for he was impudent and easily disconcerted, Wagg kept his conversation pretty much to Pen during the rest of dinner, and of course chiefly spoke about their neighbours. "This is one of Bungay's grand field-days," he said. "We are all Bungavians here. — Did you read Popjoy's novel? It was an old magazine story written by poor Buzzard years ago, and forgotten here until Mr. Trotter (that is Trotter with the large shirt collar) fished it out and bethought him that it was applicable to the late elopement; so Bob wrote a few chapters a propos — Popjoy permitted the use of his name, and I dare say supplied a page here and there — and 'Desperation, or the Fugitive Duchess' made its appearance. The great fun is to examine Popjoy about his own work, of which he doesn't know a word. — I say, Popjoy, what a capital passage that is in Volume Three — where the Cardinal in disguise, after being converted by the Bishop of London, proposes marriage to the Duchess's daughter."

"Glad you like it," Popjoy answered; "it's a favourite bit of my own."

"There's no such thing in the whole book," whispered Wagg to Pen. "Invented it myself. Gad! it wouldn't be a bad plot for a high-church novel."

"I remember poor Byron, Hobhouse, Trelawney, and myself, dining with Cardinal Mezzocaldo at Rome," Captain Sumph began, "and we had some Orvieto wine for dinner, which Byron liked very much. And I remember how the Cardinal regretted that he was a single man. We went to Civita Vecchia two days afterwards, where Byron's yacht was — and, by Jove, the Cardinal died within three weeks; and Byron was very sorry, for he rather liked him."

"A devilish interesting story, Sumph, indeed," Wagg said.

"You should publish some of those stories, Captain Sumph, you really should. Such a volume would make our friend Bungay's fortune," Shandon said.

"Why don't you ask Sumph to publish 'em in your new paper — the what-d'ye-call-'em — hay, Shandon?" bawled out Wagg.

"Why don't you ask him to publish 'em in your old magazine, the Thingumbob?" Shandon replied.

"Is there going to be a new paper?" asked Wenham, who knew perfectly well, but was ashamed of his connection with the press.

"Bungay going to bring out a paper?" cried Popjoy, who, on the contrary, was proud of his literary reputation and acquaintances. "You must employ me. Mrs. Bungay, use your influence with him, and make him employ me. Prose or verse — what shall it be? Novels, poems, travels, or leading articles, begad. Anything or everything — only let Bungay pay me, and I'm ready — I am now my dear Mrs. Bungay, begad now."

"It's to be called the Small Beer Chronicle," growled Wagg, "and little Popjoy is to be engaged for the infantine department."

"It is to be called the Pall Mall Gazette, sir, and we shall be very happy to have you with us," Shandon said.

"Pall Mall Gazette — why Pall Mall Gazette?" asked Wagg.

"Because the editor was born at Dublin, the sub-editor at Cork, because the proprietor lives in Paternoster Row; — and the paper is published in Catherine Street, Strand. Won't that reason suffice you, Wagg?" Shandon said; he was getting rather angry. "Everything must have a name. My dog Ponto has got a namee. You've got a name, and a name which you deserve, more or less, indeed. Why d'ye grudge the name to our paper?"

“By any other name it would smell as sweet,” said Wagg.

“I’ll have ye remember its name’s not what-d’ye-call-’em, Mr. Wagg,” said Shandon. “You know its name well enough, and — and you know mine.”

“And I know your address too,” said Wagg; but this was spoken in an undertone, and the good-natured Irishman was appeased almost in an instant after his ebullition of spleen, and asked Wagg to drink wine with him in a friendly voice.

When the ladies retired from the table, the talk grew louder still; and presently Wenham, in a courtly speech, proposed that everybody should drink to the health of the new Journal, eulogising highly the talents, wit, and learning of its editor, Captain Shandon. It was his maxim never to lose the support of a newspaper man, and in the course of that evening he went round and saluted every literary gentleman present with a privy compliment specially addressed to him; informing this one how great an impression had been made in Downing Street by his last article, and telling that one how profoundly his good friend, the Duke of So-and-So, had been struck by the ability of the late numbers.

The evening came to a close, and in spite of all the precautions to the contrary, poor Shandon reeled in his walk, and went home to his new lodgings, with his faithful wife by his side, and the cabman on his box jeering at him. Wenham had a chariot of his own, which he put at Popjoy’s seat; and the timid Miss Bunion seeing Mr. Wagg, who was her neighbour, about to depart, insisted upon a seat in his carriage, much to that gentleman’s discomfiture.

Pen and Warrington walked home together in the moonlight. “And now,” Warrington said, “that you have seen the men of letters, tell me, was I far wrong in saying that there are thousands of people in this town, who don’t write books, who are, to the full, as clever and intellectual as people who do?”

Pen was forced to confess that the literary personages with whom he had become acquainted had not said much, in the course of the night’s conversation, that was worthy to be remembered or quoted. In fact not one word about literature had been said during the whole course of the night:— and it may be whispered to those uninitiated people who are anxious to know the habits and make the acquaintance of men of letters, that there are no race of people who talk about books, or, perhaps, who read books, so little as literary men.



CHAPTER XXXVI

THE PALL MALL GAZETTE

Considerable success at first attended the new journal. It was generally stated, that an influential political party supported the paper; and great names were cited amongst the contributors to its columns. Was there any foundation for these rumours? We are not at liberty to say whether they were ill-founded; but this much we may divulge, that an article upon foreign policy, which was generally attributed to a noble Lord, whose connexion with the Foreign Office is very well known, was in reality composed by Captain Shandon, in the parlour of the Bear and Staff public-house near Whitehall Stairs, whither the printer's boy had tracked him, and where a literary ally of his, Mr. Bludyer, had a temporary residence; and that a series of papers on finance questions, which were universally supposed to be written by a great Statesman of the House of Commons, were in reality composed by Mr. George Warrington of the Upper Temple.

That there may have been some dealings between the Pall Mall Gazette and this influential party, is very possible, Percy Popjoy (whose father, Lord Falconet, was a member of the party) might be seen not unfrequently ascending the stairs to Warrington's chambers; and some information appeared in the paper which it gave a character, and could only be got from very peculiar sources. Several poems, feeble in thought, but loud and vigorous in expression, appeared in the Pall Mall Gazette, with the signature of "P. P."; and it must be owned that his novel was praised in the new journal in a very outrageous manner.

In the political department of the paper Mr. Pen did not take any share; but he was a most active literary contributor. The Pall Mall Gazette had its offices, as we have heard, in Catherine Street, in the Strand, and hither Pen often came with his manuscripts in his pocket, and with a great deal of bustle and pleasure; such as a man feels at the outset of his literary career, when to see himself in print is still a novel sensation, and he yet pleases himself to think that his writings are creating some noise in the world.

Here it was that Mr. Jack Finucane, the sub-editor, compiled with paste and scissors the Journal of which he was supervisor. With an eagle eye he scanned all the paragraphs of all the newspapers which had anything to do with the world of fashion over which he presided. He didn't let a death or a dinner-party of the aristocracy pass without having the event recorded in the columns of his Journal; and from the most recondite provincial prints, and distant Scotch and Irish newspapers, he fished out astonishing paragraphs and intelligence regarding the upper classes of society. It was a grand, nay, a touching sight, for a philosopher, to see Jack Finucane, Esquire, with a plate of meat from the cookshop and glass of porter from the public-house, for his meal, recounting the feasts of the great as if he had been present at them; and in tattered trousers and dingy shirt-sleeves, cheerfully describing and arranging the most brilliant fetes of the world of fashion. The incongruity of Finucane's avocation, and his manners and appearance amused his new friend Pen. Since he left his own native village, where his rank probably was not very, lofty Jack had seldom seen any society but such as used the parlour of the taverns which he frequented, whereas from his writing you would have supposed that he dined with ambassadors, and that his common lounge was the bow-window of White's. Errors of description, it is true, occasionally slipped from his pen; but the Ballinafad Sentinel, of which he was own correspondent, suffered by these, not the Pall Mall Gazette, in which Jack was not permitted to write much, his London chiefs thinking that the scissors and the paste were better wielded by him than the pen.

Pen took a great deal of pains with the writing of his reviews, and having a pretty fair share of desultory reading, acquired in the early years of his life an eager fancy and a keen sense of fun, his articles pleased his chief and the public, and he was proud to think that he deserved the money which he earned. We may be sure that the Pall Mall Gazette was taken in regularly at Fairoaks, and read with delight by the two ladies there. It was received at Clavering Park, too, where we know there was a young lady of great literary tastes; and old Doctor Portman himself, to whom the widow sent her paper after she had got her son's articles by heart, signified his approval of Pen's productions, saying that the lad had spirit, taste, and fancy, and wrote, if not like a scholar, at any rate like a gentleman.

And what was the astonishment and delight of our friend Major Pendennis, on walking into one of his clubs, the Regent, where Wenham, Lord Falconet, and some other gentlemen of good reputation and fashion were assembled, to hear them one day talking over a number of the Pall Mall Gazette, and of an article which appeared in its columns, making some

bitter fun of the book recently published by the wife of a celebrated member of the opposition party. The book in question was a *Book of Travels in Spain and Italy*, by the Countess of Muffborough, in which it was difficult to say which was the most wonderful, the French or the English, in which languages her ladyship wrote indifferently, and upon the blunders of which the critic pounced with delightful mischief. The critic was no other than Pen: he jumped and danced round about his subject with the greatest jocularly and high spirits: he showed up the noble lady's faults with admirable mock gravity and decorum. There was not a word in the article which was not polite and gentlemanlike; and the unfortunate subject of the criticism was scarified and laughed at during the operation. Wenham's bilious countenance was puckered up with malign pleasure as he read the critique. Lady Muffborough had not asked him to her parties during the last year. Lord Falconet giggled and laughed with all his heart; Lord Muffborough and he had been rivals ever since they began life; and these complimented Major Pendennis, who until now had scarcely paid any attention to some hints which his Fair Oaks correspondence threw out of "dear Arthur's constant and severe literary occupations, which I fear may undermine the poor boy's health," and had thought any notice of Mr. Pen and his newspaper connexions quite below his dignity as a Major and a gentleman.

But when the oracular Wenham praised the boy's production; when Lord Falconet, who had had the news from Percy Popjoy, approved of the genius of young Pen; when the great Lord Steyne himself, to whom the Major referred the article, laughed and sniggered over it, swore it was capital, and that the Muffborough would writhe under it, like a whale under a harpoon, the Major, as in duty bound, began to admire his nephew very much, said, "By gad, the young rascal had some stuff in him, and would do something; he had always said he would do something;" and with a hand quite tremulous with pleasure, the old gentleman sate down to write to the widow at Fair Oaks all that the great folks had said in praise of Pen; and he wrote to the young rascal, too, asking when he would come and eat a chop with his old uncle, and saying that he was commissioned to take him to dinner at Gaunt House, for Lord Steyne liked anybody who could entertain him, whether by his folly, wit, or by his dulness, by his oddity, affectation, good spirits, or any other quality. Pen flung his letter across the table to Warrington: perhaps he was disappointed that the other did not seem to be much affected by it.

The courage of young critics is prodigious: they clamber up to the judgment-seat, and, with scarce a hesitation, give their opinion upon works the most intricate or profound. Had Macaulay's *History* or Herschel's *Astronomy* been put before Pen at this period, he would have looked through the volumes, meditated his opinion over a cigar, and signified his august approval of either author, as if the critic had been their born superior and indulgent master and patron. By the help of the *Biographie Universelle* or the *British Museum*, he would be able to take a rapid resume of a historical period, and allude to names, dates, and facts, in such a masterly, easy way, as to astonish his mamma at home, who wondered where her boy could have acquired such a prodigious store of reading and himself, too, when he came to read over his articles two or three months after they had been composed, and when he had forgotten the subject and the books which he had consulted. At that period of his life, Mr. Pen owns that he would not have hesitated, at twenty-four hours' notice, to pass his opinion upon the greatest scholars, or to give a judgment upon the *Encyclopaedia*. Luckily he had Warrington to laugh at him and to keep down his impertinence by a constant and wholesome ridicule, or he might have become conceited beyond all sufferance; for Shandon liked the dash and flippancy of his young aide-de-camp, and was, indeed, better pleased with Pen's light and brilliant flashes, than with the heavier metal which his elder coadjutor brought to bear.

But though he might justly be blamed on the score of impertinence and a certain prematurity of judgment, Mr. Pen was a perfectly honest critic; a great deal too candid for Mr. Bungay's purposes, indeed, who grumbled sadly at his impartiality. Pen and his chief, the Captain, had a dispute upon this subject one day. "In the name of common-sense, Mr. Pendennis," Shandon asked, "what have you been doing — praising one of Mr. Bacon's books? Bungay has been with me in a fury this morning at seeing a laudatory article upon one of the works of the odious firm over the way."

Pen's eyes opened with wide astonishment. "Do you mean to say," he asked, "that we are to praise no books that Bacon publishes: or that, if the books are good, we are to say they are bad?"

"My good young friend — for what do you suppose a benevolent publisher undertakes a critical journal, to benefit his rival?" Shandon inquired.

"To benefit himself certainly, but to tell the truth too," Pen said, "ruat coelum, to tell the truth."

"And my prospectus," said Shandon, with a laugh and a snarl; "do you consider that was a work of mathematical accuracy of statement?"

"Pardon me, that is not the question," Pen said "and I don't think you very much care to argue it. I had some qualms of conscience about that same prospectus, and debated the matter with my friend Warrington. We agreed, however," Pen said, laughing "that because the prospectus was rather declamatory and poetical, and the giant was painted upon the show-board rather larger than the original, who was inside the caravan; we need not be too scrupulous about this trifling inaccuracy, but might do our part of the show, without loss of character or remorse of conscience. We are the fiddlers, and play our tunes only; you are the showman."

"And leader of the van," said Shandon. "Well, I am glad that your conscience gave you leave to play for us."

"Yes, but," said Pen, with a fine sense of the dignity of his position, "we are all party men in England, and I will stick to my party like a Briton. I will be as good-natured as you like to our own side, he is a fool who quarrels with his own nest; and I will hit the enemy as hard as you like — but with fair play, Captain, if you please. One can't tell all the truth, I suppose; but one can tell nothing but the truth; and I would rather starve, by Jove, and never earn another penny by my pen" (this redoubted instrument had now been in use for some six weeks, and Pen spoke of it with vast enthusiasm and respect) "than strike an opponent an unfair blow, or, if called upon to place him, rank him below his honest desert."

"Well, Mr. Pendennis, when we want Bacon smashed, we must get some other hammer to do it," Shandon said, with fatal good-nature; and very likely thought within himself, "A few years hence perhaps the young gentleman won't be so squeamish." The veteran Condottiere himself was no longer so scrupulous. He had fought and killed on so many a side for many a year past, that remorse had long left him. "Gad," said he, "you've a tender conscience, Mr. Pendennis. It's the luxury of all novices, and I may have had one once myself; but that sort of bloom wears off with the rubbing of the world, and I'm not going to the trouble myself of putting on an artificial complexion, like our pious friend Wenham, or our model of virtue, Wagg."

"I don't know whether some people's hypocrisy is not better, Captain, than other's cynicism."

"It's more profitable, at any rate," said the Captain, biting his nails. "That Wenham is as dull a quack as ever quacked: and you see the carriage in which he drove to dinner. Faith, it'll be a long time before Mrs. Shandon will take a drive in her own chariot. God help her, poor thing!" And Pen went away from his chief, after their little dispute and colloquy, pointing his own moral to the Captain's tale, and thinking to himself, "Behold this man, stored with genius, wit, learning, and a hundred good natural gifts: see how he has wrecked them, by paltering with his honesty, and forgetting to respect himself. Wilt thou remember thyself, O Pen? thou art conceited enough! Wilt thou sell thy honour for a bottle? No, by heaven's grace, we will be honest, whatever befalls, and our mouths shall only speak the truth when they open."

A punishment, or, at least, a trial, was in store for Mr. Pen. In the very next number of the Pall Mall Gazette, Warrington read out, with roars of laughter, an article which by no means amused Arthur Pendennis, who was himself at work with a criticism for the next week's number of the same journal; and in which the Spring Annual was ferociously maltreated by some unknown writer. The person of all most cruelly mauled was Pen himself. His verses had not appeared with his own name in the Spring Annual, but under an assumed signature. As he had refused to review the book, Shandon had handed it over to Mr. Bludyer, with directions to that author to dispose of it. And he had done so effectually. Mr. Bludyer, who was a man of very considerable talent, and of a race which, I believe, is quite extinct in the press of our time, had a certain notoriety in his profession, and reputation for savage humour. He smashed and trampled down the poor spring flowers with no more mercy than a bull would have on a parterre; and having cut up the volume to his heart's content, went and sold it at a bookstall, and purchased a pint of brandy with the proceeds of the volume.



CHAPTER XXXVII

WHERE PEN APPEARS IN TOWN AND COUNTRY

Let us be allowed to pass over a few months of the history of Mr. Arthur Pendennis's lifetime, during the which, many events may have occurred which were more interesting and exciting to himself, than they would be likely to prove to the reader of his present memoirs. We left him, in his last chapter, regularly entered upon his business as a professional writer, or literary hack, as Mr. Warrington chooses to style himself and his friend; and we know how the life of any hack, legal or literary, in a curacy, or in a marching regiment, or at a merchant's desk, is dull of routine, and tedious of description. One day's labour resembles another much too closely. A literary man has often to work for his bread against time, or against his will, or in spite of his health, or of his indolence, or of his repugnance to the subject on which he is called to exert himself, just like any other daily toiler. When you want to make money by Pegasus (as he must, perhaps, who has no other saleable property), farewell poetry and aerial flights: Pegasus only rises now like Mr. Green's balloon, at periods advertised beforehand, and when the spectator's money has been paid. Pegasus trots in harness, over the stony pavement, and pulls a cart or a cab behind him. Often Pegasus does his work with panting sides and trembling knees, and not seldom gets a cut of the whip from his driver.

Do not let us, however, be too prodigal of our pity upon Pegasus. There is no reason why this animal should be exempt from labour, or illness, or decay, any more than any of the other creatures of God's world. If he gets the whip, Pegasus often deserves it, and I for one am quite ready to protest my friend, George Warrington, against the doctrine which poetical sympathisers are inclined to put forward, viz., that of letters, and what is called genius, are to be exempt from prose duties of this daily, bread-wanting, tax-paying life, and not to be made to work and pay like their neighbours.

Well, then, the Pall Mall Gazette being duly established and Arthur Pendennis's merits recognised as a flippant, witty, and amusing critic, he worked away hard every week, preparing reviews of such works as came into his department, and writing his reviews with flippancy certainly, but with honesty, and to the best of his power. It might be that a historian of threescore, who had spent a quarter of a century in composing a work of which our young gentleman disposed in the course of a couple of days' reading at the British Museum, was not altogether fairly treated by such a facile critic; or that a poet who had been elaborating sublime sonnets and odes until he thought them fit for the public and for fame, was annoyed by two or three dozen pert lines in Mr. Pen's review, in which the poet's claims were settled by the critic, as if the latter were my lord on the bench and the author a miserable little suitor trembling before him. The actors at the theatres complained of him wofully, too, and very likely he was too hard upon them. But there was not much harm done after all. It is different now, as we know; but there were so few great historians, or great poets, or great actors, in Pen's time, that scarce any at all came up for judgment his critical desk. Those who got a little whipping, got what in the main was good for them; not that the judge was any better or wiser than the persons whom he sentenced, or indeed ever fancied himself so. Pen had a strong sense of humour and justice, and had not therefore an overweening respect for his own works; besides, he had his friend Warrington at his elbow — a terrible critic if the young man was disposed to be conceited, and more savage over Pen than ever he was to those whom he tried at his literary assize.

By these critical labours, and by occasional contributions to leading articles of the journal, when, without wounding his paper, this eminent publicist could conscientiously speak his mind, Mr. Arthur Pendennis gained the sum of four pounds four shillings weekly, and with no small pains and labour. Likewise he furnished Magazines and Reviews with articles of his composition, and is believed to have been (though on this score he never chooses to speak) London correspondent of the Chatteris Champion, which at that time contained some very brilliant and eloquent letters from the metropolis. By these labours the fortunate youth was enabled to earn a sum very nearly equal to four hundred pounds a year; and on the second Christmas after his arrival in London, he actually brought a hundred pounds to his mother, as a dividend upon the debt which he owed to Laura. That Mrs. Pendennis read every word of her son's works, and considered him to be the profoundest thinker and most elegant writer of the day; that she thought his retribution of the hundred pounds an act of angelic virtue; that she feared he was ruining his health by his labours, and was delighted when he told her of the society which he met, and of the great men of letters and fashion whom he saw, will be imagined by all readers who have seen son-worship amongst mothers, and that charming simplicity of love with which women in the country

watch the career of their darlings in London. If John has held such and such a brief; if Tom has been invited to such and such a ball; or George has met this or that great and famous man at dinner; what a delight there is in the hearts of mothers and sisters at home in Somersetshire! How young Hopeful's letters are read and remembered! What a theme for village talk they give, and friendly congratulation! In the second winter, Pen came for a very brief space, and cheered the widow's heart, and lightened up the lonely house at Fairoaks. Helen had her son all to herself; Laura was away on a visit to old Lady Rockminster; the folks of Clavering Park were absent; the very few old friends of the house, Doctor Portman at their head, called upon Mr. Pen, and treated him with marked respect; between mother and son, it was all fondness, confidence, and affection. It was the happiest fortnight of the widow's whole life; perhaps in the lives of both of them. The holiday was gone only too quickly; and Pen was back in the busy world, and the gentle widow alone again. She sent Arthur's money to Laura: I don't know why this young lady took the opportunity of leaving home when Pen was coming thither, or whether he was the more piqued or relieved by her absence.

He was by this time, by his own merits and his uncle's introductions, pretty well introduced into London, and known both in literary and polite circles. Amongst the former his fashionable reputation stood him in no little stead; he was considered to be a gentleman of good present means and better expectations, who wrote for his pleasure, than which there cannot be a greater recommendation to a young literary aspirant. Bacon, Bungay and Co. were proud to accept his articles; Mr. Wenham asked him to dinner; Mr. Wagg looked upon him with a favourable eye; and they reported how they met him at the houses of persons of fashion, amongst whom he was pretty welcome, as they did not trouble themselves about his means, present or future; as his appearance and address were good; and as he had got a character for being a clever fellow. Finally, he was asked to one house, because he was seen at another house: and thus no small varieties of London life were presented to the young man: he was made familiar with all sorts of people from Paternoster Row to Pimlico, and was as much at home at Mayfair dining-tables as at those tavern boards where some of his companions of the pen were accustomed to assemble.

Full of high spirits and curiosity, easily adapting himself to all whom he met, the young fellow pleased himself in this strange variety and jumble of men, and made himself welcome, or at ease at least, wherever he went. He would breakfast, for instance, at Mr. Plover's of a morning, in company with a Peer, a Bishop, a parliamentary orator, two blue ladies of fashion, a popular preacher, the author of the last new novel, and the very latest lion imported from Egypt or from America: and would quit this distinguished society for the back room at the newspaper office, where pens and ink and the wet proof-sheets were awaiting him. Here would be Finucane, the sub-editor, with the last news from the Row: and Shandon would come in presently, and giving a nod to Pen, would begin scribbling his leading article at the other end of the table, flanked by the pint of sherry, which, when the attendant boy beheld him, was always silently brought for the Captain: or Mr. Bludyer's roaring voice would be heard in the front room, where that truculent critic would impound the books on the counter in spite of the timid remonstrances of Mr. Midge, the publisher, and after looking through the volumes would sell them at his accustomed bookstall, and having drunken and dined upon the produce of the sale in a tavern box, would call for ink and paper, and proceed to "smash" the author of his dinner and the novel. Towards evening Mr. Pen would stroll in the direction of his club, and take up Warrington there for a constitutional walk. This exercise freed the lungs, and gave an appetite for dinner, after which Pen had the privilege to make his bow at some very pleasant houses which were opened to him; or the town before him for amusement. There was the Opera; or the Eagle Tavern; or a ball to go to in Mayfair; or a quiet night with a cigar and a book and a long talk with Warrington; or a wonderful new song at the Back Kitchen; — at this time of his life Mr. Pen beheld all sorts of places and men; and very likely did not know how much he enjoyed himself until long after, when balls gave him no pleasure, neither did farces make him laugh; nor did the tavern joke produce the least excitement in him; nor did the loveliest dancer that ever showed her ankles cause him to stir from his chair after dinner. At his present mature age all these pleasures are over: and the times have passed away too. It is but a very very few years since — but the time is gone, and most of the men. Bludyer will no more bully authors or cheat landlords of their score. Shandon, the learned and thriftless, the witty and unwise, sleeps his last sleep. They buried honest Doolan the other day: never will he cringe or flatter, never pull long-bow or empty whisky-noggin any more.

The London season was now blooming in its full vigour, and the fashionable newspapers abounded with information regarding the grand banquets, routs, and balls which were enlivening the polite world. Our gracious Sovereign was holding levees and drawing-rooms at St. James's: the bow-windows of the clubs were crowded with the heads of respectable red-faced newspaper-reading gentlemen: along the Serpentine trailed thousands of carriages: squadrons of dandy horsemen

trampled over Rotten Row, everybody was in town, in a word; and of course Major Arthur Pendennis, who was somebody, was not absent.

With his head tied up in a smart bandana handkerchief and his meagre carcass enveloped in a brilliant Turkish dressing-gown, the worthy gentleman sate on a certain morning by his fireside letting his feet gently simmer in a bath, whilst he took his early cup of tea, and perused his Morning Post. He could not have faced the day without his two hours' toilet, without his early cup of tea, without his Morning Post. I suppose nobody in the world except Morgan, not even Morgan's master himself, knew how feeble and ancient the Major was growing, and what numberless little comforts he required.

If men sneer, as our habit is, at the artifices of an old beauty, at her paint, perfumes, ringlets; at those innumerable, and to us unknown, stratagems with which she is said to remedy the ravages of time and reconstruct the charms whereof years have bereft her; the ladies, it is to be presumed, are not on their side altogether ignorant that men are vain as well as they, and that the toilets of old bucks are to the full as elaborate as their own. How is it that old Blushington keeps that constant little rose-tint on his cheeks; and where does old Blondel get the preparation which makes his silver hair pass for golden? Have you ever seen Lord Hotspur get off his horse when he thinks nobody is looking? Taken out of his stirrups, his shiny boots can hardly totter up the steps of Hotspur House. He is a dashing young nobleman still as you see the back of him in Rotten Row; when you behold him on foot, what an old, old fellow! Did you ever form to yourself any idea of Dick Lacy (Dick has been Dick these sixty years) in a natural state, and without his stays? All these men are objects whom the observer of human life and manners may contemplate with as much profit as the most elderly Belgravian Venus, or inveterate Mayfair Jezebel. An old reprobate daddy-longlegs, who has never said his prayers (except perhaps in public) these fifty years: an old buck who still clings to as many of the habits of youth as his feeble grasp of health can hold by: who has given up the bottle, but sits with young fellows over it, and tells naughty stories upon toast-and-water — who has given up beauty, but still talks about it as wickedly as the youngest roue in company — such an old fellow, I say, if any parson in Pimlico or St. James's were to order the beadles to bring him into the middle aisle, and there set him in an armchair, and make a text of him, and preach about him to the congregation, could be turned to a wholesome use for once in his life, and might be surprised to find that some good thoughts came out of him. But we are wandering from our text, the honest Major, who sits all this while with his feet cooling in the bath: Morgan takes them out of that place of purification, and dries them daintily, and proceeds to set the old gentleman on his legs, with waistband and wig, starched cravat, and spotless boots and gloves.

It was during these hours of the toilet that Morgan and his employer had their confidential conversations, for they did not meet much at other times of the day — the Major abhorring the society of his own chairs and tables in his lodgings; and Morgan, his master's toilet over and letters delivered, had his time very much on his own hands.

This spare time the active and well-mannered gentleman bestowed among the valets and butlers of the nobility, his acquaintance; and Morgan Pendennis, as he was styled, for, by such compound names, gentlemen's gentlemen are called in their private circles, was a frequent and welcome guest at some of the very highest tables in this town. He was a member of two influential clubs in Mayfair and Pimlico; and he was thus enabled to know the whole gossip of the town, and entertain his master very agreeably during the two hours' toilet conversation. He knew a hundred tales and legends regarding persons of the very highest ton, whose valets canvass their august secrets, just, my dear Madam, as our own parlour-maids and dependants in the kitchen discuss our characters, our stinginess and generosity, our pecuniary means or embarrassments, and our little domestic or connubial tiffs and quarrels. If I leave this manuscript open on my table, I have not the slightest doubt Betty will read it, and they will talk it over in the lower regions to-night; and tomorrow she will bring in my breakfast with a face of such entire imperturbable innocence, that no mortal could suppose her guilty of playing the spy. If you and the Captain have high words upon any subject, which is just possible, the circumstances of the quarrel, and the characters of both of you, will be discussed with impartial eloquence over the kitchen tea-table; and if Mrs. Smith's maid should by chance be taking a dish of tea with yours, her presence will not undoubtedly act as a restraint upon the discussion in question; her opinion will be given with candour; and the next day her mistress will probably know that Captain and Mrs. Jones have been a quarrelling as usual. Nothing is secret. Take it as a rule that John knows everything; and as in our humble world so in the greatest: a duke is no more a hero to his valet-de-chambre than you or I; and his Grace's Man at his club, in company doubtless with other Men of equal social rank, talks over his master's character and affairs with the ingenuous truthfulness which befits gentlemen who are met together in confidence. Who is a niggard and

screws up his money-boxes: who is in the hands of the money-lenders, and is putting his noble name on the back of bills of exchange: who is intimate with whose wife: who wants whom to marry her daughter, and which he won't, no not at any price:— all these facts gentlemen's confidential gentlemen discuss confidentially, and are known and examined by every person who has any claim to rank in genteel society. In a word, if old Pendennis himself was said to know everything, and was at once admirably scandalous and delightfully discreet; it is but justice to Morgan to say, that a great deal of his master's information was supplied to that worthy man by his valet, who went out and foraged knowledge for him. Indeed, what more effectual plan is there to get a knowledge of London society, than to begin at the foundation — that is, at the kitchen floor?

So Mr. Morgan and his employer conversed as the latter's toilet proceeded. There had been a drawing-room on the previous day, and the Major read among the presentations that of Lady Clavering by Lady Rockminster, and of Miss Amory by her mother Lady Clavering — and in a further part of the paper their dresses were described, with a precision and in a jargon which will puzzle and amuse the antiquary of future generations. The sight of these names carried Pendennis back to the country. "How long have the Claverings been in London?" he asked; "pray, Morgan, have you seen any of their people?"

"Sir Francis have sent away his foring man, sir," Mr. Morgan replied; "and have took a friend of mine as own man, sir. Indeed he applied on my reckmendation. You may recklect Towler, sir — tall red-aired man — but dyes his air. Was groom of the chambers in Lord Levant's family till his Lordship broke hup. It's a fall for Towler, sir; but pore men can't be particklar," said the valet, with a pathetic voice.

"Devilish hard on Towler, by gad!" said the Major, amused, "and not pleasant for Lord Levant — he, he!"

"Always knew it was coming, sir. I spoke to you of it Michaelmas was four years: when her Ladyship put the diamonds in pawn. It was Towler, sir, took 'em in two cabs to Dobree's — and a good deal of the plate went the same way. Don't you remember seeing of it at Blackwall, with the Levant arms and coronick, and Lord Levant settn oppsit to it at the Marquis of Steyne's dinner? Beg your pardon; did I cut you, sir?"

Morgan was now operating upon the Major's chin — he continued the theme while strapping the skilful razor. "They've took a house in Grosvenor Place, and are coming out strong, sir. Her Ladyship's going to give three parties, besides a dinner a week, sir. Her fortune won't stand it — can't stand it."

"Gad, she had a devilish good cook when I was at Fairoaks," the Major said, with very little compassion for the widow Amory's fortune.

"Marobblan was his name, sir; Marobblan's gone away, sir," Morgan said — and the Major, this time, with hearty sympathy, said, "he was devilish sorry to lose him."

"There's been a tremenjuous row about that Mosseer Marobblan," Morgan continued "At a ball at Baymouth, sir, bless his impadence, he challenged Mr. Harthur to fight a jewel, sir, which Mr. Arthur was very near knocking him down, and pitchin' him outawinder, and serve him right; but Chevalier Strong, sir, came up and stopped the shindy — I beg pardon, the holtercation, sir — them French cooks has as much pride and hinsolence as if they was real gentlemen."

"I heard something of that quarrel," said the Major; "but Mirobolant was not turned off for that?"

"No, sir — that affair, sir, which Mr. Harthur forgave it him and beayved most handsome, was hushed hup: it was about Miss Hamory, sir, that he ad is dismissal. Those French fellers, they fancy everybody is in love with 'em; and he climbed up the large grape vine to her winder, sir, and was a trying to get in, when he was caught, sir; and Mr. Strong came out, and they got the garden-engine and played on him, and there was no end of a row, sir."

"Confound his impudence! You don't mean to say Miss Amory encouraged him," cried the Major, amazed at a peculiar expression in Mr. Morgan's countenance.

Morgan resumed his imperturbable demeanour. "Know nothing about it, sir. Servants don't know them kind of things the least. Most probbly there was nothing in it — so many lies is told about families — Marobblan went away, bag and baggage, saucepans, and pianna, and all — the feller ad a pianna, and wrote potry in French, and he took a lodging at Clavering, and he hankered about the primises, and it was said that Madam Fribsy, the milliner, brought letters to Miss Hamory, though I don't believe a word about it; nor that he tried to pison hisself with charcoal, which it was all a humbug betwist him and Madam Fribsy; and he was nearly shot by the keeper in the park."

In the course of that very day, it chanced that the Major had stationed himself in the great window of Bays's Club in

Saint James's Street, at the hour in the afternoon when you see a half-score of respectable old bucks similarly recreating themselves (Bays's is rather an old-fashioned place of resort now, and many of its members more than middle-aged; but in the time of the Prince Regent, these old fellows occupied the same window, and were some of the very greatest dandies in this empire)— Major Pendennis was looking from the great window, and spied his nephew Arthur walking down the street in company with his friend Mr. Popjoy.

"Look!" said Popjoy to Pen, as they passed, "did you ever pass Bays's at four o'clock, without seeing that collection of old fogies? It's a regular museum. They ought to be cast in wax, and set up at Madame Tussaud's —"

"— In a chamber of old horrors by themselves," Pen said, laughing.

"— In the chamber of horrors! Gad, doosid good!" Pop cried. They are old rogues, most of 'em, and no mistake. There's old Blondel; there's my Uncle Colchicum, the most confounded old sinner in Europe; there's — hullo! there's somebody rapping the window and nodding at us."

"It's my uncle, the Major," said Pen. "Is he an old sinner too?"

"Notorious old rogue," Pop said, wagging his head. ("Notowious old wogue," he pronounced the words, thereby rendering them much more emphatic.)—"He's beckoning you in; he wants to speak to you."

"Come in too," Pen said.

"— Can't," replied the other. "Cut uncle Col. two years ago, about Mademoiselle Frangipane — Ta, ta," and the young sinner took leave of Pen, and the club of the elder criminals, and sauntered into Blacquiere's, an adjacent establishment, frequented by reprobates of his own age.

Colchicum, Blondel, and the senior bucks had just been conversing about the Clavering family, whose appearance in London had formed the subject of Major Pendennis's morning conversation with his valet. Mr. Blondel's house was next to that of Sir Francis Clavering, in Grosvenor Place: giving very good dinners himself, he had remarked some activity in his neighbour's kitchen. Sir Francis, indeed, had a new chef, who had come in more than once and dressed Mr. Blondel's dinner for him; that gentleman having only a remarkably expert female artist permanently engaged in his establishment, and employing such chiefs of note as happened to be free on the occasion of his grand banquets. "They go to a devilish expense and see devilish bad company as yet, I hear," Mr. Blondel said, "they scour the streets, by gad, to get people to dine with 'em. Champignon says it breaks his heart to serve up a dinner to their society. What a shame it is that those low people should have money at all," cried Mr. Blondel, whose grandfather had been a reputable leather-breeches maker, and whose father had lent money to the Princes.

"I wish I had fallen in with the widow myself" sighed Lord Colchicum, "and not been laid up with that confounded gout at Leghorn — I would have married the woman myself. — I'm told she has six hundred thousand pounds in the Threes."

"Not quite so much as that — I knew her family in India,"— Major Pendennis said, "I knew her family in India; her father was an enormously rich old indigo-planter — know all about her; — Clavering has the next estate to ours in the country. — Ha! there's my nephew walking with"— "With mine — the infernal young scamp," said Lord Colchicum glowering at Popjoy out of his heavy eyebrows; and he turned away from the window as Major Pendennis tapped upon it.

The Major was in high good-humour. The sun was bright, the air brisk and invigorating. He had determined upon a visit to Lady Clavering on that day, and bethought him that Arthur would be a good companion for the walk across the Green Park to her ladyship's door. Master Pen was not displeased to accompany his illustrious relative, who pointed out a dozen great men in that brief transit through St. James's Street, and got bows from a Duke at a crossing, a Bishop (on a cob), and a Cabinet Minister with an umbrella. The Duke gave the elder Pendennis a finger of a pipe-clayed glove to shake, which the Major embraced with great veneration; and all Pen's blood tingled as he found himself in actual communication, as it were, with this famous man (for Pen had possession of the Major's left arm, whilst the gentleman's other wing was engaged with his Grace's right) and he wished all Grey Friars' School, all Oxbridge University, all Paternoster Row and the Temple and Laura and his mother at Fair Oaks, could be standing on each side of the street, to see the meeting between him and his uncle, and the most famous duke in Christendom.

"How do, Pendennis? — fine day," were his Grace's remarkable words, and with a nod of his august head he passed on — in a blue frock-coat and spotless white duck trousers, in a white stock, with a shining buckle behind.

Old Pendennis, whose likeness to his Grace has been remarked, began to imitate him unconsciously, after they had

parted, speaking with curt sentences, after the manner of the great man. We have all of us, no doubt, met with more than one military officer who has so imitated the manner of a certain great Captain of the Age; and has, perhaps, changed his own natural character and disposition, because Fate had endowed him with an aquiline nose. In like manner have we not seen many another man pride himself on having a tall forehead and a supposed likeness to Mr. Canning? many another go through life swelling with self-gratification on account of an imagined resemblance (we say “imagined,” because that anybody should be really like that most beautiful and perfect of men is impossible) to the great and revered George IV.: many third parties, who wore low necks to their dresses because they fancied that Lord Byron and themselves were similar in appearance: and has not the grave closed but lately upon poor Tom Bickerstaff, who having no more imagination than Mr. Joseph Hume, looked in the glass and fancied himself like Shakspeare? shaved his forehead so as farther to resemble the immortal bard, wrote tragedies incessantly, and died perfectly crazy — actually perished of his forehead? These or similar freaks of vanity most people who have frequented the world must have seen in their experience. Pen laughed in his roguish sleeve at the manner in which his uncle began to imitate the great man from whom they had just parted but Mr. Pen was as vain in his own way, perhaps, as the elder gentleman, and strutted, with a very consequential air of his own, by the Major’s side.

“Yes, my dear boy,” said the old bachelor, as they sauntered through the Green Park, where many poor children were disporting happily, and errand-boys were playing at toss-halfpenny, and black sheep were grazing in the sunshine, and an actor was learning his part on a bench, and nursery-maids and their charges sauntered here and there, and several couples were walking in a leisurely manner; “yes, depend on it, my boy; for a poor man, there is nothing like having good acquaintances. Who were those men, with whom you saw me in the bow-window at Bays’s? Two were Peers of the realm. Hobananob will be a Peer, as soon as his grand-uncle dies, and he has had his third seizure; and of the other four, not one has less than his seven thousand a year. Did you see that dark blue brougham, with that tremendous stepping horse, waiting at the door of the club? You’ll know it again. It is Sir Hugh Trumpington’s; he was never known to walk in his life; never appears in the streets on foot — never: and if he is going two doors off, to see his mother, the old dowager (to whom I shall certainly introduce you, for she receives some of the best company in London), gad, sir — he mounts his horse at No. 23, and dismounts again at No. 25 A. He is now upstairs, at Bays’s, playing picquet with Count Punter: he is the second-best player in England — as well he may be; for he plays every day of his life, except Sundays (for Sir Hugh is an uncommonly religious man) from half-past three till half-past seven, when he dresses for dinner.

“A very pious manner of spending his time,” Pen said, laughing and thinking that his uncle was falling into the twaddling state.

“Gad, sir, that is not the question. A man of his estate may employ his time as he chooses. When you are a baronet, a county member, with ten thousand acres of the best land in Cheshire, and such a place as Trumpington (though he never goes there), you may do as you like.”

“And so that was his brougham, sir, was it?” the nephew said with almost a sneer.

“His brougham — O ay, yes! — and that brings me back to my point — revenons a nos moutons. Yes, begad! revenons a nous moutons. Well, that brougham is mine if I choose, between four and seven. Just as much mine as if I jobbed it from Tilbury’s, begad, for thirty pound a month. Sir Hugh is the best natured fellow in the world; and if it hadn’t been so fine an afternoon as it is, you and I would have been in that brougham at this very minute on our way to Grosvenor Place. That is the benefit of knowing rich men; — I dine for nothing, sir; — I go into the country, and I’m mounted for nothing. Other fellows keep hounds and gamekeepers for me. Sic vos, non vobis, as we used to say at Grey Friars, hey? I’m of the opinion of my old friend Leech, of the Forty-fourth; and a devilish good shrewd fellow he was, as most Scotchmen are. Gad, sir, Leech used to say, ‘He was so poor that he couldn’t afford to know a poor man.’”

“You don’t act up to your principles, uncle,” Pen said good-naturedly.

“Up to my principles; how, sir?” the Major asked, rather testily.

“You would have cut me in Saint James’s Street, sir,” Pen said, “were your practice not more benevolent than your theory; you who live with dukes and magnates of the land, and would take no notice of a poor devil like me.” By which speech we may see that Mr. Pen was getting on in the world, and could flatter as well as laugh in his sleeve.

Major Pendennis was appeased instantly, and very much pleased. He tapped affectionately his nephew’s arm on which he was leaning, and said — “you, sir, you are my flesh and blood! Hang it, sir, I’ve been very proud of you and very fond of

you, but for your confounded follies and extravagances — and wild oats, sir, which I hope you've sown 'em. I hope you've sown 'em; begad! My object, Arthur, is to make a man of you — to see you well placed in the world, as becomes one of your name and my own, sir. You have got yourself a little reputation by your literary talents, which I am very far from undervaluing, though in my time, begad, poetry and genius and that sort of thing were devilish disreputable. There was poor Byron, for instance, who ruined himself, and contracted the worst habits by living with poets and newspaper-writers, and people of that kind: But the times are changed now — there's a run upon literature — clever fellows get into the best houses in town, begad! Tempora mutantur, sir; and by Jove, I suppose whatever is is right, as Shakspeare says."

Pen did not think fit to tell his uncle who was the author who had made use of that remarkable phrase, and here descending from the Green Park, the pair made their way into Grosvenor Place, and to the door of the mansion occupied there by Sir Francis and Lady Clavering.

The dining-room shutters of this handsome mansion were freshly gilded; the knockers shone gorgeous upon the newly painted door; the balcony before the drawing-room bloomed with a portable garden of the most beautiful plants, and with flowers, white, and pink, and scarlet; the windows of the upper room (the sacred chamber and dressing-room of my lady, doubtless), and even a pretty little casement of the third story, which keen-sighted Mr. Pen presumed to belong to the virgin bedroom of Miss Blanche Amory, were similarly adorned with floral ornaments, and the whole exterior face of the house presented the most brilliant aspect which fresh new paint, shining plate-glass, newly cleaned bricks, and spotless mortar, could offer to the beholder.

"How Strong must have rejoiced in organising all this splendour," thought Pen. He recognised the Chevalier's genius in the magnificence before him.

"Lady Clavering is going out for her drive," the Major said. "We shall only have to leave our pasteboards, Arthur." He used the word 'pasteboards,' having heard it from some of the ingenuous youth of the nobility about town, and as a modern phrase suited to Pen's tender years. Indeed, as the two gentlemen reached the door, a landau drove up, a magnificent yellow carriage, lined with brocade or satin of a faint cream colour, drawn by wonderful grey horses, with flaming ribbons, and harness blazing all over with crests: no less than three of these heraldic emblems surmounted the coats-of-arms on the panels, and these shields contained a prodigious number of quarterings, betokening the antiquity and splendour of the house of Clavering and Snell. A coachman in a tight silver wig surmounted the magnificent hammer-cloth (whereon the same arms were worked in bullion), and controlled the prancing greys — a young man still, but of a solemn countenance, with a laced waistcoat and buckles in his shoes — little buckles, unlike those which John and Jeames, the footmen, wear, and which we know are large, and spread elegantly over the foot.

One of the leaves of the hall door was opened, and John — one of the largest of his race — was leaning against the door-pillar with his ambrosial hair powdered, his legs crossed; beautiful, silk-stockinged; in his hand his cane, gold-headed, dolichoskion. Jeames was invisible, but near at hand, waiting in the hall, with the gentleman who does not wear livery, and ready to fling down the roll of hair-cloth over which her ladyship was to step to her carriage. These things and men, the which to tell of demands time, are seen in the glance of a practised eye: and, in fact, the Major and Pen had scarcely crossed the street, when the second battant of the door flew open; the horse-hair carpet tumbled down the door-steps to those of the carriage; John was opening it on one side of the emblazoned door, and Jeames on the other, the two ladies, attired in the highest style of fashion, and accompanied by a third, who carried a Blenheim spaniel, yelping in a light blue ribbon, came forth to ascend the carriage.

Miss Amory was the first to enter, which she did with aerial lightness, and took the place which she liked best. Lady Clavering next followed, but her ladyship was more mature of age and heavy of foot, and one of those feet, attired in a green satin boot, with some part of a stocking, which was very fine, whatever the ankle might be which it encircled, might be seen swaying on the carriage-step, as her ladyship leaned for support on the arm of the unbending Jeames, by the enraptured observer of female beauty who happened to be passing at the time of this imposing ceremonial.

The Pendennises senior and junior beheld those charms as they came up to the door — the Major looking grave and courtly, and Pen somewhat abashed at the carriage and its owners; for he thought of sundry little passages at Clavering, which made his heart beat rather quick.

At that moment Lady Clavering, looking round the pair — she was on the first carriage-step, and would have been in the vehicle in another second, but she gave a start backwards (which caused some of the powder to fly from the hair of

ambrosial Jeames), and crying out, "Lor, if it isn't Arthur Pendennis and the old Major!" jumped back to terra firma directly, and holding out two fat hands, encased in tight orange-coloured gloves, the good-natured woman warmly greeted the Major and his nephew.

"Come in both of you. — Why haven't you been before? — Get out, Blanche, and come and see your old friends. — O, I'm so glad to see you. We've been waitin and waitin for you ever so long. Come in, luncheon ain't gone down," cried out this hospitable lady, squeezing Pen's hand in both hers (she had dropped the Major's after a brief wrench of recognition), and Blanche, casting up her eyes towards the chimneys, descended from the carriage presently, with a timid, blushing, appealing look, and gave a little hand to Major Pendennis.

The companion with the spaniel looked about irresolute, and doubting whether she should not take Fido his airing; but she too turned right about face and entered the house, after Lady Clavering, her daughter, and the two gentlemen. And the carriage, with the prancing greys, was left unoccupied, save by the coachman in the silver wig.



CHAPTER XXXVIII

IN WHICH THE SYLPH REAPPEARS

Better folks than Morgan, the valet, were not so well instructed as that gentleman, regarding the amount of Lady Clavering's riches; and the legend in London, upon her Ladyship's arrival in the polite metropolis, was, that her fortune was enormous. Indigo factories, opium clippers, banks overflowing with rupees, diamonds and jewels of native princes, and vast sums of interest paid by them for loans contracted by themselves or their predecessors to Lady Clavering's father, were mentioned as sources of her wealth. Her account at her London banker's was positively known, and the sum embraced so many cyphers as to create as many O's of admiration in the wondering hearer. It was a known fact that an envoy from an Indian Prince, a Colonel Altamont, the Nawaub of Lucknow's prime favourite, an extraordinary man, who had, it was said, embraced Mahometanism, and undergone a thousand wild and perilous adventures was at present in this country, trying to negotiate with the Begum Clavering, the sale of the Nawaub's celebrated nose-ring diamond, 'the light of the Dewan.'

Under the title of the Begum, Lady Clavering's fame began to spread in London before she herself descended upon the Capital, and as it has been the boast of Delolme, and Blackstone, and all panegyrists of the British Constitution, that we admit into our aristocracy merit of every kind, and that the lowliest-born man, if he but deserve it, may wear the robes of a peer, and sit alongside of a Cavendish or a Stanley: so it ought to be the boast of our good society, that haughty though it be, naturally jealous of its privileges, and careful who shall be admitted into its circle, yet, if an individual be but rich enough, all barriers are instantly removed, and he or she is welcomed, as from his wealth he merits to be. This fact shows our British independence and honest feeling — our higher orders are not such mere haughty aristocrats as the ignorant represent them: on the contrary, if a man have money they will hold out their hands to him, eat his dinners, dance at his balls, marry his daughters, or give their own lovely girls to his sons, as affably as your commonest roturier would do.

As he had superintended the arrangements of the country mansion, our friend, the Chevalier Strong, gave the benefit of his taste and advice to the fashionable London upholsterers, who prepared the town house for the reception of the Clavering family. In the decoration of this elegant abode, honest Strong's soul rejoiced as much as if he had been himself its proprietor. He hung and re-hung the pictures, he studied the positions of sofas, he had interviews with wine merchants and purveyors who were to supply the new establishment; and at the same time the Baronet's factotum and confidential friend took the opportunity of furnishing his own chambers, and stocking his snug little cellar: his friends complimented him upon the neatness of the former; and the select guests who came in to share Strong's cutlet new found a bottle of excellent claret to accompany the meal. The Chevalier was now, as he said, "in clover:" he had a very comfortable set of rooms in Shepherd's Inn. He was waited on by a former Spanish Legionary and comrade of his whom he had left at a breach of a Spanish fort, and found at a crossing in Tottenham-court Road, and whom he had elevated to the rank of body-servant to himself and to the chum who, at present, shared his lodgings. This was no other than the favourite of the Nawaub of Lucknow, the valiant Colonel Altamont.

No man was less curious, or at any rate, more discreet, than Ned Strong, and he did not care to inquire into the mysterious connexion which, very soon after their first meeting at Baymouth was established between Sir Francis Clavering and the envoy of the Nawaub. The latter knew some secret regarding the former, which put Clavering into his power, somehow; and Strong, who knew that his patron's early life had been rather irregular, and that his career with his regiment in India had not been brilliant, supposed that the Colonel, who swore he knew Clavering well at Calcutta, had some hold upon Sir Francis, to which the latter was forced to yield. In truth, Strong had long understood Sir Francis Clavering's character, as that of a man utterly weak in purpose, in principle, and intellect, a moral and physical trifler and poltroon.

With poor Clavering, his Excellency had had one or two interviews after their Baymouth meeting, the nature of which conversations the Baronet did not confide to Strong: although he sent letters to Altamont by that gentleman, who was his ambassador in all sorts of affairs. On one of these occasions the Nawaub's envoy must have been in an exceeding ill humour; for he crushed Clavering's letter in his hand, and said with his own particular manner and emphasis:—

"A hundred, be hanged. I'll have no more letters nor no more shilly-shally. Tell Clavering I'll have a thousand, or by

Jove I'll split, and burst him all to atoms. Let him give me a thousand and I'll go abroad, and I give you my honour as a gentleman, I'll not ask him for no more for a year. Give him that message from me, Strong, my boy; and tell him if the money ain't here next Friday at twelve o'clock, as sure as my name's what it is, I'll have a paragraph in the newspaper on Saturday, and next week I'll blow up the whole concern."

Strong carried back these words to his principal, on whom their effect was such that actually on the day and hour appointed, the Chevalier made his appearance once more at Altamont's hotel at Baymouth, with the sum of money required. Altamont was a gentleman, he said, and behaved as such; he paid his bill at the Inn, and the Baymouth paper announced his departure on a foreign tour. Strong saw him embark at Dover. "It must be forgery at the very least," he thought, "that has put Clavering into this fellow's power, and the Colonel has got the bill."

Before the year was out, however, this happy country saw the Colonel once more upon its shores. A confounded run on the red had finished him, he said, at Baden Baden: no gentleman could stand against a colour coming up fourteen times. He had been obliged to draw upon Sir Francis Clavering for means of returning home: and Clavering, though pressed for money (for he had election expenses, had set up his establishment in the country and was engaged in furnishing his London house), yet found means to accept Colonel Altamont's bill, though evidently very much against his will; for in Strong's hearing, Sir Francis wished to heaven, with many curses, that the Colonel could have been locked up in a debtor's goal in Germany for life, so that he might never be troubled again.

These sums for the Colonel Sir Francis was obliged to raise without the knowledge of his wife; for though perfectly liberal, nay, sumptuous in her expenditure, the good lady had inherited a tolerable aptitude for business along with the large fortune of her father, Snell, and gave to her husband only such a handsome allowance as she thought befitted a gentleman of his rank. Now and again she would give him a present, or pay an outstanding gambling debt; but she always exacted a pretty accurate account of the moneys so required; and respecting the subsidies to the Colonel, Clavering fairly told Strong that he couldn't speak to his wife.

Part of Mr. Strong's business in life was to procure this money and other sums, for his patron. And in the Chevalier's apartments, in Shepherd's Inn, many negotiations took place between gentlemen of the moneyed world and Sir Francis Clavering, and many valuable bank-notes and pieces of stamped paper were passed between them. When a man has been in the habit of getting in debt from his early youth, and of exchanging his promises to pay at twelve months against present sums of money, it would seem as if no piece of good fortune ever permanently benefited him: a little while after the advent of prosperity, the money-lender is pretty certain to be in the house again, and the bills with the old signature in the market. Clavering found it more convenient to see these gentry at Strong's lodgings than at his own; and such was the Chevalier's friendship for the Baronet that although he did not possess a shilling of his own, his name might be seen as the drawer of almost all the bills of exchange which Sir Francis Clavering accepted. Having drawn Clavering's bills, he got them discounted "in the City." When they became due he parleyed with the bill-holders, and gave them instalments of their debt, or got time in exchange for fresh acceptances. Regularly or irregularly, gentlemen must live somehow: and as we read how, the other day, at Comorn, the troops forming that garrison were gay and lively, acted plays, danced at balls, and consumed their rations; though menaced with an assault from the enemy without the walls, and with a gallows if the Austrians were successful — so there are hundreds of gallant spirits in this town, walking about in good spirits, dining every day in tolerable gaiety and plenty, and going to sleep comfortably; with a bailiff always more or less near, and a rope of debt round their necks — the which trifling inconveniences, Ned Strong, the old soldier, bore very easily.

But we shall have another opportunity of making acquaintance with these and some other interesting inhabitants of Shepherd's Inn, and in the meanwhile are keeping Lady Clavering and her friends too long waiting on the door-steps of Grosvenor Place.

First they went into the gorgeous dining-room, fitted up, Lady Clavering couldn't for goodness gracious tell why, in the middle-aged style, "unless," said her good-natured ladyship, laughing, "because me and Clavering are middle-aged people;" — and here they were offered the copious remains of the luncheon of which Lady Clavering and Blanche had just partaken. When nobody was near, our little Sylphide, who scarcely ate at dinner more than the six grains of rice of Amina, the friend of the Ghouls in the Arabian Nights, was most active with her knife and fork, and consumed a very substantial portion of mutton cutlets: in which piece of hypocrisy it is believed she resembled other young ladies of fashion. Pen and his uncle declined the refectation, but they admired the dining-room with fitting compliments, and pronounced it "very chaste," that being the proper phrase. There were, indeed, high-backed Dutch chairs of the seventeenth century; there was

a sculptured carved buffet of the sixteenth; there was a sideboard robbed out of the carved work of a church in the Low Countries, and a large brass cathedral lamp over the round oak table; there were old family portraits from Wardour Street and tapestry from France, bits of armour, double-handed swords and battle-axes made of carton-pierre, looking-glasses, statuettes of saints, and Dresden china — nothing, in a word, could be chaster. Behind the dining-room was the library, fitted with busts and books all of a size, and wonderful easy-chairs, and solemn bronzes in the severe classic style. Here it was that, guarded by double doors, Sir Francis smoked cigars, and read Bell's Life in London, and went to sleep after dinner, when he was not smoking over the billiard-table at his clubs, or punting at the gambling-houses in Saint James's.

But what could equal the chaste splendour of the drawing-rooms? — the carpets were so magnificently fluffy that your foot made no more noise on them than your shadow: on their white ground bloomed roses and tulips as big as warming-pans: about the room were high chairs and low chairs, bandy-legged chairs, chairs so attenuated that it was a wonder any but a sylph could sit upon them, marquetterie-tables covered with marvellous gimcracks, china ornaments of all ages and countries, bronzes, gilt daggers, Books of Beauty, yataghans, Turkish papooshes and boxes of Parisian bonbons. Wherever you sate down there were Dresden shepherds and shepherdesses convenient at your elbow; there were, moreover, light blue poodles and ducks and cocks and hens in porcelain; there were nymphs by Boucher, and shepherdesses by Greuze, very chaste indeed; there were muslin curtains and brocade curtains, gilt cages with parroquets and love-birds, two squealing cockatoos, each out-squealing and out-chattering the other; a clock singing tunes on a console-table, and another booming the hours like Great Tom, on the mantelpiece — there was, in a word, everything that comfort could desire, and the most elegant taste devise. A London drawing-room, fitted up without regard to expense, is surely one of the noblest and most curious sights of the present day. The Romans of the Lower Empire, the dear Marchionesses and Countesses of Louis XV., could scarcely have had a finer taste than our modern folks exhibit; and everybody who saw Lady Clavering's reception rooms, was forced to confess that they were most elegant; and that the prettiest rooms in London — Lady Harley Quin's, Lady Hanway Wardour's, or Mrs. Hodge-Podgson's own; the great Railroad Croesus' wife, were not fitted up with a more consummate "chastity."

Poor Lady Clavering, meanwhile, knew little regarding these things, and had a sad want of respect for the splendours around her. "I only know they cost a precious deal of money, Major," she said to her guest, "and that I don't advise you to try one of them gossamer gilt chairs: I came down on one the night we gave our second dinner-party. Why didn't you come and see us before? We'd have asked you to it."

"You would have liked to see Mamma break a chair, wouldn't you, Mr. Pendennis?" dear Blanche said with a sneer. She was angry because Pen was talking and laughing with Mamma, because Mamma had made a number of blunders in describing the house — for a hundred other good reasons.

"I should like to have been by to give Lady Clavering my arm if she had need of it," Pen answered, with a bow and a blush.

"Quel preux Chevalier!" cried the Sylphide, tossing up her little head.

"I have a fellow-feeling with those who fall, remember," Pen said. "I suffered myself very much from doing so once."

"And you went home to Laura to console you," said Miss Amory. Pen winced. He did not like the remembrance of the consolation which Laura had given to him, nor was he very well pleased to find that his rebuff in that quarter was known to the world; so as he had nothing to say in reply, he began to be immensely interested in the furniture round about him, and to praise Lady Clavering's taste with all his might.

"No, don't praise me," said honest Lady Clavering, "it's all the upholsterer's doings and Captain Strong's, they did it all while we was at the Park — and — and — Lady Rockminster has been here and says the salongs are very well," said Lady Clavering, with an air and tone of great deference.

"My cousin Laura has been staying with her," Pen said.

"It's not the dowager: it is the Lady Rockminster."

"Indeed!" cried Major Pendennis, when he heard this great name of fashion. "If you have her ladyship's approval, Lady Clavering, you cannot be far wrong. No, no, you cannot be far wrong. Lady Rockminster, I should say, Arthur, is the very centre of the circle of fashion and taste. The rooms are beautiful indeed!" and the Major's voice hushed as he spoke of this great lady, and he looked round and surveyed the apartments awfully and respectfully, as if he had been at church.

"Yes, Lady Rockminster has took us up," said Lady Clavering.

“Taken us up, Mamma,” cried Blanche, in a shrill voice.

“Well, taken us up, then,” said my lady; “it’s very kind of her, and I dare say we shall like it when we git used to it, only at first one don’t fancy being took — well, taken up, at all. She is going to give our balls for us; and wants to invite all our dinners. But I won’t stand that. I will have my old friends and I won’t let her send all the cards out, and sit mum at the head of my own table. You must come to me, Arthur and Major — come, let me see, on the 14th. — It ain’t one of our grand dinners, Blanche,” she said, looking round at her daughter, who bit her lips and frowned very savagely for a sylphide.

The Major, with a smile and a bow, said he would much rather come to a quiet meeting than to a grand dinner. He had had enough of those large entertainments, and preferred the simplicity of the home circle.

“I always think a dinner’s the best the second day,” said Lady Claverling, thinking to mend her first speech. “On the 14th we’ll be quite a snug little party;” at which second blunder, Miss Blanche clasped her hands in despair, and said “O, mamma, vous etes incorrigible.” Major Pendennis vowed that he liked snug dinners of all things in the world, and confounded her ladyship’s impudence for daring to ask such a man as him to a second day’s dinner. But he was a man of an economical turn of mind, and bethinking himself that he could throw over these people if anything better should offer, he accepted with the blandest air. As for Pen, he was not a diner-out of thirty years’ standing as yet, and the idea of a fine feast in a fine house was still perfectly welcome to him.

“What was that pretty little quarrel which engaged itself between your worship and Miss Amory?” the Major asked of Pen, as they walked away together. “I thought you used to au mieux in that quarter.”

“Used to be,” answered Pen, with a dandified air “is a vague phrase regarding a woman. Was and is are two very different terms, sir, as regards women’s hearts especially.

“Egad, they change as we do,” cried the elder. “When we took the Cape of Good Hope, I recollect there was a lady who talked poisoning herself for your humble servant; and, begad, in three months she ran away from her husband with somebody else. Don’t get yourself entangled with that Miss Amory, She is forward, affected, and under-bred; and her character is somewhat — never mind what. But don’t think of her; ten thousand pound won’t do for you. What, my good fellow, is ten thousand pound? I would scarcely pay that girl’s milliner’s bill with the interest of the money.”

“You seem to be a connoisseur in millinery, Uncle” Pen said.

“I was, sir, I was,” replied the senior; “and the old war-horse, you know, never hears the sound of a trumpet, but he begins to he, he! — you understand,”— and he gave a killing and somewhat superannuated leer and bow to a carriage that passed them and entered the Park.

“Lady Catherine Martingale’s carriage” he said “mons’ous fine girls the daughters, though, gad, I remember their mother a thousand times handsomer. No, Arthur, my dear fellow, with your person and expectations, you ought to make a good coup in marriage some day or other; and though I wouldn’t have this repeated at Fair Oaks, you rogue, ha! ha! a reputation for a little wickedness, and for being an homme dange-reux, don’t hurt a young fellow with the women. They like it, sir, they hate a milksop — young men must be young men, you know. But for marriage,” continued the veteran moralist, “that is a very different matter. Marry a woman with money. I’ve told you before it is as easy to get a rich wife as a poor one; and a doosed deal more comfortable to sit down to a well-cooked dinner, with your little entrees nicely served, than to have nothing but a damned cold leg of mutton between you and your wife. We shall have a good dinner on the 14th, when we dine with Sir Francis Claverling: stick to that, my boy, in your relations with the family. Cultivate ’em, but keep ’em for dining. No more of your youthful follies and nonsense about love in a cottage.”

“It must be a cottage with a double coach-house, a cottage of gentility, sir,” said Pen, quoting the hackneyed ballad of the Devil’s Walk: but his Uncle did not know that poem (though, perhaps, he might be leading Pen upon the very promenade in question), and went on with his philosophical remarks, very much pleased with the aptness of the pupil to whom he addressed them. Indeed Arthur Pendennis was a clever fellow, who took his colour very readily from his neighbour, and found the adaptation only too easy.

Warrington, the grumbler, growled out that Pen was becoming such a puppy that soon there would be no bearing him. But the truth is, the young man’s success and dashing manners pleased his elder companion. He liked to see Pen gay and spirited, and brimful of health, and life, and hope; as a man who has long since left off being amused with clown and harlequin, still gets a pleasure in watching a child at a pantomime. Mr. Pen’s former sulkiness disappeared with his better fortune: and he bloomed as the sun began to shine upon him.

CHAPTER XXXIX

COLONEL ALTAMONT APPEARS AND DISAPPEARS

On the day appointed, Major Pendennis, who had formed no better engagement, and Arthur who desired none, arrived together to dine with Sir Francis Clavering. The only tenants of the drawing-room when Pen and his uncle reached it, were Sir Francis and his wife, and our friend Captain Strong, whom Arthur was very glad to see, though the Major looked very sulkily at Strong, being by no means well pleased to sit down to dinner with Clavering's d ——— house-steward, as he irreverently called Strong. But Mr. Welbore Welbore, Clavering's country neighbour and brother member of Parliament, speedily arriving, Pendennis the elder was somewhat appeased, for Welbore, though perfectly dull, and taking no more part in the conversation at dinner than the footman behind his chair, was a respectable country gentleman of ancient family and seven thousand a year: and the Major felt always at ease in such society. To these were added other persons of note: the Dowager Lady Rockminster, who had her reasons for being well with the Clavering family, and the Lady Agnes Foker, with her son Mr. Harry, our old acquaintance. Mr. Pynsent could not come, his parliamentary duties keeping him at the House, duties which sate upon the two other senators very lightly. Miss Blanche Amory was the last of the company who made her appearance. She was dressed in a killing white silk dress which displayed her pearly shoulders to the utmost advantage. Foker whisked to Pen, who regarded her with eyes of evident admiration, that he considered her "a stunner." She chose to be very gracious to Arthur upon this day, and held out her hand most cordially, and talked about dear Fair Oaks, and asked for dear Laura and his mother, and said she was longing to go back to the country, and in fact was entirely simple, affectionate, and artless.

Harry Foker thought he had never seen anybody so amiable and delightful. Not accustomed much to the society of ladies, and ordinarily being dumb to their presence, he found that he could speak before Miss Amory, and became uncommonly lively and talkative, even before the dinner was announced and the party descended to the lower rooms. He would have longed to give his arm to the fair Blanche, and conduct her down the broad carpeted stair; but she fell to the lot of Pen upon this occasion, Mr. Foker being appointed to escort Mrs. Welbore Welbore, in consequence of his superior rank as an earl's grandson.

But though he was separated from the object of his desire during the passage downstairs, the delighted Foker found himself by Miss Amory's side at the dinner-table, and flattered himself that he had manoeuvred very well in securing that happy place. It may be that the move was not his, but that it was made by another person. Blanche had thus the two young men, one on each side of her, and each tried to render himself gallant and agreeable.

Foker's mamma, from her place, surveying her darling boy, was surprised at his vivacity. Harry talked constantly to his fair neighbour about the topics of the day.

"Seen Taglioni in the Sylphide, Miss Amory? Bring me that soup-prime of Volile again if you please (this was addressed to the attendant near him), very good: can't think where the soup-primes come from; what becomes of the legs of the fowls, I wonder? She's clipping in the Sylphide, ain't she?" and he began very kindly to hum the pretty air which pervades that prettiest of all ballets, now faded into the past with that most beautiful and gracious of all dancers. Will the young folks ever see anything so charming, anything so classic, anything like Taglioni?

"Miss Amory is a sylph herself," said Mr. Pen.

"What a delightful tenor voice you have, Mr. Foker," said the young lady. "I am sure you have been well taught. I sing a little myself. I should like to sing with you."

Pen remembered that words very similar had been addressed to himself by the young lady, and that she had liked to sing with him in former days. And sneering within himself, he wondered with how many other gentlemen she had sung duets since his time? But he did not think fit to put this awkward question aloud: and only said, with the very tenderest air which he could assume, "I should like to hear you sing again, Miss Blanche. I never heard a voice I liked so well as yours, I think."

"I thought you liked Laura's," said Miss Blanche.

"Laura's is a contralto: and that voice is very often out, you know," Pen said, bitterly. "I have heard a great deal of

music, in London," he continued. "I'm tired of those professional people — they sing too loud — or I have grown too old or too blase. One grows old very soon, in London, Miss Amory. And like all old fellows, I only care for the songs I heard in my youth."

"I like English music best. I don't care for foreign songs much. Get me some saddle of mutton," said Mr. Foker.

"I adore English ballads, of all things," said Miss Amory.

"Sing me one of the old songs after dinner, will you?" said Pen, with an imploring voice.

"Shall I sing you an English song, after dinner?" asked the Sylphide, turning to Mr. Foker. "I will, if you will promise to come up soon:" and she gave him a perfect broadside of her eyes.

"I'll come up after dinner, fast enough," he said, simply. "I don't care about much wine afterwards — I take my whack at dinner — I mean my share, you know; and when I have had as much as I want I toddle up to tea. I'm a domestic character, Miss Amory — my habits are simple — and when I'm pleased I'm generally in a good-humour, ain't I, Pen? — that jelly, if you please — not that one, the other with the cherries inside. How the doose do they get those cherries inside the jellies?" In this way the artless youth prattled on: and Miss Amory listened to him with inexhaustible good-humour. When the ladies took their departure for the upper regions, Blanche made the two young men promise faithfully to quit the table soon, and departed with kind glances to each. She dropped her gloves on Foker's side of the table and her handkerchief on Pen's. Each had had some little attention paid to him: her politeness to Mr. Foker was perhaps a little more encouraging than her kindness to Arthur: but the benevolent little creature did her best to make both the gentlemen happy. Foker caught her last glance as she rushed out of the door; that bright look passed over Mr. Strong's broad white waistcoat and shot straight at Harry Foker's. The door closed on the charmer: he sate down with a sigh, and swallowed a bumper of claret.

As the dinner at which Pen and his uncle took their places was not one of our grand parties, it had been served at a considerably earlier hour than those ceremonial banquets of the London season, which custom has ordained shall scarcely take place before nine o'clock; and, the company being small, and Miss Blanche anxious to betake herself to her piano in the drawing-room, giving constant hints to her mother to retreat — Lady Clavering made that signal very speedily, so that it was quite daylight yet when the ladies reached the upper apartments, from the flower-embroidered balconies of which they could command a view of the two Parks, of the poor couples and children still sauntering in the one, and of the equipages of ladies and the horses of dandies passing through the arch of the other. The sun, in a word had not set behind the elms of Kensington Gardens, and was still gilding the statue erected by the ladies of England in honour of his Grace the Duke of Wellington, when Lady Clavering and her female friends left the gentlemen drinking wine.

The windows of the dining-room were opened to let in the fresh air, and afforded to the passers-by in the street a pleasant, or perhaps, tantalising view of six gentlemen in white waistcoats with a quantity of decanters and a variety of fruits before them — little boys, as they passed and jumped up at the area-railings and took a peep, said to one another, "Hi hi, Jim, shouldn't you like to be there and have a cut of that there pineapple?" — the horses and carriages of the nobility and gentry passed by conveying them to Belgravian toilets: the policeman, with clamping feet patrolled up and down before the mansion: the shades of evening began to fall: the gasman came and lighted the lamps before Sir Francis's door: the butler entered the dining-room, and illuminated the antique gothic chandelier over the antique carved oak dining-table: so that from outside the house you looked inwards upon a night-scene of feasting and wax-candles; and from within you beheld a vision of a calm summer evening, and the wall of Saint James's Park, and the sky above, in which a star or two was just beginning to twinkle.

Jeames, with folded legs, leaning against the door-pillar of his master's abode, looked forth musingly upon the latter tranquil sight: whilst a spectator clinging to the railings examined the former scene. Policeman X passing, gave his attention to neither, but fixed it upon the individual holding by the railings, and gazing into Sir Francis Clavering's dining-room, where Strong was laughing and talking away, making the conversation for the party.

The man at the railing was very gorgeously attired with chains, jewellery, and waistcoats, which the illumination from the house lighted up to great advantage; his boots were shiny; he had brass buttons to his coat, and large white wristbands over his knuckles; and indeed looked so grand, that X imagined he beheld a member of parliament, or a person of consideration before him. Whatever his rank, however, the M.P., or person of consideration, was considerably excited by wine; for he lurched and reeled somewhat in his gait, and his hat was cocked over his wild and bloodshot eyes in a manner

which no sober hat ever could assume. His copious black hair was evidently surreptitious, and his whiskers of the Tyrian purple.

As Strong's laughter, following after one of his own gros mots, came ringing out of window, this gentleman without laughed and sniggered in the queerest way likewise, and he slapped his thigh and winked at Jeames pensive in the portico, as much as to say, "Plush, my boy, isn't that a good story?"

Jeames's attention had been gradually drawn from the moon in the heavens to this sublunary scene; and he was puzzled and alarmed by the appearance of the man in shiny boots. "A holtercation," he remarked afterwards, in the servants'-hall — a "holtercation with a feller in the streets is never no good; and indeed he was not hired for any such purpose." So, having surveyed the man for some time, who went on laughing, reeling, nodding his head with tipsy knowingness, Jeames looked out of the portico, and softly called "Pleaceman," and beckoned to that officer.

X marched up resolute, with one Berlin glove stuck in his belt-side, and Jeames simply pointed with his index finger to the individual who was laughing against the railings. Not one single word more than "Pleaceman" did he say, but stood there in the calm summer evening, pointing calmly: a grand sight.

X advanced to the individual and said, "Now, sir, will you have the kindness to move hon?"

The individual, who was in perfect good-humour, did not appear to bear one word which Policeman X uttered, but nodded and wagged his grinning head at Strong, until his hat almost fell from his head over the area railings.

"Now, sir, move on, do you hear?" cries X, in a much more peremptory tone, and he touched the stranger gently with one of the fingers enclosed in the gauntlets of the Berlin woof.

He of the many rings instantly started, or rather staggered back, into what is called an attitude of self-defence, and in that position began the operation which is entitled 'squaring' at Policeman X, and showed himself brave and warlike, if unsteady. "Hullo! keep your hands off a gentleman," he said, with an oath which need not be repeated.

"Move on out of this," said X, "and don't be a blocking up the pavement, staring into gentlemen's dining-rooms."

"Not stare — ho, ho — not stare — that is a good one," replied the other with a satiric laugh and sneer — "Who's to prevent me from staring, looking at my friends, if I like? not you, old highlows."

"Friends! I dessay. Move on," answered X.

"If you touch me, I'll pitch into you, I will," roared the other. "I tell you I know 'em all — That's Sir Francis Clavering, Baronet, M.P. — I know him, and he knows me — and that's Strong, and that's the young chap that made the row at the ball. I say, Strong, Strong!"

"It's that d ——— Altamont," cried Sir Francis within, with a start and a guilty look; and Strong also, with a look of annoyance, got up from the table, and ran out to the intruder.

A gentleman in a white waistcoat, running out from a dining-room bareheaded, a policeman, and an individual decently attired, engaged in almost fisticuffs on the pavement, were enough to make a crowd, even in that quiet neighbourhood, at half-past eight o'clock in the evening, and a small mob began to assemble before Sir Francis Clavering's door. "For God's sake, come in," Strong said, seizing his acquaintance's arm. "Send for a cab, James, if you please," he added in an under voice to that domestic; and carrying the excited gentleman out of the street, the outer door was closed upon him, and the small crowd began to move away.

Mr. Strong had intended to convey the stranger into Sir Francis's private sitting-room, where the hats of the male guests were awaiting them, and having there soothed his friend by bland conversation, to have carried him off as soon as the cab arrived — but the new-comer was in a great state of wrath at the indignity which had been put upon him; and when Strong would have led him into the second door, said in a tipsy voice, "That ain't the door — that's the dining-room door — where the drink's going on — and I'll go and have some, by Jove; I'll go and have some." At this audacity the butler stood aghast in the hall, and placed himself before the door: but it opened behind him, and the master of the house made his appearance, with anxious looks.

"I will have some — by — I will," the intruder was roaring out, as Sir Francis came forward. "Hullo! Clavering, I say I'm come to have some wine with you; hay! old boy — hay, old corkscrew? Get us a bottle of the yellow seal, you old thief — the very best — a hundred rupees a dozen, and no mistake."

The host reflected a moment over his company. There is only Welbore, Pendennis, and those two lads, he thought —

and with a forced laugh and a piteous look, he said — “Well, Altamont, come in. I am very glad to see you, I’m sure.”

Colonel Altamont, for the intelligent reader has doubtless long ere this discovered in the stranger His Excellency the Ambassador of the Nawaub of Lucknow, reeled into the dining-room, with a triumphant look towards Jeames, the footman, which seemed to say, “There, sir, what do you think of that? Now, am I a gentleman or no?” and sank down into the first vacant chair. Sir Francis Clavering timidly stammered out the Colonel’s name to his guest Mr. Welbore Welbore, and his Excellency began drinking wine forthwith and gazing round upon the company, now with the most wonderful frowns, and anon with the blandest smiles, and hiccapped remarks encomiastic of the drink which he was imbibing.

“Very singular man. Has resided long in a native court in India,” Strong said, with great gravity, the Chevalier’s presence of mind never deserting him — “in those Indian courts they get very singular habits.”

“Very,” said Major Pendennis, drily, and wondering what in goodness’ name was the company into which he had got.

Mr. Foker was pleased with the new-comer. “It’s the man who would sing the Malay song at the Back Kitchen,” he whispered to Pen. “Try this pine, sir,” he then said to Colonel Altamont, it’s uncommonly fine.”

“Pines — I’ve seen ’em feed pigs on pines,” said the Colonel.

“All the Nawaub of Lucknow’s pigs are fed on pines,” Strong whispered to Major Pendennis.

“Oh, of course,” the Major answered. Sir Francis Clavering was, in the meanwhile, endeavouring to make an excuse to his brother-guest for the new-comer’s condition, and muttered something regarding Altamont, that he was an extraordinary character, very eccentric, very — had Indian habits — didn’t understand the rules of English society — to which old Welbore, a shrewd old gentleman, who drank his wine with great regularity, said, “that seemed pretty clear.”

Then the Colonel, seeing Pen’s honest face, regarded it for a while with as much steadiness as became his condition; and said, “I know you, too, young fellow. I remember you. Baymouth ball, by Jingo. Wanted to fight the Frenchman. I remember you;” and he laughed, and he squared with his fists, and seemed hugely amused in the drunken depths of his mind, as these recollections passed, or, rather, reeled across it.

“Mr. Pendennis, you remember Colonel Altamont, at Baymouth?” Strong said: upon which Pen, bowing rather stiffly, said, “he had the pleasure of remembering that circumstance perfectly.”

“What’s his name?” cried the Colonel. Strong named Mr. Pendennis again.

“Pendennis! — Pendennis be hanged!” Altamont roared out to the surprise of every one, and thumping with his fist on the table.

“My name is also Pendennis, sir,” said the Major, whose dignity was exceedingly mortified by the evening’s events — that he, Major Pendennis, should have been asked to such a party, and that a drunken man should have been introduced to it. “My name is Pendennis, and I will be obliged to you not to curse it too loudly.”

The tipsy man turned round to look at him, and as he looked, it appeared as if Colonel Altamont suddenly grew sober. He put his hand across his forehead, and in doing so, displaced somewhat the black wig which he wore; and his eyes stared fiercely at the Major, who, in his turn, like a resolute old warrior as he was, looked at his opponent very keenly and steadily. At the end of the mutual inspection, Altamont began to button up his brass-buttoned coat, and rising up from his chair, suddenly, and to the company’s astonishment, reeled towards the door, and issued from it, followed by Strong: all that the latter heard him utter was — “Captain Beak! Captain Beak, by jingo!”

There had not passed above a quarter of an hour from his strange appearance to his equally sudden departure. The two young men and the baronet’s other guest wondered at the scene, and could find no explanation for it. Clavering seemed exceedingly pale and agitated, and turned with looks of almost terror towards Major Pendennis. The latter had been eyeing his host keenly for a moment or two. “Do you know him?” asked Sir Francis of the Major.

“I am sure I have seen the fellow,” the Major replied, looking as if he, too, was puzzled. “Yes, I have it. He was a deserter from the Horse Artillery who got into the Nawaub’s service. I remember his face quite well.”

“Oh!” said Clavering, with a sigh which indicated immense relief of mind, and the Major looked at him with a twinkle of his sharp old eyes. The cab which Strong had desired to be called, drove away with the Chevalier and Colonel Altamont; coffee was brought to the remaining gentlemen, and they went upstairs to the ladies in the drawing-room, Foker declaring confidentially to Pen that “this was the rummest go he ever saw,” which decision Pen said, laughing, “Showed great discrimination on Mr. Foker’s part.”

Then, according to her promise, Miss Amory made music for the young men. Foker was enraptured with her performance, and kindly joined in the airs which she sang, when he happened to be acquainted with them. Pen affected to talk aside with others of the party, but Blanche brought him quickly to the piano, by singing some of his own words, those which we have given in a previous number, indeed, and which the Sylphide had herself, she said, set to music. I don't know whether the air was hers, or how much of it was arranged for her by Signor Twankidillo, from whom she took lessons: but good or bad, original or otherwise, it delighted Mr. Pen, who remained by her side, and turned the leaves now for her most assiduously — "Gad! how I wish I could write verses like you, Pen," Foker sighed afterwards to his companion. "If I could do 'em, wouldn't I, that's all? But I never was a dab at writing, you see, and I'm sorry I was so idle when I was at school."

No mention was made before the ladies of the curious little scene which had been transacted below-stairs; although Pen was just on the point of describing it to Miss Amory, when that young lady inquired for Captain Strong, who she wished should join her in a duet. But chancing to look up towards Sir Francis Clavering, Arthur saw a peculiar expression of alarm in the baronet's ordinarily vacuous face, and discreetly held his tongue. It was rather a dull evening. Welbore went to sleep as he always did at music and after dinner: nor did Major Pendennis entertain the ladies with copious anecdotes and endless little scandalous stories, as his wont was, but sate silent for the most part, and appeared to be listening to the music, and watching the fair young performer.

The hour of departure having arrived the Major rose, regretting that so delightful an evening should have passed away so quickly, and addressed a particularly fine compliment to Miss Amory upon her splendid talents as a singer. "Your daughter, Lady Clavering," he said to that lady, "is a perfect nightingale — a perfect nightingale, begad! I have scarcely ever heard anything equal to her, and her pronunciation of every language — begad, of every language — seems to me to be perfect; and the best houses in London must open before a young lady who has such talents, and, allow an old fellow to say, Miss Amory, such a face."

Blanche was as much astonished by these compliments as Pen was, to whom his uncle, a little time since, had been speaking in very disparaging terms of the Sylph. The Major and the two young men walked home together, after Mr. Foker had placed his mother in her carriage, and procured a light for an enormous cigar.

The young gentleman's company or his tobacco did not appear to be agreeable to Major Pendennis, who eyed him askance several times, and with a look which plainly indicated that he wished Mr. Foker would take his leave; but Foker hung on resolutely to the uncle and nephew, even until they came to the former's door in Bury Street, where the Major wished the lads good night.

"And I say, Pen," he said in a confidential whisper, calling his nephew back, "mind you make a point of calling in Grosvenor Place tomorrow. They've been uncommonly civil; mons'ously civil and kind."

Pen promised and wondered, and the Major's door having been closed upon him by Morgan, Foker took Pen's arm, and walked with him for some time silently puffing his cigar. At last, when they had reached Charing Cross on Arthur's way home to the Temple, Harry Foker relieved himself, and broke out with that eulogium upon poetry, and those regrets regarding a misspent youth which have just been mentioned. And all the way along the Strand, and up to the door of Pen's very staircase, in Lamb Court, Temple, young Harry Foker did not cease to speak about singing and Blanche Amory.



CHAPTER XL

RELATES TO MR. HARRY FOKER'S AFFAIRS

Since that fatal but delightful night in Grosvenor Place, Mr. Harry Foker's heart had been in such a state of agitation as you would hardly have thought so great a philosopher could endure. When we remember what good advice he had given to Pen in former days, how an early wisdom and knowledge of the world had manifested itself in this gifted youth; how a constant course of self-indulgence, such as becomes a gentleman of his means and expectations, ought by right to have increased his cynicism, and made him, with every succeeding day of his life, care less and less for every individual in the world, with the single exception of Mr. Harry Foker, one may wonder that he should fall into the mishap to which most of us are subject once or twice in our lives, and disquiet his great mind about a woman. But Foker, though early wise, was still a man. He could no more escape the common lot than Achilles, or Ajax, or Lord Nelson, or Adam our first father, and now, his time being come, young Harry became a victim to Love, the All-conqueror.

When he went to the Back Kitchen that night after quitting Arthur Pendennis at his staircase-door in Lamb Court, the gin-twist and devilled turkey had no charms for him, the jokes of his companions fell flatly on his ear; and when Mr. Hodgen, the singer of 'The Body Snatcher,' had a new chant even more dreadful and humorous than that famous composition, Foker, although he appeared his friend, and said "Bravo, Hodgen," as common politeness and his position as one of the chiefs of the Back Kitchen bound him to do, yet never distinctly heard one word of the song, which under its title of 'The Cat in the Cupboard,' Hodgen has since rendered so famous. Late and very tired, he slipped into his private apartments at home and sought the downy pillow, but his slumbers were disturbed by the fever of his soul, and the very instant that he woke from his agitated sleep, the image of Miss Amory presented itself to him, and said, "Here I am, I am your princess and beauty, you have discovered me, and shall care for nothing else hereafter."

Heavens, how stale and distasteful his former pursuits and friendships appeared to him! He had not been, up to the present time, much accustomed to the society of females of his own rank in life. When he spoke of such, he called them "modest women." That virtue which, let us hope, they possessed, had not hitherto compensated to Mr. Foker for the absence of more lively qualities which most of his own relatives did not enjoy, and which he found in Mesdemoiselles, the ladies of the theatre. His mother, though good and tender, did not amuse her boy; his cousins, the daughters of his maternal uncle, the respectable Earl of Rosherville, wearied him beyond measure. One was blue, and a geologist; one was a horsewoman, and smoked cigars; one was exceedingly Low Church, and had the most heterodox views on religious matters; at least, so the other said, who was herself of the very Highest Church faction, and made the cupboard in her room into an oratory, and fasted on every Friday in the year. Their paternal house of Drummington, Foker could very seldom be got to visit. He swore he had rather go on the treadmill than stay there. He was not much beloved by the inhabitants. Lord Erith, Lord Rosherville's heir, considered his cousin a low person, of deplorably vulgar habits and manners; while Foker, and with equal reason, voted Erith a prig and a dullard, the nightcap of the House of Commons, the Speaker's opprobrium, the dreariest of philanthropic spouters. Nor could George Robert, Earl of Gravesend and Rosherville, ever forget that on one evening when he condescended to play at billiards with his nephew, that young gentleman poked his lordship in the side with his cue, and said, "Well, old cock, I've seen many a bad stroke in my life, but I never saw such a bad one as that there." He played the game out with angelic sweetness of temper, for Harry was his guest as well as his nephew; but he was nearly having a fit in the night; and he kept to his own rooms until young Harry quitted Drummington on his return to Oxbridge, where the interesting youth was finishing his education at the time when the occurrence took place. It was an awful blow to the venerable earl; the circumstance was never alluded to in the family; he shunned Foker whenever he came to see them in London or in the country, and could hardly be brought to gasp out a "How d'ye do?" to the young blasphemer. But he would not break his sister Agnes's heart, by banishing Harry from the family altogether; nor, indeed, could he afford to break with Mr. Foker, senior, between whom and his lordship there had been many private transactions, producing an exchange of bank-cheques from Mr. Foker, and autographs from the earl himself, with the letters I O U written over his illustrious signature.

Besides the four daughters of Lord Gravesend whose various qualities have been enumerated in the former paragraph, his lordship was blessed with a fifth girl, the Lady Ana Milton, who, from her earliest years and nursery, had been destined

to a peculiar position in life. It was ordained between her parents and her aunt, that when Mr Harry Foker attained a proper age, Lady Ann should become his wife. The idea had been familiar to her mind when she yet wore pinafores, and when Harry the dirtiest of little boys, used to come back with black eyes from school to Drummington, or to his father's house of Logwood, where Lady Ann lived, much with her aunt. Both of the young people coincided with the arrangement proposed by the elders, without any protests or difficulty. It no more entered Lady Ann's mind to question the order of her father, than it would have entered Esther's to dispute the commands of Ahasuerus. The heir-apparent of the house of Foker was also obedient, for when the old gentleman said, "Harry, your uncle and I have agreed that when you're of a proper age, you'll marry Lady Ann. She won't have any money, but she's good blood, and a good one to look at, and I shall make you comfortable. If you refuse, you'll have your mother's jointure, and two hundred a year during my life"— Harry, who knew that his sire, though a man of few words, was yet implicitly to be trusted, acquiesced at once in the parental decree, and said, "Well, sir, if Ann's agreeable, I say ditto. She's not a bad-looking girl."

"And she has the best blood in England, sir. Your mother's blood, your own blood, sir," said the Brewer. "There's nothing like it, sir."

"Well, sir, as you like it," Harry replied. "When you want me, please ring the bell. Only there's no hurry, and I hope you'll give us a long day. I should like to have my fling out before I marry."

"Fling away, Harry," answered the benevolent father. "Nobody prevents you, do they?" And so very little more was said upon this subject, and Mr. Harry pursued those amusements in life which suited him best; and hung up a little picture of his cousin in his sitting-room, amidst the French prints, the favourite actresses and dancers, the racing and coaching works of art, which suited his taste and formed his gallery. It was an insignificant little picture, representing a simple round face with ringlets; and it made, as it must be confessed, a very poor figure by the side of Mademoiselle Petitot, dancing over a rainbow, or Mademoiselle Redowa, grinning in red boots and a lancer's cap.

Being engaged and disposed of, Lady Ann Milton did not go out so much in the world as her sisters: and often stayed at home in London at the parental house in Gaunt Square, when her mamma with the other ladies went abroad. They talked and they danced with one man after another, and the men came and went, and the stories about them were various. But there was only this one story about Ann: she was engaged to Harry Foker: she never was to think about anybody else. It was not a very amusing story.

Well, the instant Foker awoke on the day after Lady Clavering's dinner, there was Blanche's image glaring upon him with its clear grey eyes, and winning smile. There was her tune ringing in his ears, "Yet round about the spot, ofttimes I hover, ofttimes I hover," which poor Foker began piteously to hum, as he sat up in his bed under the crimson silken coverlet. Opposite him was a French Print, of a Turkish lady and her Greek lover, surprised by a venerable Ottoman, the lady's husband; on the other wall was a French print of a gentleman and lady, riding and kissing each other at full gallop; all round the chaste bedroom were more French prints, either portraits of gauzy nymphs of the Opera, or lovely illustrations of the novels; or mayhap, an English chef-d'oeuvre or two, in which Miss Calverley of T. R. E. O. would be represented in tight pantaloons in her favourite page part; or Miss Rougemont as Venus; their value enhanced by the signatures of these ladies, Maria Calverley, or Frederica Rougemont, inscribed underneath the prints in an exquisite facsimile. Such were the pictures in which honest Harry delighted. He was no worse than many of his neighbours; he was an idle jovial kindly fast man about town; and if his rooms were rather profusely decorated with works of French art, so that simple Lady Agnes, his mamma on entering the apartments where her darling sate enveloped in fragrant clouds of Latakia, was often bewildered by the novelties which she beheld there, why, it must be remembered, that he was richer than most young men, and could better afford to gratify his taste.

A letter from Miss Calverley written in a very degage style of spelling and handwriting, scrawling freely over the filagree paper, and commencing by calling Mr. Harry, her dear Hokey-pokey-fokey, lay on his bed table by his side, amidst keys, sovereigns, cigar-cases, and a bit of verbena, which Miss Amory had given him, and reminding him of the arrival of the day when he was 'to stand that dinner at the Elefant and Castle, at Richmond, which he had promised;' a card for a private box at Miss Rougemont's approaching benefit, a bundle of tickets for 'Ben Budgeon's night, the North Lancashire Pippin, at Martin Faunce's, the Three-cornered Hat, in St. Martin's Lane; where Conkey Sam, Dick the Nailor, and Deadman (the Worcestershire Nobber), would put on the gloves, and the lovers of the good old British sport were invited to attend'— these and sundry other memoirs of Mr. Foker's pursuits and pleasure lay on the table by his side when he woke.

Ah! how faint all these pleasures seemed now. What did he care for Conkey Sam or the Worcestershire Nobber? What for the French prints ogling him from all sides of the room; those regular stunning slap-up out-and-outers? And Calverley spelling bad, and calling him Hokey-fokey, confound her impudence! The idea of being engaged to a dinner at the Elephant and Castle at Richmond with that old woman (who was seven-and-thirty years old, if she was a day) filled his mind with dreary disgust now, instead of that pleasure which he had only yesterday expected to find from the entertainment.

When his fond mamma beheld her boy that morning, she remarked on the pallor of his cheek, and the general gloom of his aspect. "Why do you go on playing billiards at that wicked Spratt's?" Lady Agnes asked. "My dearest child, those billiards will kill you, I'm sure they will."

"It isn't the billiards," Harry said, gloomily.

"Then it's the dreadful Back Kitchen," said the Lady Agnes. "I've often thought, d'you know, Harry, of writing to the landlady, and begging that she would have the kindness to put only very little wine in the negus which you take, and see that you have your shawl on before you get into your brougham."

"Do, ma'am. Mrs Cutts is a most kind motley woman," Harry said. "But it isn't the Back Kitchen, neither," he added, with a ghastly sigh.

As Lady Agnes never denied her son anything, and fell into all his ways with the fondest acquiescence, she was rewarded by a perfect confidence on young Harry's part, who never thought to disguise from her a knowledge of the haunts which he frequented; and, on the contrary, brought her home choice anecdotes from the clubs and billiard-rooms, which the simple lady relished, if she did not understand. "My son goes to Spratt's," she would say to her confidential friends. "All the young men go to Spratt's after their balls. It is de rigueur, my dear; and they play billiards as they used to play macao and hazard in Mr. Fox's time. Yes, my dear father often told me that they sate up always until nine o'clock the next morning with Mr. Fox at Brookes's, whom I remember at Drummington, when I was a little girl, in a buff waistcoat and black satin small-clothes. My brother Erith never played as a young man, nor sate up late — he had no health for it; but my boy must do as everybody does, you know. Yes, and then he often goes to a place called the Back Kitchen, frequented by all the wits and authors, you know, whom one does not see in society, but whom it is a great privilege and pleasure for Harry to meet, and there he hears the questions of the day discussed; and my dear father often said that it was our duty to encourage literature, and he had hoped to see the late Dr. Johnson at Drummington, only Dr. Johnson died. Yes, and Mr. Sheridan came over, and drank a great deal of wine — everybody drank a great deal of wine in those days — and papa's wine-merchant's bill was ten times as much as Erith's is, who gets it as he wants it from Fortnum and Mason's and doesn't keep any stock at all."

"That was an uncommon good dinner we had yesterday, ma'am," the artful Harry broke out. "Their clear soup's better than ours. Moufflet will put too much taragon into everything. The supreme de volaille was very good — uncommon, and the sweets were better than Moufflet's sweets. Did you taste the plombiere, ma'am, and the maraschino jelly? Stunningly good that maraschino jelly!"

Lady Agnes expressed her agreement in these, as in almost all other sentiments of her son, who continued the artful conversation, saying —

"Very handsome house that of the Claverings. Furniture, I should say, got up regardless of expense. Magnificent display of plate, ma'am." The lady assented to all these propositions.

"Very nice people the Claverings."

"H'm!" said Lady Agnes.

"I know what you mean. Lady C. ain't distangy exactly, but she is very good-natured."

"Oh, very," mamma said, who was herself one of the most good-natured of women.

"And Sir Francis, he don't talk much before ladies; but after dinner he comes out uncommon strong, ma'am — a highly agreeable, well-informed man. When will you ask them to dinner? Look out for an early day, ma'am;" and looking into Lady Agnes's pocket-book, he chose a day only a fortnight hence (an age that fortnight seemed to the young gentleman), when the Claverings were to be invited to Grosvenor-street.

The obedient Lady Agnes wrote the required invitation. She was accustomed to do so without consulting her husband, who had his own society and habits, and who left his wife to see her own friends alone. Harry looked at the card; but there was an omission in the invitation which did not please him.

"You have not asked Miss Whatdyecallem — Miss Emery, Lady Clavering's daughter."

"Oh, that little creature!" Lady Agnes cried. "No! I think not, Harry."

"We must ask Miss Amory," Foker said. "I— I want to ask Pendennis; and — and he's very sweet upon her. Don't you think she sings very well, ma'am?"

"I thought her rather forward, and didn't listen to her singing. She only sang at you and Mr. Pendennis, it seemed to me. But I will ask her if you wish, Harry," and so Miss Amory's name was written on the card with her mother's.

This piece of diplomacy being triumphantly executed Harry embraced his fond parent with the utmost affection, and retired to his own apartments where he stretched himself on his ottoman, and lay brooding silently, sighing for the day which was to bring the fair Miss Amory under his paternal roof, and devising a hundred wild schemes for meeting her.

On his return from making the grand tour, Mr. Foker, Junior, had brought with him a polyglot valet, who took the place of Stoopid, and condescended to wait at dinner, attired in shirt fronts of worked muslin, with many gold studs and chains, upon his master and the elders of the family. This man, who was of no particular country, and spoke all languages indifferently ill, made himself useful to Mr. Harry in a variety of ways — read all the artless youth's correspondence, knew his favourite haunts and the addresses of his acquaintance, and officiated at the private dinners which the young gentleman gave. As Harry lay upon his sofa after his interview with his mamma, robed in a wonderful dressing-gown, and puffing his pipe in gloomy silence, Anatole, too, must have remarked that something affected his master's spirits; though he did not betray any ill-bred sympathy with Harry's agitation of mind. When Harry began to dress himself in his out-of-door morning costume, he was very hard indeed to please, and particularly severe and snappish about his toilet: he tried, and cursed, pantaloons of many different stripes, checks, and colours: all the boots were villainously varnished; the shirts too "loud" in pattern. He scented his linen and person with peculiar richness this day; and what must have been the valet's astonishment, when, after some blushing and hesitation on Harry's part, the young gentleman asked, "I say, Anatole, when I engaged you, didn't you — hem — didn't you say that you could dress — hem — dress hair?"

The valet said, "Yes, he could."

"Cherchy alors une paire de tongs — et — curly moi un peu," Mr. Foker said, in an easy manner; and the valet, wondering whether his master was in love or was going masquerading, went in search of the articles — first from the old butler who waited upon Mr. Foker, senior, on whose bald pate the tongs would have scarcely found a hundred hairs to seize, and finally of the lady who had the charge of the meek auburn fronts of the Lady Agnes. And the tongs being got, Monsieur Anatole twisted his young master's locks until he had made Harry's head as curly as a negro's; after which the youth dressed himself with the utmost care and splendour, and proceeded to sally out.

"At what dime sall I order de drag, sir, to be to Miss Calverley's door, sir?" the attendant whispered as his master was going forth.

"Confound her! — Put the dinner off — I can't go!" said Foker. "No, hang it — I must go. Poyntz and Rougemont, and ever so many more are coming. The drag at Pelham Corner at six o'clock, Anatole."

The drag was not one of Mr. Foker's own equipages, but was hired from a livery-stable for festive purposes; Foker, however, put his own carriage into requisition that morning, and for what purpose does the kind reader suppose? Why, to drive down to Lamb Court, Temple, taking Grosvenor Place by the way (which lies in the exact direction of the Temple from Grosvenor Street, as everybody knows), where he just had the pleasure of peeping upwards at Miss Amory's pink window-curtains, having achieved which satisfactory feat, he drove off to Pen's chambers. Why did he want to see his dear friend Pen so much? Why did he yearn and long after him; and did it seem necessary to Foker's very existence that he should see Pen that morning, having parted with him in perfect health on the night previous? Pen had lived two years in London, and Foker had not paid half a dozen visits to his chambers. What sent him thither now in such a hurry?

What? — If any young ladies read this page, I have only to inform them that, when the same mishap befalls them, which now had for more than twelve hours befallen Harry Foker, people will grow interesting to them for whom they did not care sixpence on the day before; as on the other hand persons of whom they fancied themselves fond will be found to have become insipid and disagreeable. Then you dearest Eliza, or Maria of the other day, to whom you wrote letters and sent locks of hair yards long, will on a sudden be as indifferent to you as your stupidest relation whilst, on the contrary, about his relations you will begin to feel such a warm interest! such a loving desire to ingratiate yourself with his mamma; such a liking for that dear kind old man his father! If He is in the habit of visiting at any house, what advances you will

make in order to visit there too. If He has a married sister you will like to spend long mornings with her. You will fatigue your servant by sending notes to her, for which there will be the most pressing occasion, twice or thrice in a day. You will cry if your mamma objects to your going too often to see His family. The only one of them you will dislike, is perhaps his younger brother, who is at home for the holidays, and who will persist in staying in the room when you come to see your dear new-found friend, his darling second sister. Something like this will happen to you, young ladies, or, at any rate, let us hope it may. Yes, you must go through the hot fits and the cold fits of that pretty fever. Your mothers, if they would acknowledge it, have passed through it before you were born, your dear papa being the object of the passion, of course — who could it be but he? And as you suffer it, so will your brothers, in their way — and after their kind. More selfish than you: more eager and headstrong than you: they will rush on their destiny when the doomed charmer makes her appearance. Or if they don't, and you don't, Heaven help you! As the gambler said of his dice, to love and win is the best thing, to love and lose is the next best. You don't die of the complaint: or very few do. The generous wounded heart suffers and survives it. And he is not a man, or she a woman, who is not conquered by it, or who does not conquer it in his time. — Now, then, if you ask why Henry Foker, Esquire, was in such a hurry to see Arthur Pendennis, and felt such a sudden value and esteem for him, there is no difficulty in saying it was because Pen had become really valuable in Mr. Foker's eyes: because if Pen was not the rose, he yet had been near that fragrant flower of love. Was not he in the habit of going to her house in London? Did he not live near her in the country? — know all about the enchantress? What, I wonder, would Lady Ann Milton, Mr. Foker's cousin and pretendue, have said, if her ladyship had known all that was going on in the bosom of that funny little gentleman?

Alas! when Foker reached Lamb Court, leaving his carriage for the admiration of the little clerks who were lounging in the archway that leads thence into Flag Court which leads into Upper Temple Lane, Warrington was in the chambers but Pen was absent. Pen was gone to the printing-office to see his proofs. "Would Foker have a pipe and should the laundress go to the Cock and get him some beer?"— Warrington asked, remarking with a pleased surprise the splendid toilet of this scented and shiny-booted young aristocrat; but Foker had not the slightest wish for beer or tobacco: he had very important business: he rushed away to the Pall Mall Gazette office, still bent upon finding Pen. Pen had quitted that pace. Foker wanted him that they might go together to call upon Lady Clavering. Foker went away disconsolate, and whiled away an hour or two vaguely at clubs: and when it was time to pay a visit, he thought it would be but decent and polite to drive to Grosvenor Place and leave a card upon Lady Clavering. He had not the courage to ask to see her when the door was opened, he only delivered two cards, with Mr. Henry Foker engraved upon them, to Jeames, in a speechless agony. Jeames received the tickets bowing his powdered head. The varnished doors closed upon him. The beloved object was as far as ever from him, though so near. He thought he heard the tones of a piano and of a syren singing, coming from the drawing-room and sweeping over the balcony-shrubbery of geraniums. He would have liked to stop and listen, but it might not be. "Drive to Tattersall's," he said to the groom, in a voice smothered with emotion — "And bring my pony round," he added, as the man drove rapidly away.

As good luck would have it, that splendid barouche of Lady Clavering's, which has been inadequately described in a former chapter, drove up to her ladyship's door just as Foker mounted the pony which was in waiting for him. He bestrode the fiery animal, and dodged about the arch of the Green Park, keeping the carriage well in view, until he saw Lady Clavering enter, and with her — whose could be that angel form, but the enchantress's, clad in a sort of gossamer, with a pink bonnet and a light-blue parasol — but Miss Amory?

The carriage took its fair owners to Madame Rigodon's cap and lace shop, to Mrs Wolsey's Berlin worsted shop — who knows to what other resorts of female commerce? Then it went and took ices at Hunter's, for Lady Clavering was somewhat florid in her tastes and amusements, and not only liked to go abroad in the most showy carriage in London, but that the public should see her in it too. And so, in a white bonnet with a yellow feather, she ate a large pink ice in the sunshine before Hunter's door, till Foker on his pony, and the red jacket who accompanied him, were almost tired of dodging.

Then at last she made her way into the Park, and the rapid Foker made his dash forward. What to do? Just to get a nod of recognition from Miss Amory and her mother; to cross them a half-dozen times in the drive; to watch and ogle them from the other side of the ditch, where the horsemen assemble when the band plays in Kensington Gardens. What is the use of looking at a woman in a pink bonnet across a ditch? What is the earthly good to be got out of a nod of the head? Strange that men will be contented with such pleasures, or if not contented, at least that they will be so eager in seeking them. Not one word did Harry, he so fluent of conversation ordinarily, change with his charmer on that day. Mutely he

beheld her return to her carriage, and drive away among rather ironical salutes from the young men in the Park. One said that the Indian widow was making the paternal rupees spin rapidly; another said that she ought to have burned herself alive, and left the money to her daughter. This one asked who Clavering was? — and old Tom Eales, who knew everybody, and never missed a day in the Park on his grey cob, kindly said that Clavering had come into an estate over head and heels in mortgage: that there were devilish ugly stories about him when he was a young man, and that it was reported of him that he had a share in a gambling-house, and had certainly shown the white feather in his regiment. “He plays still; he is in a hell every night almost,” Mr. Eales added.

“I should think so, since his marriage,” said a wag.

“He gives devilish good dinners,” said Foker, striking up for the honour of his host of yesterday.

“I daresay, and I daresay he doesn’t ask Eales,” the wag said. “I say, Eales, do you dine at Clavering’s — at the Begum’s?”

“I dine there?” said Mr. Eales, who would have dined with Beelzebub if sure of a good cook, and when he came away, would have painted his host blacker than fate had made him.

“You might, you know, although you do abuse him so,” continued the wag. “They say it’s very pleasant. Clavering goes to sleep after dinner; the Begum gets tipsy with cherry-brandy, and the young lady sings songs to the young gentlemen. She sings well, don’t she, Fo?”

“Slap up,” said Fo. “I tell you what, Poyntz, she sings like a whatdyecallum — you know what I mean — like a mermaid, you know, but that’s not their name.”

“I never heard a mermaid sing,” Mr. Poyntz, the wag, replied. “Whoever heard a mermaid? Eales, you are an old fellow, did you?”

“Don’t make a lark of me, hang it, Poyntz,” said Foker, turning red, and with tears almost in his eyes, “you know what I mean: it’s those what’s-his-names — in Homer, you know. I never said I was a good scholar.”

“And nobody ever said it of you, my boy,” Mr. Poyntz remarked, and Foker striking spurs into his pony, cantered away down Rotten Row, his mind agitated with various emotions, ambitions, mortifications. He was sorry that he had not been good at his books in early life — that he might have cut out all those chaps who were about her, and who talked the languages, and wrote poetry, and painted pictures in her album, and — and that — “What am I,” thought little Foker, “compared to her? She’s all soul, she is, and can write poetry or compose music, as easy as I could drink a glass of beer. Beer? — damme, that’s all I’m fit for, is beer. I am a poor, ignorant little beggar, good for nothing but Foker’s Entire. I misspent my youth, and used to get the chaps to do my exercises. And what’s the consequences now? Oh, Harry Foker, what a confounded little fool you have been!”

As he made this dreary soliloquy, he had cantered out of Rotten Row into the Park, and there was on the point of riding down a large old roomy family carriage, of which he took no heed, when a cheery voice cried out, “Harry, Harry!” and looking up, he beheld his aunt, the Lady Rosherville, and two of her daughters, of whom the one who spoke was Harry’s betrothed, the Lady Ann.

He started back with a pale, scared look, as a truth about which he had not thought during the whole day, came across him. There was his fate, there, in the back seat of that carriage.

“What is the matter, Harry? why are you so pale? You have been raking and smoking too much, you wicked boy,” said Lady Ann.

Foker said, “How do, aunt,” “How do, Ann,” in a perturbed manner — muttered something about a pressing engagement — indeed he saw by the Park clock that he must have been keeping his party in the drag waiting for nearly an hour — and waved a good-bye. The little man and the little pony were out of sight in an instant — the great carriage rolled away. Nobody inside was very much interested about his coming or going; the Countess being occupied with her spaniel, the Lady Lucy’s thoughts and eyes being turned upon a volume of sermons, and those of the Lady Ann upon a new novel, which the sisters had just procured from the library.



CHAPTER XLI

CARRIES THE READER BOTH TO RICHMOND AND GREENWICH

Poor Foker found the dinner at Richmond to be the most dreary entertainment upon which ever mortal man wasted his guineas. "I wonder how the deuce I could ever have liked these people," he thought in his own mind. "Why, I can see the crow's-feet under Rougemont's eyes, and the paint on her cheeks is laid on as thick as Clown's in a pantomime! The way in which that Calverley talks slang, is quite disgusting. I hate chaff in a woman. And old Colchicum! that old Col, coming down here in his brougham, with his coronet on it, and sitting bodkin between Mademoiselle Coralie and her mother! It's too bad. An English peer, and a horse-rider of Franconi's! — It won't do; by Jove, it won't do. I ain't proud; but it will not do!"

"Twopence-halfpenny for your thoughts, Fokey!" cried out Miss Rougemont, taking her cigar from her truly vermilion lips, as she beheld the young fellow lost in thought, seated at the head of his table, amidst melting ices, and cut pineapples, and bottles full and empty, and cigar-ashes scattered on fruit, and the ruins of a dessert which had no pleasure for him.

"Does Foker ever think?" drawled out Mr. Poyntz. "Foker, here is a considerable sum of money offered by a fair capitalist at this end of the table for the present emanations of your valuable and acute intellect, old boy!"

"What the deuce is that Poyntz a talking about?" Miss Calverley asked of her neighbour. "I hate him. He's a drawlin', sneerin' beast."

"What a droll of a little man is that little Fokare, my lor'," Mademoiselle Coralie said, in her own language, and with the rich twang of that sunny Gascony in which her swarthy cheeks and bright black eyes had got their fire. "What a droll of a man! He does not look to have twenty years."

"I wish I were of his age," said the venerable Colchicum, with a sigh, as he inclined his purple face towards a large goblet of claret.

"C'te Jeunesse. Peuh! je m'en fiche" said Madame Brack, Coralie's mamma, taking a great pinch out of Lord Colchicum's delicate gold snuff-box. "Je m'aime que les hommes faits, moi. Comme milor. Coralie! n'est-ce pas que tu n'aimes que les hommes faits, ma bichette?"

My lord said, with a grin, "You flatter me, Madame Brack."

"Taisez-vous, Maman, vous n'etes qu'une bete," Coralie cried, with a shrug of her robust shoulders; upon which, my lord said that she did not flatter at any rate; and pocketed his snuff-box, not desirous that Madame Brack's dubious fingers should plunge too frequently into his Mackabaw.

There is no need to give a prolonged detail of the animated conversation which ensued during the rest of the banquet; a conversation which would not much edify the reader. And it is scarcely necessary to say, that all ladies of the corps de dance are not like Miss Calverley, any more than that all peers resemble that illustrious member of their order, the late lamented Viscount Colchicum. But there have been such in our memories who have loved the society of riotous youth better than the company of men of their own age and rank, and have given the young ones the precious benefit of their experience and example; and there have been very respectable men too who have not objected so much to the kind of entertainment as to the publicity of it. I am sure, for instance, that our friend Major Pendennis would have made no sort of objection to join the a party of pleasure, provided that it were en petit comite, and that such men as my Lord Steyne and my Lord Colchicum were of the society. "Give the young men their pleasures," this worthy guardian said to Pen more than once. "I'm not one of your strait-laced moralists, but an old man of the world, begad; and I know that as long as it lasts young men will be young men." And there were some young men to whom this estimable philosopher accorded about seventy years as the proper period for sowing their wild oats: but they were men of fashion.

Mr. Foker drove his lovely guests home to Brompton in the drag that night; but he was quite thoughtful and gloomy during the whole of the little journey from Richmond; neither listening to the jokes of the friends behind him and on the box by his side nor enlivening them as was his wont, by his own facetious sallies. And when the ladies whom he had conveyed alighted at the door of their house, and asked their accomplished coachman whether he would not step in and take something to drink, he declined with so melancholy an air, that they supposed that the Governor and he had had a

difference or that some calamity had befallen him; and he did not tell these people what the cause of his grief was, but left Mesdames Rougemont and Calverley, unheeding the cries of the latter, who hung over her balcony like Jezebel, and called out to him to ask him to give another party soon.

He sent the drag home under the guidance of one of the grooms, and went on foot himself; his hands in his pockets, plunged in thought. The stars and moon shining tranquilly overhead, looked down upon Mr. Foker that night, as he in his turn sentimentally regarded them. And he went and gazed upwards at the house in Grosvenor Place, and at the windows which he supposed to be those of the beloved object; and he moaned and he sighed in a way piteous and surprising to witness, which Policeman X did, who informed Sir Francis Clavering's people, as they took the refreshment of beer on the coach-box at the neighbouring public-house, after bringing home their lady from the French play, that there had been another chap hanging about the premises that evening — a little chap, dressed like a swell.

And now with that perspicuity and ingenuity and enterprise which only belongs to a certain passion, Mr. Foker began to dodge Miss Amory through London, and to appear wherever he could meet her. If Lady Clavering went to the French play, where her ladyship had a box, Mr. Foker, whose knowledge of the language, as we have heard, was not conspicuous, appeared in a stall. He found out where her engagements were (it is possible that Anatole, his man, was acquainted with Sir Francis Clavering's gentleman, and so got a sight of her ladyship's engagement-book), and at many of these evening parties Mr. Foker made his appearance — to the surprise of the world, and of his mother especially, whom he ordered to apply for cards to these parties, for which until now he had shown a supreme contempt. He told the pleased and unsuspecting lady that he went to parties because it was right for him to see the world: he told her that he went to the French play because he wanted to perfect himself in the language, and there was no such good lesson as a comedy or vaudeville — and when one night the astonished Lady Agnes saw him stand up and dance, and complimented him upon his elegance and activity, the mendacious little rogue asserted that he had learned to dance in Paris, whereas Anatole knew that his young master used to go off privily to an academy in Brewer Street, and study there for some hours in the morning. The casino of our modern days was not invented, or was in its infancy as yet; and gentlemen of Mr. Foker's time had not the facilities of acquiring the science of dancing which are enjoyed by our present youth.

Old Pendennis seldom missed going to church. He considered it to be his duty as a gentleman to patronise the institution of public worship and that it was quite a correct thing to be seen at church of a Sunday. One day it chanced that he and Arthur went thither together: the latter, who was now in high favour, had been to breakfast with his uncle, from whose lodging they walked across the park to a church not far from Belgrave Square. There was a charity sermon at Saint James's, as the Major knew by the bills posted on the pillars of his parish church, which probably caused him, for he was a thrifty man, to forsake it for that day: besides he had other views for himself and Pen. "We will go to church, sir, across the Park; and then, begad, we will go to the Claverings' house and ask them for lunch in a friendly way. Lady Clavering likes to be asked for lunch, and is uncommonly kind, and monstrous hospitable."

"I met them at dinner last week, at Lady Agnes Foker's, sir," Pen said, "and the Begum was very kind indeed. So she was in the country: so she is everywhere. But I share your opinion about Miss Amory; one of your opinions, that is, uncle, for you were changing the last time we spoke about her."

"And what do you think of her now?" the elder said.

"I think her the most confounded little flirt in London," Pen answered, laughing "She made a tremendous assault upon Harry Foker, who sat next to her; and to whom she gave all the talk, though I took her down."

"Bah! Henry Foker is engaged to his cousin all the world knows it: not a bad coup of Lady Rosherville's, that. I should say, that the young man at his father's death, and old Foker's life's devilish bad: you know he had a fit at Arthur's, last year: I should say, that young Foker won't have less than fourteen thousand a year from the brewery, besides Logwood and Norfolk property. I've no pride about me, Pen. I like a man of birth certainly, but dammy, I like a brewery which brings in a man fourteen thousand a year; hey, Pen? Ha, ha, that's the sort of man for me. And I recommend you now that you are lanced in the world, to stick to fellows of that sort, to fellows who have a stake in the country, begad."

"Foker sticks to me, sir," Arthur answered. He has been at our chambers several times lately. He has asked me to dinner. We are almost as great friends, as we used to be in our youth: and his talk is about Blanche Amory from morning till night. I'm sure he's sweet upon her."

"I'm sure he is engaged to his cousin, and that they will keep the young man to his bargain," said the Major. "The

marriages in these families are affairs of state. Lady Agnes was made to marry old Foker by the late Lord, although she was notoriously partial to her cousin who was killed at Albuera afterwards, and who saved her life out of the lake at Drummington. I remember Lady Agnes, sir, an exceedingly fine woman. But what did she do? — of course she married her father's man. Why, Mr. Foker sate for Drummington till the Reform Bill, and paid dev'lish well for his seat, too. And you may depend upon this, sir, that Foker senior, who is a parvenu, and loves a great man, as all parvenus do, has ambitious views for his son as well as himself, and that your friend Harry must do as his father bids him. Lord bless you! I've known a hundred cases of love in young men and women: hey, Master Arthur, do you take me? They kick, sir, they resist, they make a deuce of a riot and that sort of thing, but they end by listening to reason, begad."

"Blanche is a dangerous girl, sir," Pen said. "I was smitten with her myself once, and very far gone, too," he added; "but that is years ago."

"Were you? How far did it go? Did she return it?" asked the Major, looking hard at Pen.

Pen, with a laugh, said "that at one time he did think he was pretty well in Miss Amory's good graces. But my mother did not like her, and the affair went off." Pen did not think it fit to tell his uncle all the particulars of that courtship which had passed between himself and the young lady.

"A man might go farther and fare worse, Arthur," the Major said, still looking queerly at his nephew.

"Her birth, sir; her father was the mate of a ship, they say: and she has not money enough," objected Pen, in a dandified manner. "What's ten thousand pound and a girl bred up like her?"

"You use my own words, and it is all very well. But, I tell you in confidence, Pen — in strict honour, mind — that it's my belief she has a devilish deal more than ten thousand pound: and from what I saw of her the other day, and — and have heard of her — I should say she was a devilish accomplished, clever girl: and would make a good wife with a sensible husband."

"How do you know about her money?" Pen asked, smiling. "You seem to have information about everybody, and to know about all the town."

"I do know a few things, sir, and I don't tell all I know. Mark that," the uncle replied. "And as for that charming Miss Amory — for charming, begad! she is — if I saw her Mrs. Arthur Pendennis, I should neither be sorry nor surprised, begad! and if you object to ten thousand pound, what would you say, sir, to thirty, or forty, or fifty?" and the Major looked still more knowingly, and still harder at Pen.

"Well, sir," he said to his godfather and namesake, "make her Mrs. Arthur Pendennis. You can do it as well as I."

"Psha! you are laughing at me, sir," the other replied rather peevishly, "and you ought not to laugh so near a church gate. Here we are at St. Benedict's. They say Mr. Oriel is a beautiful preacher."

Indeed, the bells were tolling, the people were trooping into the handsome church, the carriages of the inhabitants of the lordly quarter poured forth their pretty loads of devotees, in whose company Pen and his uncle, ending their edifying conversation, entered the fane. I do not know whether other people carry their worldly affairs to the church door. Arthur, who, from habitual reverence and feeling, was always more than respectful in a place of worship, thought of the incongruity of their talk, perhaps; whilst the old gentleman at his side was utterly unconscious of any such contrast. His hat was brushed: his wig was trim: his neckcloth was perfectly tied. He looked at every soul in the congregation, it is true: the bald heads and the bonnets, the flowers and the feathers: but so demurely that he hardly lifted up his eyes from his book — from his book which he could not read without glasses. As for Pen's gravity, it was sorely put to the test when, upon looking by chance towards the seats where the servants were collected, he spied out, by the side of a demure gentleman in plush, Henry Foker, Esquire, who had discovered this place of devotion. Following the direction of Harry's eye, which strayed a good deal from his book, Pen found that it alighted upon a yellow bonnet and a pink one: and that these bonnets were on the heads of Lady Clavering and Blanche Amory. If Pen's uncle is not the only man who has talked about his worldly affairs up to the church door, is poor Harry Foker the only one who has brought his worldly love into the aisle?

When the congregation issued forth at the conclusion of the service, Foker was out amongst the first, but Pen came up with him presently, as he was hankering about the entrance, which he was unwilling to leave, until my lady's barouche, with the bewigged coachman, had borne away its mistress and her daughter from their devotions.

When the two ladies came out, they found together the Pendennises, uncle and nephew, and Harry Foker, Esquire, sucking the crook of his stick, standing there in the sunshine. To see and to ask to eat were simultaneous with the good-

natured Begum, and she invited the three gentlemen to luncheon straightway.

Blanche was, too, particularly gracious. "O! do come," she said to Arthur, "if you are not too great a man. I want so to talk to you about — but we mustn't say what, here, you know. What would Mr. Oriel say?" And the young devotee jumped into the carriage after her mamma. — "I've read every word of it. It's adorable," she added, still addressing herself to Pen.

"I know who is," said Mr. Arthur, making rather a pert bow.

"What's the row about?" asked Mr. Foker, rather puzzled.

"I suppose Miss Clavering means 'Walter Lorraine,'" said the Major, looking knowing, and nodding at Pen.

"I suppose so, sir. There was a famous review in the Pall Mall this morning. It was Warrington's doing though, and I must not be too proud."

"A review in Pall Mall? — Walter Lorraine? What the doose do you mean?" Foker asked. "Walter Lorraine died of the measles, poor little beggar, when we were at Grey Friars. I remember his mother coming up."

"You are not a literary man, Foker," Pen said, laughing, and hooking his arm into his friend's. "You must know I have been writing a novel, and some of the papers have spoken very well of it. Perhaps you don't read the Sunday Papers?"

"I read Bell's Life regular, old boy," Mr Foker answered: at which Pen laughed again, and the three gentlemen proceeded in great good-humour to Lady Clavering's house.

The subject of the novel was resumed after luncheon by Miss Amory, who indeed loved poets and men of letters if she loved anything, and was sincerely an artist in feeling. "Some of the passages in the book made me cry, positively they did," she said.

Pen said, with some fatuity, "I am happy to think I have a part of vos larmes, Miss Blanche," — and the Major (who had not read more than six pages of Pen's book) put on his sanctified look, saying, "Yes, there are some passages quite affecting, mons'ous affecting:" and — "Oh, if it makes you cry," — Lady Amory declared she would not read it, "that she wouldn't."

"Don't, mamma," Blanche said, with a French shrug of her shoulders; and then she fell into a rhapsody about the book, about the snatches of poetry interspersed in it about the two heroines, Leonora and Neaera; about the two heroes, Walter Lorraine and his rival the young Duke — "and what good company you introduce us to," said the young lady archly "quel ton! How much of your life have you passed at court, and are you a prime minister's son, Mr. Arthur?"

Pen began to laugh — "It is as cheap for a novelist to create a Duke as to make a Baronet," he said. "Shall I tell you a secret, Miss Amory? I promoted all my characters at the request of the publisher. The young Duke was only a young Baron when the novel was first written; his false friend, the Viscount, was a simple commoner and so on with all the characters of the story."

"What a wicked, satirical, pert young man you have become! Comme vous voila forme!" said the young lady. "How different from Arthur Pendennis of the country! Ah! I think I like Arthur Pendennis of the country best, though!" and she gave him the full benefit of her eyes — both of the fond appealing glance into his own, and of the modest look downwards towards the carpet, which showed off her dark eyelids and long fringed lashes.

Pen of course protested that he had not changed in the least, to which the young lady replied by a tender sigh; and thinking that she had done quite enough to make Arthur happy or miserable (as the case might be), she proceeded to cajole his companion, Mr. Harry Foker, who during the literary conversation had sate silently imbibing the head of his cane, and wishing that he was a clever chap like that Pen.

If the Major thought that by telling Miss Amory of Mr. Foker's engagement to his cousin, Lady Ann Milton (which information the old gentleman neatly conveyed to the girl as he sate by her side at luncheon below-stairs) — if, we say, the Major thought that the knowledge of this fact would prevent Blanche from paying any further attention to the young heir of Foker's Entire, he was entirely mistaken. She became only the more gracious to Foker: she praised him, and everything belonging to him; she praised his mamma; she praised the pony which he rode in the Park; she praised the lovely breloques or gimcracks which the young gentleman wore at his watch-chain, and that dear little darling of a cane, and those dear little delicious monkeys' heads with ruby eyes, which ornamented Harry's shirt, and formed the buttons of his waistcoat. And then, having praised and coaxed the weak youth until he blushed and tingled with pleasure, and until Pen thought she really had gone quite far enough, she took another theme.

"I am afraid Mr. Foker is a very sad young man," she said, turning round to Pen.

"He does not look so," Pen answered with a sneer.

"I mean we have heard sad stories about him. Haven't we, mamma? What was Mr. Poyntz saying here, the other day, about that party at Richmond? O you naughty creature!" But here, seeing that Harry's countenance assumed a great expression of alarm, while Pen's wore a look of amusement, she turned to the latter and said, "I believe you are just as bad: I believe you would have liked to have been there — wouldn't you? I know you would: yes — and so should I."

"Lor, Blanche!" mamma cried.

"Well, I would. I never saw an actress in my life. I would give anything to know one; for I adore talent. And I adore Richmond, that I do; and I adore Greenwich, and I say, I should like to go there."

"Why should not we three bachelors," the Major here broke out, gallantly, and to his nephew's special surprise, "beg these ladies to honour us with their company at Greenwich? Is Lady Clavering to go on for ever being hospitable to us, and may we make no return? Speak for yourselves, young men — eh, begad! Here is my nephew, with his pockets full of money — his pockets full, begad! and Mr. Henry Foker, who, as I have heard say, is pretty well to do in the world — how is your lovely cousin, Lady Ann, Mr. Foker? — here are these two young ones — and they allow an old fellow like me to speak. Lady Clavering, will you do me the favour to be my guest? and Miss Blanche shall be Arthur's, if she will be so good."

"Oh, delightful!" cried Blanche.

"I like a bit of fun too," said Lady Clavering; and we will take some day when Sir Francis —"

"When Sir Francis dines out — yes, mamma," the daughter said, "it will be charming."

And a charming day it was. The dinner was ordered at Greenwich, and Foker, though he did not invite Miss Amory, had some delicious opportunities of conversation with her during the repast, and afterwards on the balcony of their room at the hotel, and again during the drive home in her ladyship's barouche. Pen came down with his uncle, in Sir Hugh Trumpington's brougham, which the Major borrowed for the occasion. "I am an old soldier, begad," he said, "and I learned in early life to make myself comfortable."

And, being an old soldier, he allowed the two young men to pay for the dinner between them, and all the way home in the brougham he rallied Pen, about Miss Amory's evident partiality for him: praised her good looks, spirits, and wit: and again told Pen in the strictest confidence, that she would be a devilish deal richer than people thought.



CHAPTER XLII

CONTAINS A NOVEL INCIDENT

SOME account has been given, in a former part of this story, how Mr. Pen, during his residence at home, after his defeat at Oxbridge, had occupied himself with various literary compositions, and amongst other works, had written the greater part of a novel. This book, written under the influence of his youthful embarrassments, amatory and pecuniary, was of a very fierce, gloomy, and passionate sort — the Byronic despair, the Wertherian despondency, the mocking bitterness of Mephistopheles of Faust, were all reproduced and developed in the character of the hero; for our youth had just been learning the German language, and imitated, as almost all clever lads do, his favourite poets and writers. Passages in the volumes once so loved, and now read so seldom, still bear the mark of the pencil with which he noted them in those days. Tears fell upon the leaf of the book, perhaps, or blistered the pages of his manuscript as the passionate young man dashed his thoughts down. If he took up the books afterwards he had no ability or wish to sprinkle the leaves with that early dew of former times: his pencil was no longer eager to score its marks of approval: but as he looked over the pages of his manuscript, he remembered what had been overflowing feelings which had caused him to blot it, and the pain which had inspired the line. If the secret history of books could be written, and the author's private thoughts and meanings noted down alongside of his story, how many insipid volumes would become interesting, and dull tales excite the reader! Many a bitter smile passed over Pen's face as he read his novel, and recalled the time and feelings which gave it birth. How pompous some of the grand passages appeared; and how weak were others in which he thought he had expressed his full heart! This page was imitated from a then favourite author, as he could now clearly see and confess, though he had believed himself to be writing originally then. As he mused over certain lines he recollected the place and hour where he wrote them: the ghost of the dead feeling came back as he mused, and he blushed to review the faint image. And what meant those blots on the page? As you come in the desert to a ground where camels' hoofs are marked in the clay, and traces of withered herbage are yet visible, you know that water was there once; so the place in Pen's mind was no longer green, and the fons lacrymarum was dried up.

He used this simile one morning to Warrington, as the latter sate over his pipe and book, and Pen, with much gesticulation according to his wont when excited, and with a bitter laugh, thumped his manuscript down on the table, making the tea-things rattle, and, the blue milk dance in the jug. On the previous night he had taken the manuscript out of a long-neglected chest, containing old shooting jackets, old Oxbridge scribbling-books, his old surplice, and battered cap and gown, and other memorials of youth, school, and home. He read in the volume in bed until he fell asleep, for the commencement of the tale was somewhat dull, and he had come home tired from a London evening party.

"By Jove!" said Pen, thumping down his papers, "when I think that these were written but very few years ago, I am ashamed of my memory. I wrote this when I believed myself be eternally in love with that little coquette, Miss Amory. I used to carry down verses to her, and put them into the hollow of a tree, and dedicate them 'Amori.'"

"That was a sweet little play upon words," Warrington remarked, with a puff "Amory — Amori. It showed proof of scholarship. Let us hear a bit of the rubbish." And he stretched over from his easy-chair, and caught hold of Pen's manuscript with the fire-tongs, which he was just using in order to put a coal into his pipe. Thus, in possession of the volume, he began to read out from the 'Leaves from the Life-book of Walter Lorraine.'

"False as thou art beautiful! heartless as thou art fair! mockery of Passion!" Walter cried, addressing Leonora; 'what evil spirit hath sent thee to torture me so? O Leonora. ——'

"Cut that part," cried out Pen, making a dash at the book, which, however, his comrade would not release. "Well! don't read it out at any rate. That's about my other flame, my first — Lady Mirabel that is now. I saw her last night at Lady Whiston's. She asked me to a party at her house, and said that, as old friends, we ought to meet oftener. She has been seeing me any time these two years in town, and never thought of inviting me before; but seeing Wenham talking to me, and Monsieur Dubois, the French literary man, who had a dozen orders on, and might have passed for a Marshal of France, she condescended to invite me. The Claverings are to be there on the same evening. Won't it be exciting to meet one's two flames at the same table?"

"Two flames! — two heaps of burnt-out cinders," Warrington said. "Are both the beauties in this book?"

"Both, or something like them," Pen said. "Leonora, who marries the Duke, is the Fotheringay. I drew the Duke from Magnus Charters, with whom I was at Oxford; it's a little like him; and Miss Amory is Neaera. By gad, that first woman! I thought of her as I walked home from Lady Whiston's in the moonlight; and the whole early scenes came back to me as if they had been yesterday. And when I got home, I pulled out the story which I wrote about her and the other three years ago: do you know, outrageous as it is, it has some good stuff in it, and if Bungay won't publish it, I think Bacon will."

"That's the way of poets," said Warrington. "They fall in love, jilt, or are jilted; they suffer and they cry out that they suffer more than any other mortals: and when they have experienced feelings enough they note them down in a book, and take the book to market. All poets are humbugs, all literary men are humbugs; directly a man begins to sell his feelings for money he's a humbug. If a poet gets a pain in his side from too good a dinner, he bellows Ai Ai louder than Prometheus."

"I suppose a poet has a greater sensibility than another man," said Pen, with some spirit. "That is what makes him a poet. I suppose that he sees and feels more keenly: it is that which makes him speak, of what he feels and sees. You speak eagerly enough in your leading articles when you espy a false argument in an opponent, or detect a quack in the House. Paley, who does not care for anything else in the world, will talk for an hour about a question of law. Give another the privilege which you take yourself, and the free use of his faculty, and let him be what nature has made him. Why should not a man sell his sentimental thoughts as well as you your political ideas, or Paley his legal knowledge? Each alike is a matter of experience and practice. It is not money which causes you to perceive a fallacy, or Paley to argue a point; but a natural or acquired aptitude for that kind of truth: and a poet sets down his thoughts and experiences upon paper as a painter does a landscape or a face upon canvas, to the best of his ability, and according to his particular gift. If ever I think I have the stuff in me to write an epic, by Jove I will try. If I only feel that I am good enough to crack a joke or tell a story, I will do that."

"Not a bad speech, young one," Warrington said, but that does not prevent all poets from being humbugs."

"What — Homer, Aeschylus, Shakspeare and all?"

"Their names are not to be breathed in the same sense with you pigmies," Mr. Warrington said: "there are men and men, sir."

"Well, Shakspeare was a man who wrote for money, just as you and I do," Pen answered, at which Warrington confounded his impudence, and resumed his pipe and his manuscript.

There was not the slightest doubt then that this document contained a great deal of Pen's personal experiences, and that 'Leaves from the Life-book of Walter Lorraine' would never have been written but for Arthur Pendennis's own private griefs, passions, and follies. As we have become acquainted with these in the first volume of his biography, it will not be necessary to make large extracts from the novel of 'Walter Lorraine,' in which the young gentleman had depicted such of them as he thought were likely to interest the reader, or were suitable for the purpose of his story.

Now, though he had kept it in his box for nearly half of the period during which, according to the Horatian maxim, a work of art ought to lie ripening (a maxim, the truth of which may, by the way, be questioned altogether), Mr. Pen had not buried his novel for this time, in order that the work might improve, but because he did not know where else to bestow it, or had no particular desire to see it. A man who thinks of putting away a composition for ten years before he shall give it to the world, or exercise his own maturer judgment upon it, had best be very sure of the original strength and durability of the work; otherwise on withdrawing it from its crypt he may find, that like small wine it has lost what flavour it once had, and is only tasteless when opened. There are works of all tastes and smacks, the small and the strong, those that improve by age, and those that won't bear keeping at all, but are pleasant at the first draught, when they refresh and sparkle.

Now Pen had never any notion, even in the time of his youthful inexperience and fervour of imagination, that the story he was writing was a masterpiece of composition, or that he was the equal of the great authors whom he admired; and when he now reviewed his little performance, he was keenly enough alive to its faults, and pretty modest regarding its merits. It was not very good, he thought; but it was as good as most books of the kind that had the run of circulating libraries and the career of the season. He had critically examined more than one fashionable novel by the authors of the day then popular, and he thought that his intellect was as good as theirs and that he could write the English language as well as those ladies or gentlemen; and as he now ran over his early performance, he was pleased to find here and there passages exhibiting both fancy and vigour, and traits, if not of genius, of genuine passion and feeling. This, too, was Warrington's verdict, when that severe critic, after half an hour's perusal of the manuscript, and the consumption of a

couple of pipes of tobacco, laid Pen's book down, yawning portentously. "I can't read any more of that balderdash now," he said; "but it seems to me there is some good stuff in it, Pen, my boy. There's a certain greenness and freshness in it which I like somehow. The bloom disappears off the face of poetry after you begin to shave. You can't get up that naturalness and artless rosy tint in after days. Your cheeks are pale, and have got faded by exposure to evening parties, and you are obliged to take curling-irons, and macassar, and the deuce-knows-what to your whiskers; they curl ambrosially, and you are very grand and genteel, and so forth; but, ah! Pen, the spring-time was the best."

"What the deuce have my whiskers to do with the subject in hand?" Pen said (who, perhaps, may have been nettled by Warrington's allusion to those ornaments, which, to say the truth, the young man coaxed, and curled, and oiled, and perfumed, and petted, in rather an absurd manner). "Do you think we can do anything with 'Walter Lorraine'? Shall we take him to the publishers, or make an auto-da-fe of him?"

"I don't see what is the good of incremation," Warrington said, "though I have a great mind to put him into the fire, to punish your atrocious humbug and hypocrisy. Shall I burn him indeed? You have much too great a value for him to hurt a hair of his head."

"Have I? Here goes," said Pen, and 'Walter Lorraine' went off the table, and was flung on to the coals. But the fire having done its duty of boiling the young man's breakfast-kettle, had given up work for the day, and had gone out, as Pen knew very well; Warrington with a scornful smile, once more took up the manuscript with the tongs from out of the harmless cinders.

"Oh, Pen, what a humbug you are!" Warrington said; "and what is worst of all, sir, a clumsy humbug. I saw you look to see that the fire was out before you sent 'Walter Lorraine' behind the bars. No, we won't burn him: we will carry him to the Egyptians, and sell him. We will exchange him away for money, yea, for silver and gold, and for beef and for liquors, and for tobacco and for raiment. This youth will fetch some price in the market; for he is a comely lad, though not over strong; but we will fatten him up and give him the bath, and curl his hair, and we will sell him for a hundred piasters to Bacon or to Bungay. The rubbish is saleable enough, sir; and my advice to you is this: the next time you go home for a holiday, take 'Walter Lorraine' in your carpet-bag — give him a more modern air, prune away, though sparingly, some of the green passages, and add a little comedy, and cheerfulness, and satire, and that sort of thing, and then we'll take him to market, and sell him. The book is not a wonder of wonders, but it will do very well."

"Do you think so, Warrington?" said Pen, delighted, for this was great praise from his cynical friend.

"You silly young fool! I think it's uncommonly clever," Warrington said in a kind voice. "So do you, sir." And with the manuscript which he held in his hand he playfully struck Pen on the cheek. That part of Pen's countenance turned as red as it had ever done in the earliest days of his blushes: he grasped the other's hand and said, "Thank you, Warrington," with all his might: and then he retired to his own room with his book, and passed the greater part of the day upon his bed re-reading it; and he did as Warrington had advised, and altered not a little, and added a great deal, until at length he had fashioned 'Walter Lorraine' pretty much into the shape in which, as the respected novel-reader knows, it subsequently appeared.

Whilst he was at work upon this performance, the good-natured Warrington artfully inspired the two gentlemen who "read" for Messrs. Bacon and Bungay with the greatest curiosity regarding 'Walter Lorraine,' and pointed out the peculiar merits of its distinguished author. It was at the period when the novel, called 'The Fashionable,' was in vogue among us; and Warrington did not fail to point out, as before, how Pen was a man of the very first fashion himself, and received at the houses of some of the greatest personages in the land. The simple and kind-hearted Percy Popjoy was brought to bear upon Mrs. Bungay, whom he informed that his friend Pendennis was occupied upon a work of the most exciting nature; a work that the whole town would run after, full of wit, genius, satire, pathos, and every conceivable good quality. We have said before, that Bungay knew no more about novels than he did about Hebrew or Algebra, and neither read nor understood any of the books which he published and paid for; but he took his opinions from his professional advisers and from Mrs. B., and, evidently with a view to a commercial transaction, asked Pendennis and Warrington to dinner again.

Bacon, when he found that Bungay was about to treat, of course, began to be anxious and curious, and desired to outbid his rival. Was anything settled between Mr. Pendennis and the odious house "over the way" about the new book? Mr. Hack, the confidential reader, was told to make inquiries, and see if any thing was to be done, and the result of the inquiries of that diplomatist was, that one morning, Bacon himself toiled up the staircase of Lamb Court and to the door on

which the names of Mr. Warrington, and Mr. Pendennis, were painted.

For a gentleman of fashion as poor Pen was represented to be, it must be confessed, that the apartments he and his friend occupied were not very suitable. The ragged carpet had grown only more ragged during the two years of joint occupancy: a constant odour of tobacco perfumed the sitting-room: Bacon tumbled over the laundress's buckets in the passage through which he had to pass; Warrington's shooting-jacket was as tattered at the elbows as usual; and the chair which Bacon was requested to take on entering, broke down with the publisher. Warrington burst out laughing, said that Bacon had got the game chair, and bawled out to Pen to fetch a sound one from his bedroom. And seeing the publisher looking round the dingy room with an air of profound pity and wonder, asked him whether he didn't think the apartments were elegant, and if he would like, for Mrs. Bacon's drawing-room, any of the articles of furniture? Mr. Warrington's character as a humourist was known to Mr. Bacon: "I never can make that chap out," the publisher was heard to say, "or tell whether he is in earnest or only chaffing."

It is very possible that Mr. Bacon would have set the two gentlemen down as impostors altogether, but that there chanced to be on the breakfast-table certain cards of invitation which the post of the morning had brought in for Pen, and which happened to come from some very exalted personage of the beau-monde, into which our young man had his introduction. Looking down upon these, Bacon saw that the Marchioness of Steyne would be at home to Mr. Arthur Pendennis upon a given day, and that another lady of distinction proposed to have dancing at her house upon a certain future evening. Warrington saw the admiring publisher eyeing these documents. "Ah," said he, with an air of simplicity, "Pendennis is one of the most affable young men I ever knew, Mr. Bacon. Here is a young fellow that dines with all the men in London, and yet he'll take his mutton-chop with you and me quite contentedly. There's nothing like the affability of the old English gentleman."

"Oh no, nothing," said Mr. Bacon.

"And you wonder why he should go on living up three pair of stairs with me, don't you now? Well, it is a queer taste. But we are fond of each other; and as I can't afford to live in a great house, he comes and stays in these rickety old chambers with me. He's a man that can afford to live anywhere."

"I fancy it don't cost him much here," thought Mr. Bacon, and the object of these praises presently entered the room from his adjacent sleeping apartment.

Then Mr. Bacon began to speak upon the subject of his visit; said he heard that Mr. Pendennis had a manuscript novel; professed himself anxious to have a sight of that work, and had no doubt that they could come to terms respecting it. What would be his price for it? would he give Bacon the refusal of it? he would find our house a liberal house, and so forth. The delighted Pen assumed an air of indifference, and said that he was already in treaty with Bungay, and could give no definite answer. This piqued the other into such liberal, though vague offers, that Pen began to fancy Eldorado was opening to him, and that his fortune was made from that day.

I shall not mention what was the sum of money which Mr. Arthur Pendennis finally received for the first edition of his novel of 'Walter Lorraine,' lest other young literary aspirants should expect to be as lucky as he was, and unprofessional persons forsake their own callings, whatever they may be, for the sake of supplying the world with novels, whereof there is already a sufficiency. Let no young people be misled and rush fatally into romance-writing: for one book which succeeds let them remember the many that fail, I do not say deservedly or otherwise, and wholesomely abstain or if they venture, at least let them do so at their own peril. As for those who have already written novels, this warning is not addressed, of course, to them. Let them take their wares to market; let them apply to Bacon and Bungay, and all the publishers in the Row, or the metropolis, and may they be happy in their ventures. This world is so wide, and the tastes of mankind happily so various, that there is always a chance for every man, and he may win the prize by his genius or by his good fortune. But what is the chance of success or failure; of obtaining popularity, or of holding it when achieved? One man goes over the ice, which bears him, and a score who follow flounder in. In fine, Mr. Pendennis's was an exceptional case, and applies to himself only and I assert solemnly, and will to the last maintain, that it is one thing to write a novel, and another to get money for it.

By merit, then, or good fortune, or the skilful playing off of Bungay against Bacon which Warrington performed (and which an amateur novelist is quite welcome to try upon any two publishers in the trade), Pen's novel was actually sold for a certain sum of money to one of the two eminent patrons of letters whom we have introduced to our readers. The sum was

so considerable that Pen thought of opening an account at a banker's, or of keeping a cab and horse, or of descending into the first floor of Lamb Court into newly furnished apartments, or of migrating to the fashionable end of the town.

Major Pendennis advised the latter move strongly; he opened his eyes with wonder when he heard of the good luck that had befallen Pen; and which the latter, as soon as it occurred, hastened eagerly to communicate to his uncle. The Major was almost angry that Pen should have earned so much money. "Who the doose reads this kind of thing?" he thought to himself when he heard of the bargain which Pen had made. "I never read your novels and rubbish. Except Paul de Kock, who certainly makes me laugh, I don't think I've looked into a book of the sort these thirty years. Gad! Pen's a lucky fellow. I should think he might write one of these in a month now — say a month — that's twelve in a year. Dammy, he may go on spinning this nonsense for the next four to five years, and make a fortune. In the meantime I should wish him to live properly, take respectable apartments, and keep a brougham." And on this simple calculation it was that the Major counselled Pen.

Arthur, laughing, told Warrington what his uncle's advice had been but he luckily had a much more reasonable counsellor than the old gentleman in the person of his friend, and in his own conscience, which said to him, "Be grateful for this piece of good fortune; don't plunge into any extravagancies. Pay back Laura!" And he wrote a letter to her, in which he told her his thanks and his regard; and enclosed to her such an instalment of his debt as nearly wiped it off. The widow and Laura herself might well be affected by the letter. It was written with genuine tenderness and modesty; and old Dr. Portman when he read a passage in the letter, in which Pen, with an honest heart full of gratitude, humbly thanked Heaven for his present prosperity, and for sending him such dear and kind friends to support him in his ill fortune — when Doctor Portman read this portion of the letter, his voice faltered, and his eyes twinkled behind his spectacles, and when he had quite finished reading the same, and had taken his glasses off his nose, and had folded up the paper and given it back to the widow, I am constrained to say, that after holding Mrs. Pendennis's hand for a minute, the Doctor drew that lady towards him and fairly kissed her: at which salute, of course, Helen burst out crying on the Doctor's shoulder, for her heart was too full to give any other reply: and the Doctor blushing at great deal after his feat, led the lady, with a bow, to the sofa, on which he seated himself by her; and he mumbled out, in a low voice, some words of a Great Poet whom he loved very much, and who describes how in the days of his prosperity he had made "the widow's heart to sing for joy."

"The letter does the boy very great honour, very great honour, my dear," he said, patting it as it lay on Helen's knee — "and I think we have all reason to be thankful for it — very thankful. I need not tell you in what quarter, my dear, for you are a sainted woman: yes, Laura, my love, your mother is a sainted woman. And Mrs. Pendennis, ma'am, I shall order a copy of the book for myself, and another at the Book Club."

We may be sure that the widow and Laura walked out to meet the mail which brought them their copy of Pen's precious novel, as soon as that work was printed and ready for delivery to the public and that they read it to each other: and that they also read it privately and separately, for when the widow came out of her room in her dressing-gown at one o'clock in the morning with volume two, which she had finished, she found Laura devouring volume three in bed. Laura did not say much about the book, but Helen pronounced that it was a happy mixture of Shakspeare, and Byron, and Walter Scott, and was quite certain that her son was the greatest genius, as he was the best son, in the world.

Did Laura not think about the book and the author, although she said so little? At least she thought about Arthur Pendennis. Kind as his tone was, it vexed her. She did not like his eagerness to repay that money. She would rather that her brother had taken her gift as she intended it: and was pained that there should be money calculations between them. His letters from London, written with the good-natured wish to amuse his mother, were full of descriptions of the famous people and the entertainments and magnificence of the great city. Everybody was flattering him and spoiling him, she was sure. Was he not looking to some great marriage, with that cunning uncle for a Mentor (between whom and Laura there was always an antipathy), that inveterate worldling, whose whole thoughts were bent upon pleasure and rank and fortune? He never alluded to — to old times, when he spoke of her. He had forgotten them and her, perhaps had he not forgotten other things and people?

These thoughts may have passed in Miss Laura's mind, though she did not, she could not, confide them to Helen. She had one more secret, too, from that lady, which she could not divulge, perhaps because she knew how the widow would have rejoiced to know it. This regarded an event which had occurred during that visit to Lady Rockminster, which Laura had paid in the last Christmas holidays: when Pen was at home with his mother, and when Mr. Pynsent, supposed to be so cold and so ambitious, had formally offered his hand to Miss Bell. No one except herself and her admirer knew of this

proposal: or that Pynsent had been rejected by her, and probably the reasons she gave to the mortified young man himself were not those which actuated her refusal, or those which she chose to acknowledge to herself. "I never," she told Pynsent, "can accept such an offer as that which you make me, which you own is unknown to your family as I am sure it would be unwelcome to them. The difference of rank between us is too great. You are very kind to me here — too good and kind, dear Mr. Pynsent — but I am little better than a dependant."

"A dependant! who ever so thought of you? You are the equal of all the world," Pynsent broke out.

"I am a dependant at home, too," Laura said, sweetly, and indeed I would not be otherwise. Left early a poor orphan, I have found the kindest and tenderest of mothers, and I have vowed never to leave her — never. Pray do not speak of this again — here, under your relative's roof, or elsewhere. It is impossible."

"If Lady Rockminster asks you herself, will you listen to her?" Pynsent cried eagerly.

"No," Laura said. "I beg you never to speak of this any more. I must go away if you do"— and with this she left him.

Pynsent never asked for Lady Rockminster's intercession; he knew how vain it was to look for that: and he never spoke again on that subject to Laura or to any person.

When at length the famous novel appeared it not only met with applause from more impartial critics than Mrs. Pendennis, but, luckily for Pen it suited the taste of the public, and obtained a quick and considerable popularity before two months were over, Pen had the satisfaction and surprise of seeing the second edition of 'Walter Lorraine' advertised in the newspapers; and enjoyed the pleasure of reading and sending home the critiques of various literary journals and reviewers upon his book. Their censure did not much affect him; for the good-natured young man was disposed to accept with considerable humility the dispraises of others. Nor did their praise elate him over much; for, like most honest persons he had his own opinion about his own performance, and when a critic praised him in the wrong place he was rather hurt than pleased by the compliment. But if a review of his work was very laudatory, it was a great pleasure to him to send it home to his mother at Fair Oaks, and to think of the joy which it would give there. There are some natures, and perhaps, as we have said, Pendennis's was one, which are improved and softened by prosperity and kindness, as there are men of other dispositions, who become arrogant and graceless under good fortune. Happy he, who can endure one or the other with modesty and good-humour! Lucky he who has been educated to bear his fate, whatsoever it may be, by an early example of uprightness, and a childish training in honour!



CHAPTER XLIII

ALSATIA

Bred up, like a bailiff or a shabby attorney, about the purlieus of the Inns of Court, Shepherd's Inn is always to be found in the close neighbourhood of Lincoln's-Inn Fields, and the Temple. Some where behind the black gables and smutty chimney-stacks of Wych Street, Holywell Street, Chancery Lane, the quadrangle lies, hidden from the outer world; and it is approached by curious passages and ambiguous smoky alleys, on which the sun has forgotten to shine. Slop-sellers, brandy-ball and hard-bake vendors, purveyors of theatrical prints for youth, dealers in dingy furniture and bedding suggestive of anything but sleep, line the narrow walls and dark casements with their wares. The doors are many-belled: and crowds of dirty children form endless groups about the steps: or around the shell-fish dealers' trays in these courts; whereof the damp pavements resound with pattens, and are drabbed with a never-failing mud. Ballad-singers come and chant here, in deadly guttural tones, satirical songs against the Whig administration, against the bishops and dignified clergy, against the German relatives of an august royal family: Punch sets up his theatre, sure of an audience, and occasionally of a halfpenny from the swarming occupants of the houses: women scream after their children for loitering in the gutter, or, worse still, against the husband who comes reeling from the gin-shop; — there is a ceaseless din and life in these courts out of which you pass into the tranquil, old-fashioned quadrangle of Shepherd's Inn. In a mangy little grass-plot in the centre rises up the statue of Shepherd, defended by iron railings from the assaults of boys. The hall of the Inn, on which the founder's arms are painted, occupies one side of the square, the tall and ancient chambers are carried round other two sides, and over the central archway, which leads into Oldcastle Street, and so into the great London thoroughfare.

The Inn may have been occupied by lawyers once: but the laity have long since been admitted into its precincts, and I do not know that any of the principal legal firms have their chambers here. The offices of the Polwheeldle and Tredyddlum Copper Mines occupy one set of the ground-floor chambers; the Registry of Patent Inventions and Union of Genius and Capital Company, another; — the only gentleman whose name figures here, and in the "Law List," is Mr. Campion, who wears mustachios, and who comes in his cab twice or thrice in a week; and whose West End offices are in Curzon Street, Mayfair, where Mrs. Campion entertains the nobility and gentry to whom her husband lends money. There, and on his glazed cards, he is Mr. Somerset Campion; here he is Campion and Co.; and the same tuft which ornaments his chin, sprouts from the under lip of the rest of the firm. It is splendid to see his cab-horse harness blazing with heraldic bearings, as the vehicle stops at the door leading to his chambers: The horse flings froth off his nostrils as he chafes and tosses under the shining bit. The reins and the breeches of the groom are glittering white — the lustre of that equipage makes a sunshine in that shady place.

Our old friend, Captain Costigan, has examined Campion's cab and horse many an afternoon, as he trailed about the court in his carpet slippers and dressing-gown, with his old hat cocked over his eye. He suns himself there after his breakfast when the day is suitable; and goes and pays a visit to the porter's lodge, where he pats the heads of the children, and talks to Mrs. Bolton about the thayatres and me daughther Leedy Mirabel. Mrs. Bolton was herself in the profession once, and danced at the Wells in early days as the thirteenth of Mr. Serle's forty pupils.

Costigan lives in the third floor at No. 4, in the rooms which were Mr. Podmore's, and whose name is still on the door — (somebody else's name, by the way, is on almost all the doors in Shepherd's Inn). When Charley Podmore (the pleasing tenor singer, T.R.D.L., and at the Back Kitchen Concert Rooms) married, and went to live at Lambeth, he ceded his chambers to Mr. Bows and Captain Costigan, who occupy them in common now, and you may often hear the tones of Mr. Bows's piano of fine days when the windows are open, acid when he is practising for amusement, or for the instruction of a theatrical pupil, of whom he has one or two. Fanny Bolton is one, the portress's daughter, who has heard tell of her mother's theatrical glories, which she longs to emulate. She has a good voice and a pretty face and figure for the stage; and she prepares the rooms and makes the beds and breakfasts for Messrs. Costigan and Bows, in return for which the latter instructs her in music and singing. But for his unfortunate propensity to liquor (and in that excess she supposes that all men of fashion indulge), she thinks the Captain the finest gentleman in the world, and believes in all the versions of all his stories, and she is very fond of Mr. Bows too, and very grateful to him, and this shy queer old gentleman has a fatherly

fondness for her too, for in truth his heart is full of kindness, and he is never easy unless he loves somebody.

Costigan has had the carriages of visitors of distinction before his humble door in Shepherd's Inn: and to hear him talk of a morning (for his evening song is of a much more melancholy nature) you would fancy that Sir Charles and Lady Mirabel were in the constant habit of calling at his chambers, and bringing with them the select nobility to visit the "old man, the honest old half-pay Captain, poor old Jack Costigan," as Cos calls himself.

The truth is, that Lady Mirabel has left her husband's card (which has been stuck in the little looking-glass over the mantelpiece of the sitting-room at No. 4, for these many months past), and has come in person to see her father, but not of late days. A kind person, disposed to discharge her duties gravely, upon her marriage with Sir Charles she settled a little pension upon her father, who occasionally was admitted to the table of his daughter and son-in-law. At first poor Cos's behaviour "in the height of *poloît societee*," as he denominated Lady Mirabel's drawing-room table, was harmless, if it was absurd. As he clothed his person in his best attire, so he selected the longest and richest words in his vocabulary to deck his conversation, and adopted a solemnity of demeanour which struck with astonishment all those persons in whose company he happened to be. —"Was your Leedyship in the Pork to dee?" he would demand of his daughter. "I looked for your equipage in veen:— the poor old man was not gratified by the soight of his daughter's choriot. Sir Chorlus, I saw your neem at the Levee; many's the Levee at the Castle at Dublin that poor old Jack Costigan has attended in his time. Did the Juke look pretty well? Bedad, I'll call at Apsley House and lave me cyard upon 'um. I thank ye, James, a little dthrop more champeane." Indeed, he was magnificent in his courtesy to all, and addressed his observations not only to the master and the guests, but to the domestics who waited at the table, and who had some difficulty in maintaining their professional gravity while they waited on Captain Costigan.

On the first two or three visits to his son-in-law, Costigan maintained a strict sobriety, content to make up for his lost time when he got to the Back Kitchen, where he bragged about his son-in-law's dart and burgundee, until his own utterance began to fail him, over his sixth tumbler of whisky-punch. But with familiarity his caution vanished, and poor Cos lamentably disgraced himself at Sir Charles Mirabel's table, by premature inebriation. A carriage was called for him: the hospitable door was shut upon him. Often and sadly did he speak to his friends at the Kitchen of his resemblance to King Lear in the plee — of his having a thankless choild, bedad — of his being a pore worn-out lonely old man, dthriven to dthinking by ingratitude, and seeking to dthrown his sorrows in punch.

It is painful to be obliged to record the weaknesses of fathers, but it must be furthermore told of Costigan, that when his credit was exhausted and his money gone, he would not unfrequently beg money from his daughter, and made statements to her not altogether consistent with strict truth. On one day a bailiff was about to lead him to prison, he wrote, "unless the — to you insignificant — sum of three pound five can be forthcoming to liberate a poor man's grey hairs from gaol." And the good-natured Lady Mirabel despatched the money necessary for her father's liberation, with a caution to him to be more economical for the future. On a second occasion the Captain met with a frightful accident, and broke a plate-glass window in the Strand, for which the proprietor of the shop held him liable. The money was forthcoming on this time too, to repair her papa's disaster, and was carried down by Lady Mirabel's servant to the slipshod messenger and aide-de-camp of the Captain, who brought the letter announcing his mishap. If the servant had followed the Captain's aide-de-camp who carried the remittance, he would have seen that gentleman, a person of Costigan's country too (for have we not said, that however poor an Irish gentleman is, he always has a poorer Irish gentleman to run on his errands and transact his pecuniary affairs?), call a cab from the nearest stand, and rattle down to the Roscius Head, Harlequin Yard, Drury Lane, where the Captain was indeed in pawn, and for several glasses containing rum-and-water, or other spirituous refreshment, of which he and his staff had partaken. On a third melancholy occasion he wrote that he was attacked by illness, and wanted money to pay the physician whom he was compelled to call in; and this time Lady Mirabel, alarmed about her father's safety, and perhaps reproaching herself that she had of late lost sight of her father, called for her carriage and drove to Shepherd's Inn, at the gate of which she alighted, whence she found the way to her father's chambers, "No. 4, third floor, name of Podmore over the door," the portress said, with many curtsies, pointing towards the door of the house, into which the affectionate daughter entered and mounted the dingy stair. Alas! the door, surmounted by the name of Podmore, was opened to her by poor Cos in his shirt-sleeves, and prepared with the gridiron to receive the mutton-chops which Mrs. Bolton had gone to purchase.

Also, it was not pleasant for Sir Charles Mirabel to have letters constantly addressed to him at Brookes's, with the information that Captain Costigan was in the hall, waiting for an answer; or when he went to play his rubber at the

Travellers', to be obliged to shoot out of his brougham and run up the steps rapidly, lest his father-in-law should seize upon him; and to think that while he read his paper or played his whist, the Captain was walking on the opposite side of Pall Mall, with that dreadful cocked hat, and the eye beneath it fixed steadily upon the windows of the club. Sir Charles was a weak man; he was old, and had many infirmities: he cried about his father-in-law to his wife, whom he adored with senile infatuation: he said he must go abroad — he must go and live in the country — he should die or have another fit if he saw that man again — he knew he should. And it was only by paying a second visit to Captain Costigan, and representing to him, that if he plagued Sir Charles by letters or addressed him in the street, or made any further applications for loans, his allowance would be withdrawn altogether, that Lady Mirabel was enabled to keep her papa in order, and to restore tranquillity to her husband. And on occasion of this visit, she sternly rebuked Bows for not keeping a better watch over the Captain; desired that he should not be allowed to drink in that shameful way; and that the people at the horrid taverns which he frequented should be told, upon no account to give him credit. "Papa's conduct is bringing me to the grave," she said (though she looked perfectly healthy), "and you, as an old man, Mr. Bows, and one that pretended to have a regard for us, ought to be ashamed of abetting him in it." Those were the thanks which honest Bows got for his friendship and his life's devotion. And I do not suppose that the old philosopher was much worse off than many other men, or had greater reason to grumble.

On the second floor of the next house to Bows's, in Shepherd's Inn, at No. 3, live two other acquaintances of ours: Colonel Altamont, agent to the Nawaub of Lucknow, and Captain Chevalier Edward Strong. No name at all is over their door. The Captain does not choose to let all the world know where he lives and his cards bear the address of a Jermyn Street hotel; and as for the Ambassador Plenipotentiary of the Indian potentate, he is not an envoy accredited to the Courts of St. James's or Leadenhall Street but is here on a confidential mission quite independent of the East India Company or the Board of Control. "In fact," Strong says, "Colonel Altamont's object being financial, and to effectuate a sale of some of the principal diamonds and rubies of the Lucknow crown, his wish is not to report himself at the India House or in Cannon Row, but rather to negotiate with private capitalists — with whom he has had important transactions both in this country and on the Continent."

We have said that these anonymous chambers of Strong's had been very comfortably furnished since the arrival of Sir Francis Clavering in London, and the Chevalier might boast with reason to the friends who visited him, that few retired Captains were more snugly quartered than he, in his crib in Shepherd's Inn. There were three rooms below: the office where Strong transacted his business — whatever that might be — and where still remained the desk and railings of the departed officials who had preceded him, and the Chevalier's own bedroom and sitting-room; and a private stair led out of the office to two upper apartments, the one occupied by Colonel Altamont, and the other serving as the kitchen of the establishment, and the bedroom of Mr. Grady, the attendant. These rooms were on a level with the apartments of our friends Bows and Costigan next door at No. 4; and by reaching over the communicating leads, Grady could command the mignonette-box which bloomed in Bows's window.

From Grady's kitchen casement often came odours still more fragrant. The three old soldiers who formed the garrison of No. 3 were all skilled in the culinary art. Grady was great at an Irish stew; the Colonel was famous for pillaus and curries; and as for Strong he could cook anything. He made French dishes and Spanish dishes, stews, fricassees, and omelettes, to perfection; nor was there any man in England more hospitable than he when his purse was full or his credit was good. At those happy periods, he could give a friend, as he said, a good dinner, a good glass of wine, and a good song afterwards; and poor Cos often heard with envy the roar of Strong's choruses, and the musical clinking of the glasses, as he sate in his own room, so far removed and yet so near to those festivities. It was not expedient to invite Mr. Costigan always: his practice of inebriation was lamentable; and he bored Strong's guests with his stories when sober, and with his maudlin tears when drunk.

A strange and motley set they were, these friends of the Chevalier; and though Major Pendennis would not much have relished their company, Arthur and Warrington liked it not a little, and Pen thought it as amusing as the society of the finest gentlemen in the finest houses which he had the honour to frequent. There was a history about every man of the set: they seemed all to have had their tides of luck and bad fortune. Most of them had wonderful schemes and speculations in their pockets, and plenty for making rapid and extraordinary fortunes. Jack Holt had been in Don Carlos's army, when Ned Strong had fought on the other side; and was now organising a little scheme for smuggling tobacco into London, which must bring thirty thousand a year to any man who would advance fifteen hundred, just to bribe the last officer of the Excise

who held out, and had wind of the scheme. Tom Diver, who had been in the Mexican navy, knew of a specie-ship which had been sunk in the first year of the war, with three hundred and eighty thousand dollars on board, and a hundred and eighty thousand pounds in bars and doubloons. "Give me eighteen hundred pounds," Tom said, "and I'm off tomorrow. I take out four men, and a diving-bell with me; and I return in ten months to take my seat in Parliament, by Jove! and to buy back my family estate." Keightley, the manager of the Tredyddlum and Polwheedle Copper Mines (which were as yet under water), besides singing as good a second as any professional man, and besides the Tredyddlum Office, had a Smyrna Sponge Company, and a little quicksilver operation in view, which would set him straight with the world yet. Filby had been everything a corporal of dragoons, a field-preacher, and missionary-agent for converting the Irish; an actor at a Greenwich fair-booth, in front of which his father's attorney found him when the old gentleman died and left him that famous property, from which he got no rents now, and of which nobody exactly knew the situation. Added to these was Sir Francis Clavering, Bart., who liked their society, though he did not much add to its amusements by his convivial powers. But he was made much of by the company now, on account of his wealth and position in the world. He told his little story and sang his little song or two with great affability; and he had had his own history, too, before his accession to good fortune; and had seen the inside of more prisons than one, and written his name on many a stamped paper.

When Altamont first returned from Paris, and after he had communicated with Sir Francis Clavering from the hotel at which he had taken up his quarters (and which he had reached in a very denuded state, considering the wealth of diamonds and rubies with which this honest man was entrusted), Strong was sent to his patron by the Baronet; paid his little bill at the inn, and invited him to come and sleep for a night or two at the chambers, where he subsequently took up his residence. To negotiate with this man was very well, but to have such a person settled in his rooms, and to be constantly burthened with such society, did not suit the Chevalier's taste much; and he grumbled not a little to his principal.

"I wish you would put this bear into somebody else's cage," he said to Clavering. "The fellow's no gentleman. I don't like walking with him. He dresses himself like a nigger on a holiday. I took him to the play the other night; and, by Jove, sir, he abused the actor who was doing the part of villain in the play, and swore at him so, that the people in the boxes wanted to turn him out. The after-piece was the 'Brigand,' where Wallack comes in wounded, you know, and dies. When he died, Altamont began to cry like a child, and said it was a d — d shame, and cried and swore so, that there was another row, and everybody laughing. Then I had to take him away, because he wanted to take his coat off to one fellow who laughed at him; and bellowed to him to stand up like a man. — Who is he? Where the deuce does he come from? You had best tell me the whole story. Frank; you must one day. You and he have robbed a church together, that's my belief. You had better get it off your mind at once, Clavering, and tell me what this Altamont is, and what hold he has over you."

"Hang him! I wish he was dead!" was the Baronet's only reply; and his countenance became so gloomy, that Strong did not think fit to question his patron any further at that time; but resolved, if need were, to try and discover for himself what was the secret tie between Altamont and Clavering.



CHAPTER XLIV

IN WHICH THE COLONEL NARRATES SOME OF HIS ADVENTURES

Early in the forenoon of the day after the dinner in Grosvenor Place, at which Colonel Altamont had chosen to appear, the Colonel emerged from his chamber in the upper story at Shepherd's Inn, and entered into Strong's sitting-room, where the Chevalier sate in his easy-chair with the newspaper and his cigar. He was a man who made his tent comfortable wherever he pitched it, and long before Altamont's arrival, had done justice to a copious breakfast of fried eggs and broiled rashers, which Mr. Grady had prepared *secundum artem*. Good-humoured and talkative, he preferred any company rather than none; and though he had not the least liking for his fellow-lodger, and would not have grieved to hear that the accident had befallen him which Sir Francis Clavering desired so fervently, yet kept on fair terms with him. He had seen Altamont to bed with great friendliness on the night previous, and taken away his candle for fear of accidents; and finding a spirit-bottle empty, upon which he had counted for his nocturnal refreshment, had drunk a glass of water with perfect contentment over his pipe, before he turned into his own crib and to sleep. That enjoyment never failed him: he had always an easy temper, a faultless digestion, and a rosy cheek; and whether he was going into action the next morning or to prison (and both had been his lot), in the camp or the Fleet, the worthy Captain snored healthfully through the night, and woke with a good heart and appetite, for the struggles or difficulties or pleasures of the day.

The first act of Colonel Altamont was to bellow to Grady for a pint of pale ale, the which he first poured into a pewter flagon, whence he transferred it to his own lips. He put down the tankard empty, drew a great breath, wiped his mouth in his dressing-gown (the difference of the colour of his beard from his dyed whiskers had long struck Captain Strong, who had seen too that his hair was fair under his black wig, but made no remarks upon these circumstances)— the Colonel drew a great breath, and professed himself immensely refreshed by his draught. "Nothing like that beer," he remarked, "when the coppers are hot. Many a day I've drunk a dozen of Bass at Calcutta, and — and —"

"And at Lucknow, I suppose," Strong said with a laugh. "I got the beer for you on purpose: knew you'd want it after last night." And the Colonel began to talk about his adventures of the preceding evening.

"I cannot help myself," the Colonel said, beating his head with his big hand. "I'm a madman when I get the liquor on board me; and ain't fit to be trusted with a spirit-bottle. When I once begin I can't stop till I've emptied it; and when I've swallowed it, Lord knows what I say or what I don't say. I dined at home here quite quiet. Grady gave me just my two tumblers, and I intended to pass the evening at the Black and Red as sober as a parson. Why did you leave that confounded sample-bottle of Hollands out of the cupboard, Strong? Grady must go out too, and leave me the kettle a-boiling for tea. It was of no use, I couldn't keep away from it. Washed it all down, sir, by Jove. And it's my belief I had some more, too, afterwards at that infernal little thieves' den."

"What, were you there too?" Strong asked, "and before you came to Grosvenor Place? That was beginning betimes."

"Early hours to be drunk and cleared out before nine o'clock, eh? But so it was. Yes, like a great big fool, I must go there; and found the fellows dining, Blackland and young Moss, and two or three more of the thieves. If we'd gone to Rouge et Noir, I must have won. But we didn't try the black and red. No, hang 'em, they know'd I'd have beat 'em at that — I must have beat 'em — I can't help beating 'em, I tell you. But they was too cunning for me. That rascal Blackland got the bones out, and we played hazard on the dining-table. And I dropped all the money I had from you in the morning, be hanged to my luck. It was that that set me wild, and I suppose I must have been very hot about the head, for I went off thinking to get some more money from Clavering, I recollect; and then — and then I don't much remember what happened till I woke this morning, and heard old Bows at No. 4 playing on his pianner."

Strong mused for a while as he lighted his cigar with a coal, "I should like to know how you always draw money from Clavering, Colonel," he said.

The Colonel burst out with a laugh — "Ha, ha! he owes it me," he said.

"I don't know that that's a reason with Frank for paying," Strong answered. "He owes plenty besides you."

"Well, he gives it me because he is so fond of me," the other said with the same grinning sneer. "He loves me like a brother; you know he does, Captain. — No? — He don't? — Well, perhaps he don't; and if you ask me no questions, perhaps

I'll tell you no lies, Captain Strong — put that in your pipe and smoke it, my boy."

"But I'll give up that confounded brandy-bottle," the Colonel continued, after a pause. "I must give it up, or it'll be the ruin of me."

"It makes you say queer things," said the Captain, looking Altamont hard in the face. "Remember what you said last night, at Clavering's table."

"Say? What did I say?" asked the other hastily. "Did I split anything? Dammy, Strong, did I split anything?"

"Ask me no questions, and I will tell you no lies," the Chevalier replied on his part. Strong thought of the words Mr. Altamont had used, and his abrupt departure from the Baronet's dining-table and house as soon as he recognised Major Pendennis, or Captain Beak, as he called the Major. But Strong resolved to seek an explanation of these words otherwise than from Colonel Altamont, and did not choose to recall them to the other's memory. "No," he said then, "you didn't split as you call it, Colonel; it was only a trap of mine to see if I could make you speak; but you didn't say a word that anybody could comprehend — you were too far gone for that."

So much the better, Altamont thought; and heaved a great sigh, as if relieved. Strong remarked the emotion, but took no notice, and the other being in a communicative mood, went on speaking.

"Yes, I own to my faults," continued the Colonel. "There is some things I can't, do what I will, resist: a bottle of brandy, a box of dice, and a beautiful woman. No man of pluck and spirit, no man as was worth his salt ever could, as I know of. There's hardly p'raps a country in the world in which them three ain't got me into trouble."

"Indeed?" said Strong.

"Yes, from the age of fifteen, when I ran away from home, and went cabin-boy on board an Indiaman, till now, when I'm fifty year old, pretty nigh, them women have always been my ruin. Why, it was one of 'em, and with such black eyes and jewels on her neck, and Battens and ermine like a duchess, I tell you — it was one of 'em at Paris that swept off the best part of the thousand pound as I went off with. Didn't I ever tell you of it? Well, I don't mind. At first I was very cautious and having such a lot of money kept it close and lived like a gentleman — Colonel Altamont, Meurice's hotel, and that sort of thing — never played, except at the public tables, and won more than I lost. Well, sir, there was a chap that I saw at the hotel and the Palace Royal too, a regular swell fellow, with white kid gloves and a tuft to his chin, Bloundell-Bloundell his name was, as I made acquaintance with somehow, and he asked me to dinner, and took me to Madame the Countess de Foljambe's soirees — such a woman, Strong! — such an eye! such a hand at the pianner. Lor bless you, she'd sit down and sing to you, and gaze at you, until she warbled your soul out of your body a'most. She asked me to go to her evening parties every Toosday; and didn't I take opera-boxes and give her dinners at the restauranteur's, that's all? But I had a run of luck at the tables, and it was not in the dinners and opera-boxes that poor Clavering's money went. No, be hanged to it, it was swept off in another way. One night, at the Countess's, there was several of us at supper — Mr. Bloundell-Bloundell, the Honourable Deuceace, the Marky de la Tour de Force — all tip-top nobs, sir, and the height of fashion, when we had supper, and champagne you may be sure in plenty, and then some of that confounded brandy. I would have it — I would it go on at it — the Countess mixed the tumblers of punch for me, and we had cards as well as grog after supper, and I played and drank until I don't know what I did. I was like I was last night. I was taken away and put to bed somehow, and never woke until the next day, to a roaring headache, and to see my servant, who said the Honourable Deuceace wanted to see me, and was waiting in the sitting-room. 'How are you, Colonel?' says he, a coming into my bedroom. 'How long did you stay last night after I went away? The play was getting too high for me, and I'd lost enough to you for one night.'"

"'To me,' says I, 'how's that, my dear feller? (for though he was an Earl's son, we was as familiar as you and me). How's that, my dear feller?' says I, and he tells me, that he had borrowed thirty louis of me at vingt-et-un, that he gave me an I.O.U. for it the night before, which I put into my pocket-book before he left the room. I takes out my card-case — it was the Countess as worked it for me — and there was the I.O.U. sure enough, and he paid me thirty louis in gold down upon the table at my bedside. So I said he was a gentleman, and asked him if he would like to take anything, when my servant should get it for him; but the Honourable Deuceace don't drink of a morning, and he went away to some business which he said he had.

"Presently there's another ring at my outer door; and this time it's Bloundell-Bloundell and the Marky that comes in. 'Bong jour, Marky,' says I. 'Good morning — no headache?' says he. So I said I had one; and how I must have been uncommon queer the night afore; but they both declared I didn't show no signs of having had too much, but took my liquor

as grave as a judge.

“‘So,’ says the Marky, ‘Deuceace has been with you; we met him in the Palais Royal as we were coming from breakfast. Has he settled with you? Get it while you can: he’s a slippery card; and as he won three ponies of Bloundell, I recommend you to get your money while he has some.’

“‘He has paid me,’ says I; ‘but I knew no more than the dead that he owed me anything, and don’t remember a bit about lending him thirty louis.’

“‘The Marky and Bloundell looks and smiles at each other at this; and Bloundell says, ‘Colonel, you are a queer feller. No man could have supposed, from your manners, that you had tasted anything stronger than tea all night, and yet you forget things in the morning. Come, come — tell that to the marines, my friend — we won’t have it at any price.’

“‘En effet,’ says the Marky, twiddling his little black mustachios in the chimney-glass, and making a lunge or two as he used to do at the fencing-school. (He was a wonder at the fencing-school, and I’ve seen him knock down the image fourteen times running, at Lepage’s.) ‘Let us speak of affairs. Colonel, you understand that affairs of honour are best settled at once: perhaps it won’t be inconvenient to you to arrange our little matters of last night.’

“‘What little matters?’ says I. ‘Do you owe me any money, Marky?’

“‘Bah!’ says he; ‘do not let us have any more jesting. I have your note of hand for three hundred and forty louis. La voia!’ says he, taking out a paper from his pocket-book.

“‘And mine for two hundred and ten,’ says Bloundell-Bloundell, and he pulls out his bit of paper.

“‘I was in such a rage of wonder at this, that I sprang out of bed, and wrapped my dressing-gown round me. ‘Are you come here to make a fool of me?’ says I. ‘I don’t owe you two hundred, or two thousand, or two louis; and I won’t pay you a farthing. Do you suppose you can catch me with your notes of hand? I laugh at ’em and at you; and I believe you to be a couple —.’

“‘A couple of what?’ says Mr. Bloundell. ‘You, of course, are aware that we are a couple of men of honour, Colonel Altamont, and not come here to trifle or to listen to abuse from you. You will either pay us or we will expose you as a cheat, and chastise you as a cheat, too,’ says Bloundell.

“‘Oui, parbleu,’ says the Marky — but I didn’t mind him, for I could have thrown the little fellow out of the window; but it was different with Bloundell — he was a large man, that weighs three stone more than me, and stands six inches higher, and I think he could have done for me.

“‘Monsieur will pay, or Monsieur will give me the reason why. I believe you’re little better than a polisson, Colonel Altamont,’— that was the phrase he used — Altamont said with a grin — and I got plenty more of this language from the two fellows, and was in the thick of the row with them, when another of our party came in. This was a friend of mine — a gent I had met at Boulogne, and had taken to the Countess’s myself. And as he hadn’t played at all on the previous night, and had actually warned me against Bloundell and the others, I told the story to him, and so did the other two.

“‘I am very sorry,’ says he. ‘You would go on playing: the Countess entreated you to discontinue. These gentlemen offered repeatedly to stop. It was you that insisted on the large stakes, not they.’ In fact he charged dead against me: and when the two others went away, he told me how the Marky would shoot me as sure as my name was — was what it is. ‘I left the Countess crying, too,’ said he. ‘She hates these two men; she has warned you repeatedly against them’(which she actually had done, and often told me never to play with them), ‘and now, Colonel, I have left her in hysterics almost, lest there should be any quarrel between you, and that confounded Marky should put a bullet through your head. Its my belief,’ says my friend, ‘that that woman is distractedly in love with you.’

“‘Do you think so?’ says I; upon which my friend told me how she had actually gone down on her knees to him and ‘Save Colonel Altamont!’

“‘As soon as I was dressed, I went and called upon that lovely woman. She gave a shriek and pretty near fainted when she saw me. She called me Ferdinand — I’m blest if she didn’t.”

“‘I thought your name was Jack,” said Strong, with a laugh; at which the Colonel blushed very much behind his dyed whiskers.

“‘A man may have more names than one, mayn’t he, Strong?’ Altamont asked. “‘When I’m with a lady, I like to take a good one. She called me by my Christian name. She cried fit to break your heart. I can’t stand seeing a woman cry — never

could — not whilst I'm fond of her. She said she could bear not to think of my losing so much money in her house. Wouldn't I take her diamonds and necklaces, and pay part?

"I swore I wouldn't touch a farthing's worth of her jewellery, which perhaps I did not think was worth a great deal — but what can a woman do more than give you her all? That's the sort I like, and I know there's plenty of 'em. And I told her to be easy about the money, for I would not pay one single farthing.

"Then they'll shoot you,' says she; 'they'll kill my Ferdinand.'"

"They'll kill my Jack wouldn't have sounded well in French," Strong said, laughing.

"Never mind about names," said the other, sulkily; "a man of honour may take any name he chooses, I suppose."

"Well, go on with your story," said Strong. "She said they would kill you."

"No,' says I, 'they won't: for I will not let that scamp of a Marquis send me out of the world; and if he lays a hand on me, I'll brain him, Marquis as he is.'

"At this the Countess shrank back from me as if I had said something very shocking. 'Do I understand Colonel Altamont aright?' says she: 'and that a British officer refuses to meet any person who provokes him to the field of honour?'

"Field of honour be hanged, Countess,' says I. 'You would not have me be a target for that little scoundrel's pistol practice.'

"Colonel Altamont,' says the Countess, 'I thought you were a man of honour — I thought, I— but no matter. Good-bye, sir.'— And she was sweeping out of the room, her voice regular choking in her pocket-handkerchief.

"Countess!' says I, rushing after her and seizing her hand.

"Leave me, Monsieur le Colonel,' says she, shaking me off, 'my father was a General of the Grand Army. A soldier should know how to pay all his debts of honour.'

"What could I do? Everybody was against me. Caroline said I had lost the money: though I didn't remember a syllable about the business. I had taken Deuceace's money too; but then it was because he offered it to me you know, and that's a different thing. Every one of these chaps was a man of fashion and honour; and the Marky and the Countess of the first families in France. And, by Jove, sir, rather than offend her, I paid the money up five hundred and sixty gold Napoleons, by Jove: besides three hundred which I lost when I had my revenge.

"And I can't tell you at this minute whether I was done or not," concluded the Colonel, musing. "Sometimes I think I was: but then Caroline was so fond of me. That woman would never have seen me done: never, I'm sure she wouldn't: at least, if she would, I'm deceived in woman."

Any further revelations of his past life which Altamont might have been disposed to confide to his honest comrade the Chevalier, were interrupted by a knocking at the outer door of their chambers; which, when opened by Grady the servant, admitted no less a person than Sir Francis Clavering into the presence of the two worthies.

"The Governor, by Jove," cried Strong, regarding the arrival of his patron with surprise. "What's brought you here?" growled Altamont, looking sternly from under his heavy eyebrows at the Baronet. "It's no good, I warrant." And indeed, good very seldom brought Sir Francis Clavering into that or any other place.

Whenever he came into Shepherd's Inn it was money that brought the unlucky baronet into those precincts; and there was commonly a gentleman of the money-dealing world in waiting for him at Strong's chambers, or at Campion's below; and a question of bills to negotiate or to renew. Clavering was a man who had never looked his debts fairly in the face, familiar as he had been with them all his life; as long as he could renew a bill, his mind was easy regarding it; and he would sign almost anything for tomorrow, provided today could be left unmolested. He was a man whom scarcely any amount of fortune could have benefited permanently, and who was made to be ruined to cheat small tradesmen, to be the victim of astuter sharpers: to be niggardly and reckless, and as destitute of honesty as the people who cheated him, and a dupe, chiefly because he was too mean to be a successful knave. He had told more lies in his time, and undergone more baseness of stratagem in order to stave off a small debt, or to swindle a poor creditor, than would have sufficed to make a fortune for a braver rogue. He was abject and a shuffler in the very height of his prosperity. Had he been a Crown Prince — he could not have been more weak, useless, dissolute or ungrateful. He could not move through life except leaning on the arm of somebody: and yet he never had an agent but he mistrusted him; and marred any plans which might be arranged for his benefit, and secretly acting against the people whom he employed. Strong knew Clavering and judged him quite correctly.

It was not as friends that this pair met: but the Chevalier worked for his principal, as he would when in the army have pursued a harassing march, or undergone his part in the danger and privations of a siege; because it was his duty, and because he had agreed to it. "What is it he wants?" thought the officers of the Shepherd's Inn garrison when the Baronet came among them.

His pale face expressed extreme anger and irritation. "So sir," he said, addressing Altamont, "you've been at your old tricks."

"Which of 'um?" asked Altamont, with a sneer.

"You have been at the Rouge et Noir: you were there last night," cried the Baronet.

"How do you know — were you there?" the other said. "I was at the Club but it wasn't on the colours I played — ask the Captain — I've been telling him of it. It was with the bones. It was at hazard, Sir Francis, upon my word and honour it was;" and he looked at the Baronet with a knowing humorous mock humility, which only seemed to make the other more angry.

"What the deuce do I care, sir, how a man like you loses his money, and whether it is at hazard or roulette?" screamed the Baronet, with a multiplicity of oaths, and at the top of his voice. "What I will not have, sir, is that you should use my name, or couple it with yours. — Damn him, Strong, why don't you keep him in better order? I tell you he has gone and used my name again, sir — drawn a bill upon me, and lost the money on the table — I can't stand it — I won't stand it. Flesh and blood won't bear it — Do you know how much I have paid for you, sir?"

"This was only a very little 'un, Sir Francis — only fifteen pound, Captain Strong, they wouldn't stand another: and it oughtn't to anger you, Governor. Why, it's so trifling I did not even mention it to Strong — did I now, Captain? I protest it had quite slipped my memory, and all on account of that confounded liquor I took."

"Liquor or no liquor, sir, it is no business of mine. I don't care what you drink, or where you drink it — only it shan't be in my house. And I will not have you breaking into my house of a night, and a fellow like you intruding himself on my company: how dared you show yourself in Grosvenor Place last night, sir — and — and what do you suppose my friends must think of me when they see a man of your sort walking into my dining-room uninvited, and drunk, and calling for liquor as if you were the master of the house?"

"They'll think you know some very queer sort of people, I dare say," Altamont said with impenetrable good-humour. "Look here, Baronet, I apologise; on my honour I do, and ain't an apology enough between two gentlemen? It was a strong measure I own, walking into your cuddy, and calling for drink as if I was the Captain: but I had had too much before, you see, that's why I wanted some more; nothing can be more simple — and it was because they wouldn't give me no more money upon your name at the Black and Red, that I thought I would come down and speak to you about it. To refuse me was nothing: but to refuse a bill drawn on you that have been such a friend to the shop, and are a baronet and a member of parliament, and a gentleman and no mistake — Damme, its ungrateful."

"By heavens, if ever you do it again — if ever you dare show to yourself in my house; or give my name at a gambling-house or at any other house, by Jove — at any other house — or give any reference at all to me, or speak to me in the street, by God, or anywhere else until I speak to you — I disclaim you altogether — I won't give you another shilling."

"Governor, don't be provoking," Altamont said surlily. "Don't talk to me about daring to do this thing or t'other, or when my dander is up it's the very thing to urge me on. I oughtn't to have come last night, I know I oughtn't: but I told you I was drunk, and that ought to be sufficient between gentleman and gentleman."

"You a gentleman! dammy, sir," said the Baronet, "how dares a fellow like you to call himself a gentleman?"

"I ain't a baronet, I know," growled the other; and I've forgotten how to be a gentleman almost now, but — but I was one, once, and my father was one, and I'll not have this sort of talk from you, Sir F. Clavering, that's flat. I want to go abroad again. Why don't you come down with the money, and let me go? Why the devil are you to be rolling in riches, and me to have none? Why should have a house and a table covered with plate, and me be in a garret here in this beggarly Shepherd's Inn? We're partners, ain't we? I'd as good a right to be rich as you have, haven't I? Tell the story to Strong here, if you like; and ask him to be umpire between us. I don't mind letting my secret out to a man that won't split. Look here, Strong — perhaps you guess the story already — the fact is, me and the Governor —"

"D— — hold your tongue," shrieked out the Baronet in a fury. "You shall have the money as soon as I can get it. I ain't made of money. I'm so pressed and badgered, I don't know where to turn. I shall go mad; by Jove, I shall. I wish I was

dead, for I'm the most miserable brute alive. I say, Mr. Altamont, don't mind me. When I'm out of health — and I'm devilish bilious this morning — hang me, I abuse everybody, and don't know what I say. Excuse me if I've offended you. I—I'll try and get that little business done. Strong shall try. Upon my word he shall. And I say, Strong, my boy, I want to speak to you. Come into the office for a minute."

Almost all Clavering's assaults ended in this ignominious way, and in a shameful retreat. Altamont sneered after the Baronet as he left the room, and entered into the office, to talk privately with his factotum.

"What is the matter now?" the latter asked of him. "It's the old story, I suppose."

"D—— it, yes," the Baronet said. "I dropped two hundred in ready money at the Little Coventry last night, and gave a cheque for three hundred more. On her ladyship's bankers, too, for tomorrow; and I must meet it, for there'll be the deuce to pay else. The last time she paid my play-debts, I swore I would not touch a dice-box again, and she'll keep her word, Strong, and dissolve partnership, if I go on. I wish I had three hundred a year, and was away. At a German watering-place you can do devilish well with three hundred a year. But my habits are so d —— reckless: I wish I was in the Serpentine. I wish I was dead, by Gad I wish I was. I wish I had never touched those confounded bones. I had such a run of luck last night, with five for the main, and seven to five all night, until those ruffians wanted to pay me with Altamont's bill upon me. The luck turned from that minute. Never held the box again for three mains, and came away cleared out, leaving that infernal cheque behind me. How shall I pay it? Blackland won't hold it over. Hulker and Bullock will write about it directly to her ladyship. By Jove, Ned, I'm the most miserable brute in all England."

It was necessary for Ned to devise some plan to console the Baronet under this pressure of grief; and no doubt he found the means of procuring a loan for his patron, for he was closeted at Mr. Champion's offices that day for some time. Altamont had once more a guinea or two in his pocket, with a promise of a further settlement; and the Baronet had no need to wish himself dead for the next two or three months at least. And Strong, putting together what he had learned from the Colonel and Sir Francis, began to form in his own mind a pretty accurate opinion as to the nature of the tie which bound the two men together.



CHAPTER XLV

A CHAPTER OF CONVERSATIONS

Every day, after the entertainment at Grosvenor Place and Greenwich, of which we have seen Major Pendennis partake, the worthy gentleman's friendship and cordiality for the Clavering family seemed to increase. His calls were frequent; his attentions to the lady of the house unremitting. An old man about town, he had the good fortune to be received in many houses, at which a lady of Lady Clavering's distinction ought to be seen. Would her ladyship not like to be present at the grand entertainment at Gaunt House? There was to be a very pretty breakfast ball at Viscount Marrowfat's, at Fulham. Everybody was to be there (including august personages of the highest rank), and there was to be a Watteau quadrille, in which Miss Amory would surely look charming. To these and other amusements the obsequious old gentleman kindly offered to conduct Lady Clavering, and was also ready to make himself useful to the Baronet in any way agreeable to the latter.

In spite of his present station and fortune, the world persisted in looking rather coldly upon Clavering, and strange suspicious rumours followed him about. He was blackballed at two clubs in succession. In the House of Commons, he only conversed with a few of the most disreputable members of that famous body, having a happy knack of choosing bad society, and adapting himself naturally to it, as other people do to the company of their betters. The name all the senators with whom Clavering consorted, would be invidious. We may mention only a few. There was Captain Raff, the honourable member for Epsom, who retired after the last Goodwood races, having accepted, as Mr. Hotspur, the whip of the party, said, a mission to the Levant; there was Hustingson, the patriotic member for Islington, whose voice is never heard now denouncing corruption, since his appointment to the Governorship of Coventry Island; there was Bob Freeny, of the Booterstown Freenys, who is a dead shot, and of whom we therefore wish to speak with every respect; and of all these gentlemen, with whom in the course of his professional duty Mr. Hotspur had to confer, there was none for whom he had a more thorough contempt and dislike than for Sir Francis Clavering, the representative of an ancient race, who had sat for their own borough of Clavering time out of mind in the House. "If that man is wanted for a division," Hotspur said, "ten to one he is to be found in a hell. He was educated in the Fleet, and he has not heard the end of Newgate yet, take my word for it. He'll muddle away the Begum's fortune at thimble-rig, be caught picking pockets, and finish on board the hulks." And if the high-born Hotspur, with such an opinion of Clavering, could yet from professional reasons be civil to him, why should not Major Pendennis also have reasons of his own for being attentive to this unlucky gentleman?

"He has a very good cellar and a very good cook," the Major said; "as long as he is silent he is not offensive, and he very seldom speaks. If he chooses to frequent gambling-tables, and lose his money to blacklegs, what matters to me? Don't look too curiously into any man's affairs, Pen, my boy; every fellow has some cupboard in his house, begad, which he would not like you and me to peep into. Why should we try, when the rest of the house is open to us? And a devilish good house, too, as you and I know. And if the man of the family is not all one could wish, the women are excellent. The Begum is not over-refined, but as kind a woman as ever lived, and devilish clever too; and as for the little Blanche, you know my opinion about her, you rogue; you know my belief is that she is sweet on you, and would have you for the asking. But you are growing such a great man, that I suppose you won't be content under a Duke's daughter — Hey, sir? I recommend you to ask one of them, and try."

Perhaps Pen was somewhat intoxicated by his success in the world; and it may also have entered into the young man's mind (his uncle's perpetual hints serving not a little to encourage the notion) that Miss Amory was tolerably well disposed to renew the little flirtation which had been carried on in the early days of both of them, by the banks of the rural Brawl. But he was little disposed to marriage, he said, at that moment, and, adopting some of his uncle's worldly tone, spoke rather contemptuously of the institution, and in favour of a bachelor life.

"You are very happy, sir," said he, "and you get on very well alone, and so do I. With a wife at my side, I should lose my place in society; and I don't, for my part, much fancy retiring into the country with a Mrs. Pendennis; or taking my wife into lodgings to be waited upon by the servant-of-all-work. The period of my little illusions is over. You cured me of my first love who, certainly was a fool, and would have had a fool for her husband, and a very sulky discontented husband too if she had taken me. We young fellows live fast, sir; and I feel as old at five-and-twenty as many of the old fo — the old

bachelors — whom I see in the bow-window at Bays's. Don't look offended, I only mean that I am blase about love matters, and that I could no more fan myself into a flame for Miss Amory now, than I could adore Lady Mirabel over again. I wish I could; I rather like old Mirabel for his infatuation about her, and think his passion is the most respectable part of his life."

"Sir Charles Mirabel was always a theatrical man, sir," the Major said, annoyed that his nephew should speak flippantly of any person of Sir Charles's rank and station. "He has been occupied with theatricals since his early days. He acted at Carlton House when he was Page to the Prince; he has been mixed up with that sort of thing; he could afford to marry whom he chooses; and Lady Mirabel is a most respectable woman, received everywhere — everywhere, mind. The Duchess of Connaught receives her, Lady Rockminster receives her — it doesn't become young fellows to speak lightly of people in that station. There's not a more respectable woman in England than Lady Mirabel:— and the old fogies, as you call them, at Bays's, are some of the first gentlemen in England, of whom you youngsters had best learn a little manners, and a little breeding, and a little modesty." And the Major began to think that Pen was growing exceedingly pert and conceited, and that the world made a great deal too much of him.

The Major's anger amused Pen. He studied his uncle's peculiarities with a constant relish, and was always in a good humour with his worldly old Mentor. "I am a youngster of fifteen years' standing, sir," he said, adroitly, "and if you think that we are disrespectful, you should see those of the present generation. A protege of yours came to breakfast with me the other day. You told me to ask him, and I did it to please you. We had a day's sights together, and dined at the club, and went to the play. He said the wine at the Polyanthus was not so good as Ellis's wine at Richmond, smoked Warrington's cavendish after breakfast, and when I gave him a sovereign as a farewell token, said he had plenty of them, but would take it to show he wasn't proud."

"Did he? — did you ask young Clavering?" cried the Major, appeased at once — "fine boy, rather wild, but a fine boy — parents like that sort of attention, and you can't do better than pay it to our worthy friends of Grosvenor Place. And so you took him to the play and tipped him? That was right, sir, that was right:" with which Mentor quitted Telemachus, thinking that the young men were not so very bad, and that he should make something of that fellow yet.

As Blaster Clavering grew into years and stature, he became too strong for the authority of his fond parents and governess; and rather governed them than permitted himself to be led by their orders. With his papa he was silent and sulky, seldom making his appearance, however, in the neighbourhood of that gentleman; with his mamma he roared and fought when any contest between them arose as to the gratification of his appetite, or other wish of his heart; and in his disputes with his governess over his book, he kicked that quiet creature's shins so fiercely, that she was entirely overmastered and subdued by him. And he would have so treated his sister Blanche, too, and did on one or two occasions attempt to prevail over her; but she showed an immense resolution and spirit on her part, and boxed his ears so soundly, that he forbore from molesting Miss Amory, as he did the governess and his mamma, and his mamma's maid.

At length, when the family came to London, Sir Francis gave forth his opinion, that "the little beggar had best be sent to school." Accordingly the young son and heir of the house of Clavering was despatched to the Rev. Otto Rose's establishment at Twickenham, where young noblemen and gentlemen were received preparatory to their introduction to the great English public schools.

It is not our intention to follow Master Clavering in his scholastic career; the paths to the Temple of Learning were made more easy to him than they were to some of us of earlier generations. He advanced towards that fane in a carriage-and-four, so to speak, and might halt and take refreshment almost whenever he pleased. He wore varnished boots from the earliest period of youth, and had cambric handkerchiefs and lemon-coloured kid gloves, of the smallest size ever manufactured by Privat. They dressed regularly at Mr. Rose's to come down to dinner; the young gentlemen had shawl dressing-gowns, fires in their bedrooms, horse and carriage exercise occasionally, and oil for their hair. Corporal punishment was altogether dispensed with by the Principal, who thought that moral discipline was entirely sufficient to lead youth; and the boys were so rapidly advanced in many branches of learning, that they acquired the art of drinking spirits and smoking cigars, even before they were old enough to enter a public school. Young Frank Clavering stole his father's Havannahs, and conveyed them to school, or smoked them in the stables, at a surprisingly early period of life, and at ten years old drank his champagne almost as stoutly as any whiskered cornet of dragoons could do.

When this interesting youth came home for his vacations Major Pendennis was as laboriously civil and gracious to him as he was to the rest of the family; although the boy had rather a contempt for old Wigsby, as the Major was denominated, mimicked him behind his back, as the polite Major bowed and smirked with Lady Clavering or Miss Amory; and drew rude

caricatures, such as are designed by ingenious youths, in which the Major's wig, his nose, his tie, etc., were represented with artless exaggeration. Untiring in his efforts to be agreeable, the Major wished that Pen, too, should take particular notice of this child; incited Arthur to invite him to his chambers, to give him a dinner at the club, to take him to Madame Tussaud's, the Tower, the play, and so forth, and to tip him, as the phrase is, at the end of the day's pleastres. Arthur, who was good-natured and fond of children, went through all these ceremonies one day; had the boy to breakfast at the Temple, where he made the most contemptuous remarks regarding the furniture, the crockery, and the tattered state of Warrington's dressing-gown; and smoked a short pipe, and recounted the history of a fight between Tuffy and Long Biggings, at Rose's, greatly to the edification of the two gentlemen his hosts.

As the Major rightly predicted, Lady Clavering was very grateful for Arthur's attention to the boy; more grateful than the lad himself, who took attentions as a matter of course, and very likely had more sovereigns in his pocket than poor Pen, who generously gave him one of his own slender stock of those coins.

The Major, with the sharp eyes with which Nature endowed him, and with the glasses of age and experience, watched this boy, and surveyed his position in the family without seeming to be rudely curious about their affairs. But, as a country neighbour, one who had many family obligations to the Claverings, an old man of the world, he took occasion to find out what Lady Clavering's means were, how her capital was disposed, and what the boy was to inherit. And setting himself to work — for what purposes will appear, no doubt, ulteriorly — he soon had got a pretty accurate knowledge of Lady Clavering's affairs and fortune, and of the prospects of her daughter and son. The daughter was to have but a slender provision; the bulk of the property was, as before has been said, to go to the son — his father did not care for him or anybody else — his mother was dotingly fond of him as the child of her latter days — his sister disliked him. Such may be stated in round numbers, to be the result of the information which Major Pendennis got. "Ah! my dear madam," he would say, patting the head of the boy, "this boy may wear a baron's coronet on his head on some future coronation, if matters are but managed rightly, and if Sir Francis Clavering would but play his cards well,"

At this the widow Amory heaved a deep sigh. "He plays only much of his cards, Major, I'm afraid," she said. The Major owned that he knew as much; did not disguise that he had heard of Sir Francis Clavering's unfortunate propensity to play; pitied Lady Clavering sincerely; but spoke with such genuine sentiment and sense, that her ladyship, glad to find a person of experience to whom she could confide her grief and her condition, talked about them pretty unreservedly to Major Pendennis, and was eager to have his advice and consolation. Major Pendennis became the Begum's confidante and house-friend, and as a mother, a wife, and a capitalist, she consulted him.

He gave her to understand (showing at the same time a great deal of respectful sympathy) that he was acquainted with some of the circumstances of her first unfortunate marriage, and with even the person of her late husband, whom he remembered in Calcutta — when she was living in seclusion with her father. The poor lady, with tears of shame more than of grief in her eyes, told her version of her story. Going back a child to India after two years at a European school, she had met Amory, and foolishly married him. "Oh, you don't know how miserable that man, made me," she said, "or what a life I passed betwixt him and my father. Before I saw him I had never seen a man except my father's clerks and native servants. You know we didn't go into society in India on account of ——" ("I know," said Major Pendennis, with a bow) "I was a wild romantic child, my head was full of novels which I'd read at school — I listened to his wild stories and adventures, for he was a daring fellow, and I thought he talked beautifully of those calm nights on the passage out, when he used to ——. Well, I married him, and I was wretched from that day — wretched with my father, whose character you know, Major Pendennis, and I won't speak of: but he wasn't a good man, sir — neither to my poor mother, nor to me, except that he left me his money — nor to no one else that I ever heard of: and he didn't do many kind actions in his lifetime, I'm afraid. And as for Amory, he was almost worse; he was a spendthrift when my father was close: he drank dreadfully, and was furious when in that way. He wasn't in any way a good or a faithful husband to me, Major Pendennis, and if he'd died in the gaol before this trial, instead of afterwards he would have saved me a deal of shame and of unhappiness since, sir." Lady Clavering added: "For perhaps I should not have married at all if I had not been so anxious to change his horrid name, and I have not been happy in my second husband, as I suppose you know, sir. Ah, Major Pendennis, I've got money to be sure, and I'm a lady, and people fancy I'm very happy, but I ain't. We all have our cares, and griefs, and troubles: and many's the day that I sit down to one of my grand dinners with an aching heart, and many a night do I lay awake on my fine bed a great deal more unhappy than the maid that makes for it. I'm not a happy woman, Major, for all the world says; and envies the Begum her diamonds, and carriages, and the great company that comes to my house. I'm not happy in my husband; I'm not in my

daughter. She ain't a good girl like that dear Laura Bell at Fair Oaks. She's cost me many a tear though you don't see 'em; and she sneers at her mother because I haven't had learning and that. How should I? I was brought up amongst natives till I was twelve, and went back to India when I was fourteen. Ah, Major, I should have been a good woman if I had had a good husband. And now I must go upstairs and wipe my eyes, for they're red with cryin'. And Lady Rockminster's a comin', and we're goin' to ave a drive in the Park. And when Lady Rockminster made her appearance, there was not a trace of tears or vexation on Lady Clavering's face, but she was full of spirits, and bounced out with her blunders and talk, and murdered the king's English with the utmost liveliness and good-humour.

"Begad, she is not such a bad woman!" the Major thought within himself. "She is not refined, certainly, and calls 'Apollo' 'Apoller,' but she has some heart, and I like that sort of thing, and a devilish deal of money, too. Three stars in India Stock to her name, begad! which that young cub is to have — is he?" And he thought how he should like to see a little of the money transferred to Miss Blanche, and, better still, one of those stars shining in the name of Mr. Arthur Pendennis.

Still bent upon pursuing his schemes, whatsoever they might be, the old negotiator took the privilege of his intimacy and age, to talk in a kindly and fatherly manner to Miss Blanche, when he found occasion to see her alone. He came in so frequently at luncheon-time, and became so familiar with the ladies, that they did not even hesitate to quarrel before him; and Lady Clavering, whose tongue was loud, and temper brusque, had many a battle with the Sylphide in the family friend's presence. Blanche's wit seldom failed to have the mastery in these encounters, and the keen barbs of her arrows drove her adversary discomfited away. "I am an old fellow," the Major said; "I have nothing to do in life. I have my eyes open. I keep good counsel. I am the friend of both of you; and if you choose to quarrel before me, why, I shan't tell any one. But you are two good people, and I intend to make it up between you. I have between lots of people — husbands and wives, fathers and sons, daughters and mammas, before this. I like it; I've nothing else to do."

One day, then, the old diplomatist entered Lady Clavering's drawing-room, just as the latter quitted it, evidently in a high state of indignation, and ran past him up the stairs to her own apartments. "She couldn't speak to him now," she said; "she was a great deal too angry with that — that — that little, wicked" — anger choked the rest of the words, or prevented their utterance until Lady Clavering had passed out of hearing.

"My dear, good Miss Amory," the Major said, entering the drawing-room, "I see what is happening. You and mamma have been disagreeing. Mothers and daughters disagree in the best families. It was but last week that I healed up a quarrel between Lady Clapperton and her daughter Lady Claudia. Lady Lear and her eldest daughter have not spoken for fourteen years. Kinder and more worthy people than these I never knew in the whole course of my life; for everybody but each other admirable. But they can't live together: they oughtn't to live together: and I wish, my dear creature, with all my soul, that I could see you with an establishment of your own — for there is no woman in London who could conduct one better — with your own establishment, making your own home happy."

"I am not very happy in this one," said the Sylphide; "and the stupidity of mamma is enough to provoke a saint."

"Precisely so; you are not suited to one another. Your mother committed one fault in early life — or was it Nature, my dear, in your case? — she ought not to have educated you. You ought not to have been bred up to become the refined and intellectual being you are, surrounded, as I own you are, by those who have not your genius or your refinement. Your place would be to lead in the most brilliant circles, not to follow, and take a second place in any society. I have watched you, Miss Amory: you are ambitious; and your proper sphere is command. You ought to shine; and you never can in this house, I know it. I hope I shall see you in another and a happier one, some day, and the mistress of it."

The Sylphide shrugged her lily shoulders with a look of scorn. "Where is the Prince, and where is the palace, Major Pendennis?" she said. "I am ready. But there is no romance in the world now, no real affection."

"No, indeed," said the Major, with the most sentimental and simple air which he could muster.

"Not that I know anything about it," said Blanche, casting her eyes down "except what I have read in novels."

"Of course not," Major Pendennis cried; "how should you, my dear young lady? and novels ain't true, as you remark admirably, and there is no romance left in the world. Begad, I wish I was a young fellow like my nephew."

"And what," continued Miss Amory, musing, "what are the men whom we see about at the balls every night — dancing guardsmen, penniless treasury clerks — boobies! If I had my brother's fortune, I might have such an establishment as you promise me — but with my name, and with my little means, what am I to look to! A country parson, or a barrister in a street near Russell Square, or a captain in a dragoon regiment, who will take lodgings for me, and come home from the

mess tipsy and smelling of smoke like Sir Francis Clavering. That is how we girls are destined to end life. O Major Pendennis, I am sick of London, and of balls, and of young dandies with their chin-tips, and of the insolent great ladies who know us one day and cut us the next — and of the world altogether. I should like to leave it and to go into a convent, that I should. I shall never find anybody to understand me. And I live here as much alone in my family and in the world, as if I were in a cell locked up for ever. I wish there were Sisters of Charity here, and that I could be one and catch the plague, and die of it — I wish to quit the world. I am not very old: but I am tired, I have suffered so much — I've been so disillusionated — I'm weary, I'm weary — O that the Angel of Death would come and beckon me away!"

This speech may be interpreted as follows. A few nights since a great lady, Lady Flamingo, had cut Miss Amory and Lady Clavering. She was quite mad because she could not get an invitation to Lady Drum's ball: it was the end of the season and nobody had proposed to her: she had made no sensation at all, she who was so much cleverer than any girl of the year, and of the young ladies forming her special circle. Dora who had but five thousand pounds, Flora who had nothing, and Leonora who had red hair, were going to be married, and nobody had come for Blanche Amory!

"You judge wisely about the world, and about your position, my dear Miss Blanche," the Major said. "The Prince don't marry nowadays, as you say: unless the Princess has a doosid deal of money in the funds, or is a lady of his own rank. — The young folks of the great families marry into the great families: if they haven't fortune they have each other's shoulders, to push on in the world, which is pretty nearly as good. — A girl with your fortune can scarcely hope for a great match: but a girl with your genius and your admirable tact and fine manners, with a clever husband by her side, may make any place for herself in the world. — We are grown doosid republican. Talent ranks with birth and wealth now, begad: and a clever man with a clever wife, may take any place they please."

Miss Amory did not of course in the least understand what Major Pendennis meant. — Perhaps she thought over circumstances in her mind and asked herself, could he be a negotiator for a former suitor of hers, and could he mean Pen? No, it was impossible — He had been civil, but nothing more. — So she said laughing, "Who is the clever man, and when will you bring him to me, Major Pendennis? I am dying to see him."

At this moment a servant threw open the door, and announced Mr. Henry Foker: at which name, and at the appearance of our friend, both the lady and the gentleman burst out laughing.

"That is not the man," Major Pendennis said. "He is engaged to his cousin, Lord Gravesend's daughter. — Good-bye, my dear Miss Amory."

Was Pen growing worldly, and should a man not get the experience of the world and lay it to his account? "He felt, for his part," as he said, "that he was growing very old very soon." "How this town forms and changes us," he said once to Warrington. Each had come in from his night's amusement; and Pen was smoking his pipe, and recounting, as his habit was, to his friend the observations and adventures of the evening just past. "How I am changed," he said, "from the simpleton boy at Fairoaks, who was fit to break his heart about his first love! Lady Mirabel had a reception to-night, and was as grave and collected as if she had been born a Duchess, and had never seen a trap-door in her life. She gave me the honour of a conversation, and patronised me about 'Walter Lorraine,' quite kindly."

"What condescension!" broke in Warrington.

"Wasn't it?" Pen said, simply — at which the other burst out laughing according to his wont. "Is it possible," he said, "that anybody should think of patronising the eminent author of 'Walter Lorraine?'"

"You laugh at both of us," Pen said, blushing a little — "I was coming to that myself. She told me that she had not read the book (as indeed I believe she never read a book in her life), but that Lady Rockminster had, and that the Duchess of Connaught pronounced it to be very clever. In that case, I said, I should die happy, for that to please those two ladies was in fact the great aim of my existence, and having their approbation, of course I need look for no other. Lady Mirabel looked at me solemnly out of her fine eyes, and said, 'Oh, indeed,' as if she understood me, and then she asked me whether I went to the Duchess's Thursdays, and when I said No, hoped she should see me there, and that I must try and get there, everybody went there — everybody who was in society: and then we talked of the new ambassador from Timbuctoo, and how he was better than the old one; and how Lady Mary Billington was going to marry a clergyman quite below her in rank; and how Lord and Lady Ringdove had fallen out three months after their marriage about Tom Pouter of the Blues, Lady Ringdove's cousin — and so forth. From the gravity of that woman you would have fancied she had been born in a

palace, and lived all the seasons of her life in Belgrave Square.”

“And you, I suppose you took your part in the conversation pretty well, as the descendant of the Earl your father, and the heir of Fair Oaks Castle?” Warrington said. “Yes, I remember reading of the festivities which occurred when you came of age. The Countess gave a brilliant tea soiree to the neighbouring nobility; and the tenantry were regaled in the kitchen with a leg of mutton and a quart of ale. The remains of the banquet were distributed amongst the poor of the village, and the entrance to the park was illuminated until old John put the candle out on retiring to rest at his usual hour.”

“My mother is not a countess,” said Pen, “though she has very good blood in her veins too — but commoner as she is, I have never met a peeress who was more than her peer, Mr. George; and if you will come to Fair Oaks Castle you shall judge for yourself of her and of my cousin too. They are not so witty as the London women, but they certainly are as well bred. The thoughts of women in the country are turned to other objects than those which occupy your London ladies. In the country a woman has her household and her poor, her long calm days and long calm evenings.”

“Devilish long,” Warrington said, “and a great deal too calm; I’ve tried ’em.”

“The monotony of that existence must be to a certain degree melancholy — like the tune of a long ballad; and its harmony grave and gentle, sad and tender: it would be unendurable else. The loneliness of women in the country makes them of necessity soft and sentimental. Leading a life of calm duty, constant routine, mystic reverie — a sort of nuns at large — too much gaiety or laughter would jar upon their almost sacred quiet, and would be as out of place there as in a church.”

“Where you go to sleep over the sermon,” Warrington said.

“You are a professed misogynist, and hate the sex because, I suspect, you know very little about them,” Mr. Pen continued, with an air of considerable self-complacency. “If you dislike the women in the country for being too slow, surely the London woman ought to be fast enough for you. The pace of London life is enormous: how do people last at it, I wonder — male and female? Take a woman of the world: follow her course through the season; one asks how she can survive it? or if she tumbles into a sleep at the end of August, and lies torpid until the spring? She goes into the world every night, and sits watching her marriageable daughters dancing till long after dawn. She has a nursery of little ones, very likely, at home, to whom she administers example and affection; having an eye likewise to bread-and-milk, catechism, music and French, and roast leg of mutton at one o’clock; she has to call upon ladies of her own station, either domestically or in her public character, in which she sits upon Charity Committees, or Ball Committees, or Emigration Committees, or Queen’s College Committees, and discharges I don’t know what more duties of British stateswomanship. She very likely keeps a poor-visiting list; has conversations with the clergyman about soup or flannel, or proper religious teaching for the parish; and (if she lives in certain districts) probably attends early church. She has the newspapers to read, and, at least, must know what her husband’s party is about, so as to be able to talk to her neighbour at dinner; and it is a fact that she reads every new book that comes out; for she can talk, and very smartly and well, about them all, and you see them all upon her drawing-room table. She has the cares of her household besides — to make both ends meet; to make the girls’ milliner’s bills appear not too dreadful to the father and paymaster of the family; to snip off, in secret, a little extra article of expenditure here and there, and convey it, in the shape of a bank-note, to the boys at college or at sea; to check the encroachments of tradesmen and housekeepers’ financial fallacies; to keep upper and lower servants from jangling with one another, and the household in order. Add to this, that she has a secret taste for some art or science, models in clay, makes experiments in chemistry, or plays in private on the violoncello — and I say, without exaggeration, many London ladies are doing this — and you have a character before you such as our ancestors never heard of, and such as belongs entirely to our era and period of civilisation. Ye gods! how rapidly we live and grow! In nine months, Mr. Paxton grows you a pineapple as large as a portmanteau, whereas a little one, no bigger than a Dutch cheese, took three years to attain his majority in old times; and as the race of pineapples so is the race of man. Hoiaper — what’s the Greek for a pineapple, Warrington?”

“Stop, for mercy’s sake, stop with the English and before you come to the Greek,” Warrington cried out, laughing. “I never heard you make such a long speech, or was aware that you had penetrated so deeply into the female mysteries. Who taught you all this, and into whose boudoirs and nurseries have you been peeping, whilst I was smoking my pipe, and reading my book, lying on my straw bed?”

“You are on the bank; old boy, content to watch the waves tossing in the winds, and the struggles of others at sea,” Pen

said. "I am in the stream now, and by Jove I like it. How rapidly we go down it, hey? Strong and feeble, old and young — the metal pitchers and the earthen pitchers — the pretty little china boat swims gaily till the big bruised brazen one bumps him and sends him down — eh, *vogue la galere!* — you see a man sink in the race, and say good-bye to him — look, he has only dived under the other fellow's legs, and comes up shaking his pole, and striking out ever so far ahead. Eh, *vogue la galere*, I say. It's good sport, Warrington — not winning merely, but playing."

"Well, go in and win, young 'un. I'll sit and mark the game," Warrington said, surveying the ardent young fellow with an almost fatherly pleasure. "A generous fellow plays for the play, a sordid one for the stake; an old foggy sits by and smokes the pipe of tranquillity, while Jack and Tom are pummelling each other in the ring."

"Why don't you come in, George, and have a turn with the gloves? You are big enough and strong enough," Pen said. "Dear old boy, you are worth ten of me."

"You are not quite as tall as Goliath, certainly," the other answered, with a laugh that was rough and yet tender. "As for me, I am disabled. I had a fatal hit in early life. I will tell you about it some day. You may, too, meet with your master. Don't be too eager, or too confident, or too worldly, my boy."

Was Pendennis becoming worldly, or only seeing the worldly, or both? and is a man very wrong for being after all only a man? Which is the most reasonable, and does his duty best: he who stands aloof from the struggle of life, calmly contemplating, or he who descends to the ground, and takes his part in the contest? "That philosopher," Pen said, "had held a great place amongst the leaders of the world, and enjoyed to the full what it had to give of rank and riches, renown and pleasure, who came, weary-hearted, out of it, and said that all was vanity and vexation of spirit. Many a teacher of those whom we reverence, and who steps out of his carriage up to his carved cathedral place, shakes his lawn ruffles over the velvet cushions, and cries out, that the whole struggle is an accursed one, and the works of the world are evil. Many a conscience-stricken mystic flies from it altogether, and shuts himself out from it within convent walls (real or spiritual), whence he can only look up to the sky, and contemplate the heaven out of which there is no rest, and no good."

"But the earth, where our feet are, is the work of the same Power as the immeasurable blue yonder, in which the future lies into which we would peer. Who ordered toil as the condition of life, ordered weariness, ordered sickness, ordered poverty, failure, success — to this man a foremost place, to the other a nameless struggle with the crowd — to that a shameful fall, or paralysed limb, or sudden accident — to each some work upon the ground he stands on, until he is laid beneath it." While they were talking, the dawn came shining through the windows of the room, and Pen threw them open to receive the fresh morning air. "Look, George," said he; "look and see the sun rise: he sees the labourer on his way a-field; the work-girl plying her poor needle; the lawyer at his desk, perhaps; the beauty smiling asleep upon her pillow of down; or the jaded reveller reeling to bed; or the fevered patient tossing on it; or the doctor watching by it, over the throes of the mother for the child that is to be born into the world; — to be born and to take his part in the suffering and struggling, the tears and laughter, the crime, remorse, love, folly, sorrow, rest."



CHAPTER XLVI

MISS AMORY'S PARTNERS

The noble Henry Foker, of whom we have lost sight for a few pages, has been in the meanwhile occupied, as we might suppose a man of his constancy would be, in the pursuit and indulgence of his all-absorbing passion of love.

I wish that a few of my youthful readers who are inclined to that amusement would take the trouble to calculate the time which is spent in the pursuit, when they would find it to be one of the most costly occupations in which a man can possibly indulge. What don't you sacrifice to it, indeed, young gentlemen and young ladies of ill-regulated minds? Many hours of your precious sleep in the first place, in which you lie tossing and thinking about the adored object, whence you come down late to breakfast, when noon is advancing and all the family is long since away to its daily occupations. Then when you at length get to these occupations you pay no attention to them, and engage in them with no ardour — all your thoughts and powers of mind being fixed elsewhere. Then the day's work being slurred over, you neglect your friends and relatives, your natural companions and usual associates in life, that you may go and have a glance at the dear personage, or a look up at her windows, or a peep at her carriage in the Park. Then at night the artless blandishments of home bore you; mamma's conversation palls upon you; the dishes which that good soul prepares for the dinner of her favourite are sent away untasted — the whole meal of life, indeed, except one particular plat, has no relish. Life, business, family ties, home, all things useful and dear once, become intolerable, and you are never easy except when you are in pursuit of your flame.

Such I believe to be not unfrequently the state of mind amongst ill-regulated young gentlemen, and such indeed was Mr. H. Foker's condition, who, having been bred up to indulge in every propensity towards which he was inclined, abandoned himself to this one with his usual selfish enthusiasm. Nor because he had given his friend Arthur Pendennis a great deal of good advice on a former occasion, need men of the world wonder that Mr. Foker became passion's slave in his turn. Who among us has not given a plenty of the very best advice to his friends? Who has not preached, and who has practised? To be sure, you, madam, are perhaps a perfect being, and never had a wrong thought in the whole course of your frigid and irreproachable existence: or sir, you are a great deal too strong-minded to allow any foolish passion to interfere with your equanimity in chambers or your attendance on 'Change; you are so strong that you don't want any sympathy. We don't give you any, then; we keep ours for the humble and weak, that struggle and stumble and get up again, and so march with the rest of mortals. What need have you of a hand who never fall? Your serene virtue is never shaded by passion, or ruffled by temptation, or darkened by remorse; compassion would be impertinence for such an angel: but then with such a one companionship becomes intolerable; you are, from the elevation of your very virtue and high attributes, of necessity lonely; we can't reach up and talk familiarly with such potentatess good-bye, then; our way lies with humble folks, and not with serene highnesses like you; and we give notice that there are no perfect characters in this history, except, perhaps, one little one, and that one is not perfect either, for she never knows to this day that she is perfect, and with a deplorable misapprehension and perverseness of humility, believes herself to be as great a sinner as need be.

This young person does not happen to be in London at the present period of our story, and it is by no means for the like of her that Mr. Henry Foker's mind is agitated. But what matters a few failings? Need we be angels, male or female, in order to be worshipped as such? Let us admire the diversity of the tastes of mankind; and the oldest, the ugliest, the stupidest and most pompous, the silliest and most vapid, the greatest criminal, tyrant booby, Bluebeard, Catherine Hayes, George Barnwell, amongst us, we need never despair. I have read of the passion of a transported pickpocket for a female convict (each of them advanced in age, being repulsive in person, ignorant, quarrelsome, and given to drink), that was as magnificent as the loves of Cleopatra and Antony, or Lancelot and Guinever. The passion which Count Borulawski, the Polish dwarf, inspired in the bosom of the most beautiful Baroness at the Court of Dresden, is a matter with which we are all of us acquainted: the flame which burned in the heart of young Cornet Tozer but the other day, and caused him to run off and espouse Mrs. Battersby, who was old enough to be his mamma — all these instances are told in the page of history or the newspaper column. Are we to be ashamed or pleased to think that our hearts are formed so that the biggest and highest-placed Ajax among us may some day find himself prostrate before the pattens of his kitchen-maid; as that there is no poverty or shame or crime, which will not be supported, hugged even with delight, and cherished more closely than virtue would be, by the perverse fidelity and admirable constant folly of a woman?

So then Henry Foker, Esquire, longed after his love, and cursed the fate which separated him from her. When Lord Gravesend's family retired to the country (his lordship leaving his proxy with the venerable Lord Bagwig), Harry still remained lingering on in London, certainly not much to the sorrow of Lady Ann, to whom he was affianced, and who did not in the least miss him. Wherever Miss Clavering went, this infatuated young fellow continued to follow her; and being aware that his engagement to his cousin was known in the world, he was forced to make a mystery of his passion, and confine it to his own breast, so that it was so pent in there and pressed down, that it is a wonder he did not explode some day with the stormy secret, and perish collapsed after the outburst.

There had been a grand entertainment at Gaunt House on one beautiful evening in June, and the next day's journals contained almost two columns of the names of the most closely printed nobility and gentry who had been honoured with invitations to the ball. Among the guests were Sir Francis and Lady Clavering and Miss Amory, for whom the indefatigable Major Pendennis had procured an invitation, and our two young friends Arthur and Harry. Each exerted himself, and danced a great deal with Miss Blanche. As for the worthy Major, he assumed the charge of Lady Clavering, and took care to introduce her to that department of the mansion where her ladyship specially distinguished herself, namely, the refreshment-room, where, amongst pictures of Titian and Giorgione, and regal portraits of Vandyke and Reynolds, and enormous salvers of gold and silver, and pyramids of large flowers, and constellations of wax candles — in a manner perfectly regardless of expense, in a word — a supper was going on all night. Of how many creams, jellies, salads, peaches, white soups, grapes, pates, galantines, cups of tea, champagne, and so forth, Lady Clavering partook, it does not become us to say. How much the Major suffered as he followed the honest woman about, calling to the solemn male attendants and lovely servant-maids, and administering to Lady Clavering's various wants with admirable patience, nobody knows; — he never confessed. He never allowed his agony to appear on his countenance in the least; but with a constant kindness brought plate after plate to the Begum.

Mr. Wagg counted up all the dishes of which Lady Clavering partook as long as he could count (but as he partook very freely himself of champagne during the evening, his powers of calculation were not to be trusted at the close of the entertainment), and he recommended Mr. Honeyman, Lady Steyne's medical man, to look carefully after the Begum, and to call and get news of her ladyship the next day.

Sir Francis Clavering made his appearance, and skulked for a while about the magnificent rooms; but the company and the splendour which he met there were not to the Baronet's taste, and after tossing off a tumbler of wine or two at the buffet, he quitted Gaunt House for the neighbourhood of Jermyn Street, where his friends Loder, Punter, little Moss Abramns, and Captain Skewball were assembled at the familiar green table. In the rattle of the box, and of their agreeable conversation, Sir Francis's spirits rose to their accustomed point of feeble hilarity.

Mr. Pynsent, who had asked Miss Amory to dance, came up on one occasion to claim her hand, but scowls of recognition having already passed between him and Mr. Arthur Pendennis in the dancing-room, Arthur suddenly rose up and claimed Miss Amory as his partner for the present dance, on which Mr. Pynsent, biting his lips and scowling yet more savagely, withdrew with a profound bow, saying that he gave up his claim. There are some men who are always falling in one's way in life. Pynsent and Pen had this view of each other; and each regarded other accordingly.

"What a confounded conceited provincial fool that is!" thought the one. "Because he has written a twopenny novel, his absurd head is turned, and a kicking would take his conceit out of him."

"What an impertinent idiot that man is!" remarked the other to his partner. "His soul is in Downing Street; his neckcloth is foolscap; his hair is sand; his legs are rulers; his vitals are tape and sealing-wax; he was a prig in his cradle; and never laughed since he was born, except three times at the same joke of his chief. I have the same liking for that man, Miss Amory, I have for that cold boiled veal." Upon which Blanche of course remarked, that Mr. Pendennis was wicked, mechant, perfectly abominable, and wondered what he would say when her back was turned.

"Say! — Say that you have the most beautiful figure, and the slimmest waist in the world, Blanche — Miss Amory, I mean. I beg your pardon. Another turn; this music would make an alderman dance."

"And you have left off tumbling when you waltz now?" Blanche asked, archly looking up at her partner's face.

"One falls and one gets up again in life, Blanche; you know I used to call you so in old times, and it is the prettiest name in the world. Besides, I have practised since then."

"And with a great number of partners, I'm afraid," Blanche said, with a little sham sigh, and a shrug of the shoulders.

And so in truth Mr. Pen had practised a good deal in this life; and had undoubtedly arrived at being able to dance better.

If Pendennis was impertinent in his talk, Foker, on the other hand, so bland and communicative on most occasions, was entirely mum and melancholy when he danced with Miss Amory. To clasp her slender waist was a rapture, to whirl round the room with her was a delirium; but to speak to her, what could he say that was worthy of her? What pearl of conversation could he bring that was fit for the acceptance of such a Queen of love and wit as Blanche? It was she who made the talk when she was in the company of this love-stricken partner. It was she who asked him bow that dear little pony was, and looked at him and thanked him with such a tender kindness and regret, and refused the dear little pony with such a delicate sigh when he offered it. "I have nobody to ride with in London," she said. "Mamma is timid, and her figure is not pretty on horseback. Sir Francis never goes out with me. He loves me like — like a stepdaughter. Oh, how delightful it must be to have a father — a father, Mr. Foker!"

"Oh, uncommon," said Mr. Harry, who enjoyed that blessing very calmly, upon which, and forgetting the sentimental air which she had just before assumed, Blanche's grey eyes gazed at Foker with such an arch twinkle that both of them burst out laughing, and Harry enraptured and at his ease began to entertain her with a variety of innocent prattle — good kind simple Foker talk, flavoured with many expressions by no means to be discovered in dictionaries, and relating to the personal history of himself or horses, or other things dear and important to him, or to persons in the ballroom then passing before them, and about whose appearance or character Mr. Harry spoke with artless freedom, and a considerable dash of humour.

And it was Blanche who, when the conversation flagged, and the youth's modesty came rushing back and overpowering him, knew how to reanimate her companion: asked him questions about Logwood, and whether it was a pretty place? Whether he was a hunting man, and whether he liked women to hunt? (in which case she was prepared to say that she adored hunting)— but Mr. Foker expressing his opinion against sporting females, and pointing out Lady Bullfinch, who happened to pass by, as a horse-godmother, whom he had seen at cover with a cigar in her face, Blanche too expressed her detestation of the sports of the field, and said it would make her shudder to think of a dear sweet little fox being killed, on which Foker laughed and waltzed with renewed vigour and grace.

And at the end of the waltz — the last waltz they had on that night — Blanche asked him about Drummington, and whether it was a fine house. His cousins, she had heard, were very accomplished: Lord Erith she had met, and which of his cousins was his favourite? Was it not Lady Ann? Yes, she was sure it was she; sure by his looks and his blushes. She was tired of dancing; it was getting very late; she must go to mamma; — and, without another word, she sprang away from Harry Foker's arm, and seized upon Pen's, who was swaggering about the dancing-room, and again said, "Mamma, mamma! — take me to mamma, dear, Mr. Pendennis!" transfixing Harry with a Parthian shot, as she fled from him.

My Lord Steyne, with garter and ribbon, with a bald head and shining eyes, and a collar of red whiskers round his face, always looked grand upon an occasion of state; and made a great effect upon Lady Clavering, when he introduced himself to her at the request of the obsequious Major Pendennis. With his own white and royal hand, he handed to her ladyship a glass of wine, said he had heard of her charming daughter, and begged to be presented to her; and, at this very juncture, Mr. Arthur Pendennis came up with the young lady on his arm.

The peer made a profound bow, and Blanche the deepest curtesy that ever was seen. His lordship gave Mr. Arthur Pendennis his hand to shake; said he had read his book, which was very wicked and clever; asked Miss Blanche if she had read it — at which Pen blushed and winced. Why, Blanche was one of the heroines of the novel. Blanche, in black ringlets and a little altered, was the Neaera of 'Walter Lorraine.'

Blanche had read it: the language of the eyes expressed her admiration and rapture at the performance. This little play being achieved, the Marquis of Steyne made other two profound bows to Lady Clavering and her daughter, and passed on to some other of his guests at the splendid entertainment.

Mamma and daughter were loud in their expressions of admiration of the noble Marquis so soon as his broad back was turned upon them. "He said they make a very nice couple," whispered major Pendennis to Lady Clavering. Did he now, really? Mamma thought they would; Mamma was so flustered with the honour which had just been shown to her, and with other intoxicating events of the evening, that her good-humour knew no bounds. She laughed, she winked, and nodded knowingly at Pen; she tapped him on the arm with her fan; she tapped Blanche; she tapped the Major; — her contentment was boundless, and her method of showing her joy equally expansive.

As the party went down the great staircase of Gaunt House, the morning had risen stark and clear over the black trees of the square; the skies were tinged with pink; and the cheeks of some of the people at the ball, — ah, how ghastly they looked! That admirable and devoted Major above all — who had been for hours by Lady Clavering's side, ministering to her and feeding her body with everything that was nice, and her ear with everything that was sweet and flattering — oh! what an object he was! The rings round his eyes were of the colour of bistre; those orbs themselves were like the plovers' eggs whereof Lady Clavering and Blanche had each tasted; the wrinkles in his old face were furrowed in deep gashes; and a silver stubble, like an elderly morning dew was glittering on his chin, and alongside the dyed whiskers now limp and out of curl.

There he stood, with admirable patience, enduring, uncomplainingly, a silent agony; knowing that people could see the state of his face (for could he not himself perceive the condition of others, males and females, of his own age?)— longing to go to rest for hours past; aware that suppers disagreed with him, and yet having eaten a little so as to keep his friend, Lady Clavering, in good-humour; with twinges of rheumatism in the back and knees; with weary feet burning in his varnished boots — so tired, oh, so tired and longing for bed! If a man, struggling with hardship and bravely overcoming it, is an object of admiration for the gods, that Power in whose chapels the old Major was a faithful worshipper must have looked upwards approvingly upon the constancy of Pendennis's martyrdom. There are sufferers in that cause as in the other: the negroes in the service of Mumbo Jumbo tattoo and drill themselves with burning skewers with great fortitude; and we read that the priests in the service of Baal gashed themselves and bled freely. You who can smash the idols, do so with a good courage; but do not be too fierce with the idolaters — they worship the best thing they know.

The Pendennises, the elder and the younger, waited with Lady Clavering and her daughter until her ladyship's carriage was announced, when the elder's martyrdom may be said to have come to an end, for the good-natured Begum insisted upon leaving him at his door in Bury Street; so he took the back seat of the carriage after a feeble bow or two, and speech of thanks, polite to the last, and resolute in doing his duty. The Begum waved her dumpy little hand by way of farewell to Arthur and Foker, and Blanche smiled languidly out upon the young men, thinking whether she looked very wan and green under her rose-coloured hood, and whether it was the mirrors at Gaunt House, or the fatigue and fever of her own eyes, which made her fancy herself so pale.

Arthur, perhaps, saw quite well how yellow Blanche looked, but did not attribute that peculiarity of her complexion to the effect of the looking-glasses, or to any error in his sight or her own. Our young man of the world could use his eyes very keenly, and could see Blanche's face pretty much as nature had made it. But for poor Foker it had a radiance which dazzled and blinded him: he could see no more faults in it than in the sun, which was now flaring over the house-tops.

Amongst other wicked London habits which Pen had acquired, the moralist will remark that he had got to keep very bad hours; and often was going to bed at the time when sober country-people were thinking of leaving it. Men get used to one hour as to another. Editors of newspapers, Covent Garden market-people, night cabmen and coffee-sellers, chimney-sweeps, and gentlemen and ladies of fashion who frequent balls, are often quite lively at three or four o'clock of a morning, when ordinary mortals are snoring. We have shown in the last chapter how Pen was in a brisk condition of mind at this period, inclined to smoke his cigar at ease, and to speak freely.

Foker and Pen walked away from Gaunt House, then, indulging in both the above amusements: or rather Pen talked, and Foker looked as if he wanted to say something. Pen was sarcastic and dandified when he had been in the company of great folks; he could not help imitating some of their airs and tones, and having a most lively imagination, mistook himself for a person of importance very easily. He rattled away, and attacked this person and that; sneered at Lady John Turnbull's bad French, which her ladyship will introduce into all conversations in spite of the sneers of everybody; at Mrs. Slack Roper's extraordinary costume and sham jewels; at the old dandies and the young ones; — at whom didn't he sneer and laugh?

"You fire at everybody, Pen — you're grown awful, that you are," Foker said. "Now you've pulled about Blondel's yellow wig, and Colchicum's black one, why don't you have a shy at a brown one, hay? you know whose I mean. It got into Lady Clavering's carriage."

"Under my uncle's hat? My uncle is a martyr, Foker, my boy. My uncle has been doing excruciating duties all night. He likes to go to bed rather early. He has a dreadful headache if he sits up and touches supper. He always has the gout if he walks or stands much at a ball. He has been sitting up, and standing up, and supping. He has gone home to the gout and the headache, and for my sake. Shall I make fun of the old boy? no, not for Venice!"

"How do you mean that he has been doing it for your sake?" Foker asked, looking rather alarmed.

"Boy! canst thou keep a secret if I impart it to thee?" Pen cried out, in high spirits. "Art thou of good counsel? Wilt thou swear? Wilt thou be mum, or wilt thou preach? Wilt thou be silent and hear, or wilt thou speak and die?" And as he spoke, flinging himself into an absurd theatrical attitude, the men in the cabstand in Piccadilly wondered and grinned at the antics of the two young swells.

"What the doose are you driving at?" Foker asked, looking very much agitated.

Pen, however, did not remark this agitation much, but continued in the same bantering and excited vein. "Henry, friend of my youth," he said, "and witness of my early follies, though dull at thy books, yet thou art not altogether deprived of sense — nay, blush not, Henrico, thou hast a good portion of that, and of courage and kindness too, at the service of thy friends. Were I in a strait of poverty, I would come to my Foker's purse. Were I in grief, I would discharge my grief upon his sympathising bosom —"

"Gammon, Pen — go on," Foker said.

"I would, Henrico, upon thy studs, and upon thy cambric worked by the hands of beauty, to adorn the breast of valour! Know then, friend of my boyhood's days, that Arthur Pendennis of the Upper Temple, student-at-law, feels that he is growing lonely and old Care is furrowing his temples, and Baldness is busy with his crown. Shall we stop and have a drop of coffee at this stall, it looks very hot and nice? Look how that cabman is blowing at his saucer. No, you won't? Aristocrat! I resume my tale. I am getting on in life. I have got devilish little money. I want some. I am thinking of getting some, and settling in life. I'm thinking of settling. I'm thinking of marrying, old boy. I'm thinking of becoming a moral man; a steady port and sherry character: with a good reputation in my quartier, and a moderate establishment of two maids and a man — with an occasional brougham to drive out Mrs. Pendennis, and a house near the Parks for the accommodation of the children. Ha! what sayest thou? Answer thy friend, thou worthy child of beer. Speak, I adjure thee by all thy vats.

"But you ain't got any money, Pen," said the other, still looking alarmed.

"I ain't? No, but she ave. I tell thee there is gold in store for me — not what you call money, nursed in the lap of luxury, and cradled on grains, and drinking in wealth from a thousand mash-tubs. What do you know about money? What is poverty to you, is splendour to the hardy son of the humble apothecary. You can't live without an establishment, and your houses in town and country. A snug little house somewhere off Belgravia, a brougham for my wife, a decent cook, and a fair bottle of wine for my friends at home sometimes; these simple necessities suffice for me, my Foker." And here Pendennis began to look more serious. Without bantering further, Pen continued, "I've rather serious thoughts of settling and marrying. No man can get on in the world without some money at his back. You must have a certain stake to begin with, before you can go in and play the great game. Who knows that I'm not going to try, old fellow? Worse men than I have won at it. And as I have not got enough capital from my fathers, I must get some by my wife — that's all."

They were walking down Grosvenor Street, as they talked, or rather as Pen talked, in the selfish fulness of his heart; and Mr. Pen must have been too much occupied with his own affairs to remark the concern and agitation of his neighbour, for he continued: "We are no longer children, you know, you and I, Harry. Bah! the time of our romance has passed away. We don't marry for passion, but for prudence and for establishment. What do you take your cousin for? Because she is a nice girl, and an Earl's daughter, and the old folks wish it, and that sort of thing."

"And you, Pendennis," asked Foker, "you ain't very fond of the girl — you're going to marry?"

Pen shrugged his shoulders. "Comme ca," said he; "I like her well enough. She's pretty enough; she's clever enough. I think she'll do very well. And she has got money enough — that's the great point. Psha! you know who she is, don't you? I thought you were sweet on her yourself one night when we dined with her mamma. It's little Amory."

"I— I thought so," Foker said; "and has she accepted you?"

"Not quite," Arthur replied, with a confident smile, which seemed to say, I have but to ask, and she comes to me that instant.

"Oh, not quite," said Foker; and he broke out with such a dreadful laugh, that Pen, for the first time, turned his thoughts from himself towards his companion, and was struck by the other's ghastly pale face.

"My dear fellow, Fo! what's the matter? You're ill," Pen said, in a tone of real concern.

"You think it was the champagne at Gaunt House, don't you? It ain't that. Come in; let me talk to you for a minute. I'll tell you what it is. D—— it, let me tell somebody," Foker said.

They were at Mr. Foker's door by this time, and, opening it, Harry walked with his friend into his apartments, which were situated in the back part of the house, and behind the family dining-room where the elder Foker received his guests, surrounded by pictures of himself, his wife, his infant son on a donkey, and the late Earl of Gravesend in his robes as a Peer. Foker and Pen passed by this chamber, now closed with death-like shutters, and entered into the young man's own quarters. Dusky streams of sunbeams were playing into that room, and lighting up poor Harry's gallery of dancing-girls and opera nymphs with flickering illuminations.

"Look here! I can't help telling you, Pen," he said. Ever since the night we dined there, I'm so fond of that girl, that I think I shall die if I don't get her. I feel as if I should go mad sometimes. I can't stand it, Pen. I couldn't bear to hear you talking about her, just now, about marrying her only because she's money. Ah, Pen! that ain't the question in marrying. I'd bet anything it ain't. Talking about money and such a girl as that, it's — it's — what-d'ye-call-'em — you know what I mean — I ain't good at talking — sacrilege, then. If she'd have me, I'd take and sweep a crossing, that I would!"

"Poor Fo! I don't think that would tempt her," Pen said, eyeing his friend with a great deal of real good-nature and pity. "She is not a girl for love and a cottage."

"She ought to be a duchess, I know that very well, and I know she wouldn't take me unless I could make her a great place in the world — for I ain't good for anything myself much — I ain't clever and that sort of thing," Foker said sadly. "If I had all the diamonds that all the duchesses and marchionesses had on to-night, wouldn't I put 'em in her lap? But what's the use of talking? I'm booked for another race. It's that kills me, Pen. I can't get out of it; though I die, I can't get out of it. And though my cousin's a nice girl, and I like her very well, and that, yet I hadn't seen this one when our Governors settled that matter between us. And when you talked, just now, about her doing very well, and about her having money enough for both of you, I thought to myself it isn't money or mere liking a girl, that ought to be enough to make a fellow marry. He may marry, and find he likes somebody else better. All the money in the world won't make you happy then. Look at me; I've plenty of money, or shall have out of the mash-tubs, as you call 'em. My Governor thought he'd made it all right for me in settling my marriage with my cousin. I tell you it won't do; and when Lady Ann has got her husband, it won't be happy for either of us, and she'll have the most miserable beggar in town."

"Poor old fellow!" Pen said, with rather a cheap magnanimity, "I wish I could help you. I had no idea of this, and that you were so wild about the girl. Do you think she would have you without your money? No. Do you think your father would agree to break off your engagement with your cousin? You know him very well, and that he would cast you off rather than do so."

The unhappy Foker only groaned a reply, flinging himself prostrate on a sofa, face forwards, his head in his hands.

"As for my affair," Pen went on, "my dear fellow, if I had thought matters were so critical with you, at least I would not have pained you by choosing you as my confidant. And my business is not serious, at least not as yet. I have not spoken a word about it to Miss Amory. Very likely she would not have me if I asked her. Only I have had a great deal of talk about it with my uncle, who says that the match might be an eligible one for me. I'm ambitious and I'm poor. And it appears Lady Claverling will give her a good deal of money, and Sir Francis might be got to never mind the rest. Nothing is settled, Harry. They are going out of town directly. I promise you I won't ask her before she goes. There's no hurry: there's time for everybody. But, suppose you got her, Foker. Remember what you said about marriages just now, and the misery of a man who doesn't care for his wife; and what sort of a wife would you have who didn't care for her husband?"

"But she would care for me," said Foker, from his sofa — "that is, I think she would. Last night only, as we were dancing, she said —"

"What did she say?" Pen cried, starting up in great wrath. But he saw his own meaning more clearly than Foker, and broke off with a laugh — "Well, never mind what she said, Harry. Miss Amory is a clever girl, and says numbers of civil things — to you — to me, perhaps — and who the deuce knows to whom besides? Nothing's settled, old boy. At least, my heart won't break if I don't get her. Win her if you can, and I wish you joy of her. Good-bye! Don't think about what I said to you. I was excited, and confoundedly thirsty in those hot rooms, and didn't, I suppose, put enough Seltzer-water into the champagne. Good night! I'll keep your counsel too. 'Mum' is the word between us; and 'let there be a fair fight, and let the best man win,' as Peter Crawley says."

So saying, Mr. Arthur Pendennis, giving a very queer and rather dangerous look at his companion, shook him by the hand, with something of that sort of cordiality which befitted his just repeated simile of the boxing-match, and which Mr.

Bendigo displays when he shakes hands with Mr. Gaunt before they fight each other for the champion's belt and two hundred pounds a side. Foker returned his friend's salute with an imploring look, and a piteous squeeze of the hand, sank back on his cushions again, and Pen, putting on his hat, strode forth into the air, and almost over the body of the matutinal housemaid, who was rubbing the steps at the door.

"And so he wants her too, does he?" thought Pen as he marched along — and noted within himself with a fatal keenness of perception and almost an infernal mischief, that the very pains and tortures which that honest heart of Foker's was suffering gave a zest and an impetus to his own pursuit of Blanche: if pursuit might be called which had been no pursuit as yet, but mere sport and idle dallying. "She said something to him, did she? perhaps she gave him the fellow flower to this;" and he took out of his coat and twiddled in his thumb and finger a poor little shrivelled crumpled bud that had faded and blackened with the heat and flare of the night — "I wonder to how many more she has given her artless tokens of affection — the little flirt" — and he flung his into the gutter, where the water may have refreshed it, and where any amateur of rosebuds may have picked it up. And then bethinking him that the day was quite bright, and that the passers-by by might be staring at his beard and white neckcloth, our modest young gentleman took a cab and drove to the Temple.

Ah! is this the boy that prayed at his mother's knee but a few years since, and for whom very likely at this hour of morning she is praying? Is this jaded and selfish worldling the lad who, a short while back, was ready to fling away his worldly all, his hope, his ambition, his chance of life, for his love? This is the man you are proud of, old Pendennis. You boast of having formed him: and of having reasoned him out of his absurd romance and folly — and groaning in your bed over your pains and rheumatisms, satisfy yourself still by thinking, that, at last, that lad will do something to better himself in life, and that the Pendennises will take a good place in the world. And is he the only one, who in his progress through this dark life goes wilfully or fatally astray, whilst the natural truth and love which should illumine him grow dim in the poisoned air, and suffice to light him no more?

When Pen was gone away, poor Harry Foker got up from the sofa, and taking out from his waistcoat — the splendidly buttoned, but the gorgeously embroidered, the work of his mamma — a little white rosebud, he drew from his dressing-case, also the maternal present, a pair of scissors, with which he nipped carefully the stalk of the flower, and placing it in a glass of water opposite his bed, he sought refuge there from care and bitter remembrances.

It is to be presumed that Miss Blanche Amory had more than one rose in her bouquet, and why should not the kind young creature give out of her superfluity, and make as many partners as possible happy?



CHAPTER XLVII

MONSEIGNEUR S'AMUSE

The exertions of that last night at Gaunt House had proved almost too much for Major Pendennis; and as soon as he could move his weary old body with safety, he transported himself groaning to Buxton, and sought relief in the healing waters of that place. Parliament broke up. Sir Francis Clavering and family left town, and the affairs which we have just mentioned to the reader were not advanced, in the brief interval of a few days or weeks which have occurred between this and the last chapter. The town was, however, emptied since then.

The season was now come to a conclusion: Pen's neighbours, the lawyers, were gone upon circuit: and his more fashionable friends had taken their passports for the Continent, or had fled for health or excitement to the Scotch moors. Scarce a man was to be seen in the bow-windows of the Clubs, or on the solitary Pall Mall pavement. The red jackets had disappeared from before the Palace-gate: the tradesmen of St. James's were abroad taking their pleasure: the tailors had grown mustachios and were gone up the Rhine: the bootmakers were at Ems or Baden, blushing when they met their customers at those places of recreation, or punting beside their creditors at the gambling-tables: the clergymen of St. James's only preached to half a congregation, in which there was not a single sinner of distinction: the band in Kensington Gardens had shut up their instruments of brass and trumpets of silver: only two or three old flies and chaises crawled by the banks of the Serpentine; and Clarence Bulbul, who was retained in town by his arduous duties as a Treasury clerk, when he took his afternoon ride in Rotten Row, compared its loneliness to the vastness of the Arabian desert and himself to a Bedouin wending his way through that dusty solitude. Warrington stowed away a quantity of Cavendish tobacco in his carpet-bag, and betook himself, as his custom was in the vacation, to his brother's house in Norfolk. Pen was left alone in chambers for a while, for this man of fashion could not quit the metropolis when he chose always: and was at present detained by the affairs of his newspaper, the Pall Mall Gazette, of, which he acted as the editor and charge d'affaires during the temporary absence of the chief, Captain Shandon, who was with his family at the salutary watering-place of Boulogne-sur-Mer.

Although, as we have seen, Mr. Pen had pronounced himself for years past to be a man perfectly blase and wearied of life, yet the truth is that he was an exceedingly healthy young fellow still: with a fine appetite, which he satisfied with the greatest relish and satisfaction at least once a day; and a constant desire for society, which showed him to be anything but misanthropical. If he could not get a good dinner he sate down to a bad one with perfect contentment; if he could not procure the company of witty or great or beautiful persons, he put up with any society that came to hand; and was perfectly satisfied in a tavern-parlour or on board a Greenwich steamboat, or in a jaunt to Hampstead with Mr. Finucane, his colleague at the Pall Mall Gazette; or in a visit to the summer theatres across the river; or to the Royal Gardens of Vauxhall, where he was on terms of friendship with the great Simpson, and where he shook the principal comic singer of the lovely equestrian of the arena by the hand. And while he could watch the grimaces or the graces of these with a satiric humour that was not deprived of sympathy, he could look on with an eye of kindness at the lookers-on too; at the roystering youth bent upon enjoyment, and here taking it: at the honest parents, with their delighted children laughing and clapping their hands at the show: at the poor outcasts, whose laughter was less innocent though perhaps louder, and who brought their shame and their youth here, to dance and be merry till the dawn at least; and to get bread and drown care. Of this sympathy with all conditions of men Arthur often boasted: said he was pleased to possess it: and that he hoped thus to the last he should retain it. As another man has an ardour for art or music, or natural science, Mr. Pen said that anthropology was his favourite pursuit; and had his eyes always eagerly open to its infinite varieties and beauties: contemplating with an unfailling delight all specimens of it in all places to which he resorted, whether it was the coquetting of a wrinkled dowager in a ballroom, or a high-bred young beauty blushing in her prime there; whether it was a hulking guardsman coaxing a servant-girl in the Park — or innocent little Tommy that was feeding the ducks whilst the nurse listened. And indeed a man whose heart is pretty clean, can indulge in this pursuit with an enjoyment that never ceases, and is only perhaps the more keen because it is secret and has a touch of sadness in it: because he is of his mood and humour lonely, and apart although not alone.

Yes, Pen used to brag and talk in his impetuous way to Warrington. "I was in love so fiercely in my youth, that I have

burned out that flame for ever, I think, and if ever I marry, it will be a marriage of reason that I will make, with a well-bred, good-tempered, good-looking person who has a little money, and so forth, that will cushion our carriage in its course through life. As for romance, it is all done; I have spent that out, and am old before my time — I'm proud of it."

"Stuff!" growled the other, "you fancied you were getting bald the other day, and bragged about it as you do about everything. But you began to use the bear's-grease pot directly the hairdresser told you; and are scented like a barber ever since."

"You are Diogenes," the other answered, "and you want every man to live in a tub like yourself. Violets smell better than stale tobacco, you grizzly old cynic." But Mr. Pen was blushing whilst he made this reply to his unromantic friend, and indeed cared a great deal more about himself still than such a philosopher perhaps should have done. Indeed, considering that he was careless about the world, Mr. Pen ornamented his person with no small pains in order to make himself agreeable to it, and for a weary pilgrim as he was, wore very tight boots and bright varnish.

It was in this dull season of the year, then, of a shining Friday night in autumn, that Mr. Pendennis, having completed at his newspaper office a brilliant leading article — such as Captain Shandon himself might have written, had the Captain been in good-humour, and inclined to work, which he never would do except under compulsion — that Mr. Arthur Pendennis having written his article, and reviewed it approvingly as it lay before him in its wet proof-sheet at the office of the paper, bethought him that he would cross the water, and regale himself with the fireworks and other amusements of Vauxhall. So he affably put in his pocket the order which admitted "Editor of Pall Mall Gazette and friend" to that place of recreation, and paid with the coin of the realm a sufficient sum to enable him to cross Waterloo Bridge. The walk thence to the Gardens was pleasant, the stars were shining in the skies above, looking down upon the royal property, whence the rockets and Roman candles had not yet ascended to outshine the stars.

Before you enter the enchanted ground, where twenty thousand additional lamps are burned every night as usual, most of us have passed through the black and dreary passage and wickets which hide the splendours of Vauxhall from uninitiated men. In the walls of this passage are two holes strongly illuminated, in the midst of which you see two gentlemen at desks, where they will take either your money as a private individual, or your order of admission if you are provided with that passport to the Gardens. Pen went to exhibit his ticket at the last-named orifice, where, however, a gentleman and two ladies were already in parley before him.

The gentleman, whose hat was very much on one side, and who wore a short and shabby cloak in an excessively smart manner, was crying out in a voice which Pen at once recognised.

"Bedad, sir, if ye doubt me honour, will ye oblige me by stipping out of that box, and ——"

"Lor, Captin!" cried the elder lady.

"Don't bother me," said the man in the box.

And ask Mr. Hodgen himself, who's in the gyardens, to let these leedies pass. Don't be frightened, me dear madam, I'm not going to quarl with this gentleman, at anyreet before leedies. Will ye go, sir, and desoire Mr. Hodgen (whose orther I keem in with, and he's me most intemate friend, and I know he's goan to sing the 'Body Snatcher' here to-noight), with Captain Costigan's compliments, to stip out and let in the leedies — for meself, sir, I've seen Vauxhall, and I scawrun any interfayrance on moi account: but for these leedies, one of them has never been there, and of should think ye'd harly take advantage of me misfartune in losing the ticket, to deprieve her of her pleasure."

"It ain't no use, Captain. I can't go about your business," the check-taker said; on which the Captain swore an oath, and the elder lady said, "Lor, ow provokin!"

As for the young one, she looked up at the Captain and said, "Never mind, Captain Costigan, I'm sure I don't want to go at all. Come away, mamma." And with this, although she did not want to go at all, her feelings overcame her, and she began to cry.

"Me poor child!" the Captain said. "Can ye see that, sir, and will ye not let this innocent creature in?"

"It ain't my business," cried the doorkeeper, peevishly, out of the illuminated box. And at this minute Arthur came up, and recognising Costigan, said, "Don't you know me, Captain? Pendennis!" And he took off his hat and made a bow to the two ladies. "Me dear boy! Me dear friend!" cried the Captain, extending towards Pendennis the grasp of friendship; and he rapidly explained to the other what he called "a most unluckee conthratong." He had an order for Vauxhall, admitting two, from Mr. Hodgen, then within the Gardens, and singing (as he did at the Back Kitchen and the nobility's concerts, the

'Body Snatcher,' the 'Death of General Wolfe,' the 'Banner of Blood,' and other favourite melodies); and, having this order for the admission of two persons, he thought that it would admit three, and had come accordingly to the Gardens with his friends. But, on his way, Captain Costigan had lost the paper of admission — it was not forthcoming at all; and the leedies must go back again, to the great disappointment of one of them, as Pendennis saw.

Arthur had a great deal of good-nature for everybody, and sympathised with the misfortunes of all sorts of people: how could he refuse his sympathy in such a case as this? He had seen the innocent face as it looked up to the Captain, the appealing look of the girl, the piteous quiver of the mouth, and the final outburst of tears. If it had been his last guinea in the world, he must have paid it to have given the poor little thing pleasure. She turned the sad imploring eyes away directly they lighted upon a stranger, and began to wipe them with her handkerchief. Arthur looked very handsome and kind as he stood before the women, with his hat off, blushing, bowing, generous, a gentleman. "Who are they?" he asked of himself. He thought he had seen the elder lady before.

"If I can be of any service to you, Captain Costigan," the young man said, "I hope you will command me; is there any difficulty about taking these ladies into the garden? Will you kindly make use of my purse? And — and I have a ticket myself which will admit two — I hope, ma'am, you will permit me?"

The first impulse of the Prince of Fair Oaks was to pay for the whole party, and to make away with his newspaper order as poor Costigan had done with his own ticket. But his instinct, and the appearance of the two women, told him that they would be better pleased if he did not give himself the airs of a grand seigneur, and he handed his purse to Costigan, and laughingly pulled out his ticket with one hand, as he offered the other to the elder of the ladies — ladies was not the word — they had bonnets and shawls, and collars and ribbons, and the youngest showed a pretty little foot and boot under her modest grey gown, but his Highness of Fair Oaks was courteous to every person who wore a petticoat whatever its texture was, and the humbler the wearer, only the more stately and polite in his demeanour.

"Fanny, take the gentleman's arm," the elder said; "Since you will be so very kind — I've seen you often come in at our gate, sir, and go in to Captain Strong's at No. 3."

Fanny made a little curtsy, and put her hand under Arthur's arm. It had on a shabby little glove, but it was pretty and small. She was not a child, but she was scarcely a woman as yet; her tears had dried up, and her cheek mantled with youthful blushes, and her eyes glistened with pleasure and gratitude, as she looked up into Arthur's kind face.

Arthur, in a protecting way, put his other hand upon the little one resting on his arm. "Fanny's a very pretty little name," he said, "and so you know me, do you?"

"We keep the lodge, sir, at Shepherd's Inn," Fanny said with a curtsy; "and I've never been at Vauxhall, sir, and Papa didn't like me to go — and — and — O — O — law, how beautiful!" She shrank back as she spoke, starting with wonder and delight as she saw the Royal Gardens blaze before her with a hundred million of lamps, with a splendour such as the finest fairy tale, the finest pantomime she had ever witnessed at the theatre, had never realised. Pen was pleased with her pleasure, and pressed to his side the little hand which clung so kindly to him. "What would I not give for a little of this pleasure?" said the blase young man.

"Your purse, Pendennis, me dear boy," said the Captain's voice behind him. "Will ye count it? it's all roight — no — ye thrust in old Jack Costigan (he thrusts me, ye see, madam). Ye've been me preserver, Pen (I've known um since choildhood, Mrs. Bolton; he's the proprietiore of Fair Oaks Castle, and many's the cooper of clart I've dthunk there with the first nobiltee of his neetive countee) — Mr. Pendennis, ye've been me preserver, and of thank ye; me daughtther will thank ye; — Mr. Simpson, your humble servant sir."

If Pen was magnificent in his courtesy to the ladies, what was his splendour in comparison to Captain Costigan's bowing here and there, and crying bravo to the singers?

A man, descended like Costigan, from a long line of Hibernian kings, chieftains, and other magnates and sheriffs of the county, had of course too much dignity and self-respect to walk arrum-inarrum (as the Captain phrased it) with a lady who occasionally swept his room out, and cooked his mutton-chops. In the course of their journey from Shepherd's Inn to Vauxhall Gardens, Captain Costigan had walked by the side of the two ladies, in a patronising and affable manner pointing out to them the edifices worthy of note, and discoorsing, according to his wont, about other cities and countries which he had visited, and the people of rank and fashion with whom he had the honour of an acquaintance. Nor could it be expected, nor, indeed, did Mrs. Bolton expect, that, arrived in the Royal property, and strongly illuminated by the flare of the twenty

thousand additional lamps, the Captain could relax from his dignity, and give an arm to a lady who was, in fact, little better than a housekeeper or charwoman.

But Pen, on his part, had no such scruples. Miss Fanny Bolton did not make his bed nor sweep his chambers; and he did not choose to let go his pretty little partner. As for Fanny, her colour heightened, and her bright eyes shone the brighter with pleasure, as she leaned for protection on the arm of such a fine gentleman as Mr. Pen. And she looked at numbers of other ladies in the place, and at scores of other gentlemen under whose protection they were walking here and there; and she thought that her gentleman was handsomer and grander-looking than any other gent in the place. Of course there were votaries of pleasure of all ranks there — rakish young surgeons, fast young clerks and commercialists, occasional dandies of the Guard regiments, and the rest. Old Lord Colchicum was there in attendance upon Mademoiselle Caracoline, who had been riding in the ring; and who talked her native French very loud, and used idiomatic expressions of exceeding strength as she walked about, leaning on the arm of his lordship.

Colchicum was in attendance upon Mademoiselle Carandine, little Tom Tufthunt was in attendance upon Lord Colchicum; and rather pleased, too, with his position. When Don Juan scalds the wall, there's never a want of a Leporello to hold the ladder. Tom Tufthunt was quite happy to act as friend to the elderly viscount, and to carve the fowl, and to make the salad at supper. When Pen and his young lady met the Viscount's party, that noble poor only gave Arthur a passing leer of recognition as his lordship's eyes passed from Pen's face under the bonnet of Pen's companion. But Tom Tufthunt wagged his head very good-naturedly at Mr. Arthur, and said, "How are you, old boy?" and looked extremely knowing at the godfather of this history.

"That is the great rider at Astley's; I have seen her there," Miss Bolton said, looking after Mademoiselle Caracoline; "and who is that old man? is it not the gentleman in the ring!"

"That is Lord Viscount Colchicum, Miss Fanny," said Pen with an air of protection. He meant no harm; he was pleased to patronise the young girl, and he was not displeased that she should be so pretty, and that she should be hanging upon his arm, and that yonder elderly Don Juan should have seen her there.

Fanny was very pretty; her eyes were dark and brilliant, her teeth were like little pearls; her mouth was almost as red as Mademoiselle Caracoline's when the latter had put on her vermilion. And what a difference there was between the one's voice and the other's, between the girl's laugh and the woman's! It was only very lately, indeed, that Fanny, when looking in the little glass over the Bows-Costigan mantelpiece as she was dusting it had begun to suspect that she was a beauty. But a year ago, she was a clumsy, gawky girl, at whom her father sneered, and of whom the girls at the day-school (Miss Minifer's, Newcastle Street, Strand; Miss M., the younger sister, took the leading business at the Norwich circuit in 182 —; and she herself had played for two seasons with some credit T. R. E. O., T. R. S. W., until she fell down a trap-door and broke her leg); the girls at Fanny's school, we say, took no account of her, and thought her a dowdy little creature as long as she remained under Miss Minifer's instruction. And it was unremarked and almost unseen in the porter's dark lodge of Shepherd's Inn, that this little flower bloomed into beauty.

So this young person hung upon Mr. Pen's arm, and they paced the gardens together, Empty as London was, there were still some two millions of people left lingering about it, and amongst them, one or two of the acquaintances of Mr. Arthur Pendennis.

Amongst them, silent and alone, pale, with his hands in his pockets, and a rueful nod of the head to Arthur as they met, passed Henry Foker, Esq. Young Henry was trying to ease his mind by moving from place to place, and from excitement to excitement. But he thought about Blanche as he sauntered in the dark walks; he thought about Blanche as he looked at the devices of the lamps. He consulted the fortune-teller about her, and was disappointed when that gipsy told him that he was in love with a dark lady who would make him happy; and at the concert, though Mr. Momus sang his most stunning comic songs, and asked his most astonishing riddles, never did a kind smile come to visit Foker's lips. In fact, he never heard Mr. Momus at all.

Pen and Miss Bolton were hard by listening to the same concert, and the latter remarked, and Pen laughed at Mr. Foker's woebegone face.

Fanny asked what it was that made that odd-looking little man so dismal? "I think he is crossed in love!" Pen, said. "Isn't that enough to make any man dismal, Fanny?" And he looked down at her, splendidly protecting her, like Egmont at Clara in Goethe's play, or Leicester at Amy in Scott's novel.

"Crossed in love is he? poor gentleman," said Fanny with a sigh, and her eyes turned round towards him with no little kindness and pity — but Harry did not see the beautiful dark eyes.

"How dy do, Mr. Pendennis!" — a voice broke in here — it was that of a young man in a large white coat with a red neckcloth, over which a dingy shirt-collar was turned so as to exhibit a dubious neck — with a large pin of bullion or other metal, and an imaginative waistcoat with exceedingly fanciful glass buttons, and trousers that cried with a loud voice, "Come look at me and see how cheap and tawdry I am; my master, what a dirty buck!" and a little stick in one pocket of his coat, and a lady in pink satin on the other arm — "How dy do — Forget me, I dare say? Huxter — Clavering."

"How do you do, Mr. Huxter," the Prince of Fair Oaks said in his most princely manner — "I hope you are very well."

"Pretty bobbish, thanky." — And Mr. Huxter wagged his head. "I say, Pendennis, you've been coming it uncommon strong since we had the row at Wapshot's, don't you remember. Great author, hay? Go about with the swells. Saw your name in the Morning Post. I suppose you're too much of a swell to come and have a bit of supper with an old friend? — Charterhouse Lane tomorrow night — some devilish good fellows from Bartholomew's, and some stunning gin-punch. Here's my card." And with this Mr. Huxter released his hand from the pocket where his cane was, and pulling off the top of his card-case with his teeth produced thence a visiting ticket, which he handed to Pen.

"You are exceedingly kind, I am sure," said Pen: "but I regret that I have an engagement which will take me out of town tomorrow night." And the Marquis of Fair Oaks, wondering that such a creature as this could have the audacity to give him a card, put Mr. Huxter's card into his waistcoat pocket with a lofty courtesy. Possibly Mr. Samuel Huxter was not aware that there was any great social difference between Mr. Arthur Pendennis and himself. Mr. Huxter's father was a surgeon and apothecary at Clavering just as Mr. Pendennis's papa had been a surgeon and apothecary at Bath. But the impudence of some men is beyond all calculation.

"Well, old fellow, never mind," said Mr. Huxter, who, always frank and familiar, was from vinous excitement even more affable than usual. "If ever you are passing, look up our place, I'm mostly at home Saturdays; and there's generally a cheese cupboard. Ta, ta. — There's the bell for the fireworks ringing. Come along, Mary." And he set off running with the rest of the crowd in the direction of the fireworks.

So did Pen presently, when this agreeable youth was out of sight, begin to run with his little companion; Mrs. Bolton following after them, with Captain Costigan at her side. But the Captain was too majestic and dignified in his movements to run for friend or enemy, and he pursued his course with the usual jaunty swagger which distinguished his steps, so that he and his companion were speedily distanced by Pen and Miss Fanny.

Perhaps Arthur forgot, or perhaps he did not choose to remember, that the elder couple had no money in their pockets, as had been proved by their adventure at the entrance of the Gardens; howbeit, Pen paid a couple of shillings for himself and his partner, and with her hanging close on his arm, scaled the staircase which leads to the firework gallery. The Captain and mamma might have followed them if they liked, but Arthur and Fanny were too busy to look back. People were pushing and squeezing there beside and behind them. One eager individual rushed by Fanny, and elbowed her so, that she fell back with a little cry, upon which, of course, Arthur caught her adroitly in his arms, and, just for protection, kept her so defended, until they mounted the stair, and took their places.

Poor Foker sate alone on one of the highest benches, his face illuminated by the fireworks, or in their absence by the moon. Arthur saw him, and laughed, but did not occupy himself about his friend much. He was engaged with Fanny. How she wondered! how happy she was! how she cried O, O, O, as the rockets soared into the air, and showered down in azure, and emerald, and vermilion! As these wonders blazed and disappeared before her, the little girl thrilled and trembled with delight at Arthur's side — her hand was under his arm still, he felt it pressing him as she looked up delighted.

"How beautiful they are, sir!" she cried.

"Don't call me sir, Fanny," Arthur said.

A quick blush rushed up into the girl's face. "What shall I call you?" she said, in a low voice, sweet and tremulous. "What would you wish me to say, sir?"

"Again, Fanny! Well, I forgot; it is best so, my dear," Pendennis said, very kindly and gently. "I may call you Fanny?"

"Oh yes!" she said, and the little hand pressed his arm once more very eagerly, and the girl clung to him so that he could feel her heart beating on his shoulder.

"I may call you Fanny, because you are a young girl, and a good girl, Fanny, and I am an old gentleman. But you

mustn't call me anything but sir, or Mr. Pendennis, if you like; for we live in very different stations, Fanny; and don't think I speak unkindly; and — and why do you take your hand away, Fanny? Are you afraid of me? Do you think I would hurt you? Not for all the world, my dear little girl. And — and look how beautiful the moon and stars are, and how calmly they shine when the rockets have gone out, and the noisy wheels have done hissing and blazing. When I came here to-night I did not think I should have had such a pretty little companion to sit by my side, and see these fine fireworks. You must know I live by myself, and work very hard. I write in books and newspapers, Fanny; and I quite tired out, and was expected to sit alone all night; and — don't cry, my dear, dear, little girl." Here Pen broke out, rapidly putting an end to the calm oration which he had begun to deliver; for the sight of a woman's tears always put his nerves in a quiver, and he began forthwith to coax her and soothe her, and to utter a hundred and twenty little ejaculations of pity and sympathy, which need not be repeated here, because they would be absurd in print. So would a mother's talk to a child be absurd in print; so would a lover's to his bride. That sweet artless poetry bears no translation; and is too subtle for grammarians' clumsy definitions. You have but the same four letters to describe the salute which you perform on your grandmother's forehead, and that which you bestow on the sacred cheek of your mistress; but the same four letters, and not one of them a labial. Do we mean to hint that r. Arthur Pendennis made any use of the monosyllable in question? Not so. In the first place, it was dark: the fireworks were over, and nobody could see him; secondly, he was not a man to have this kind of secret, and tell it; thirdly and lastly, let the honest fellow who has kissed a pretty girl, say what would have been his own conduct in such a delicate juncture?

Well, the truth is, that however you may suspect him, and whatever you would have done under the circumstances, or Mr. Pen would have liked to do, he behaved honestly, and like a man. "I will not play with this little girl's heart," he said within himself, "and forget my own or her honour. She seems to have a great deal of dangerous and rather contagious sensibility, and I am very glad the fireworks are over, and that I can take her back to her mother. Come along, Fanny; mind the steps, and lean on me. Don't stumble, you heedless little thing; this is the way, and there is your mamma at the door."

And there, indeed, Mrs. Bolton was, unquiet in spirit, and grasping her umbrella. She seized Fanny with maternal fierceness and eagerness, and uttered some rapid abuse to the girl in an undertone. The expression in Captain Costigan's eye — standing behind the matron and winking at Pendennis from under his hat — was, I am bound to say, indefinably humorous.

It was so much so, that Pen could not refrain from bursting into a laugh. "You should have taken my arm, Mrs. Bolton," he said, offering it. "I am very glad to bring Miss Fanny back quite safe to you. We thought you would have followed us up into the gallery. We enjoyed the fireworks, didn't we?"

"Oh yes!" said Miss Fanny, with rather a demure look.

"And the bouquet was magnificent," said Pen. "And it is ten hours since I had anything to eat, ladies; and I wish you would permit me to invite you to supper."

"Dad," said Costigan, "I'd loike a snack to; only I forgawt me purse, or I should have invoited these leedies to a collection."

Mrs. Bolton with considerable asperity said, She ad an eadache, and would much rather go ome.

"A lobster salad is the best thing in the world for a headache," Pen said gallantly, "and a glass of wine I'm sure will do you good. Come, Mrs. Bolton, be kind to me and oblige me. I shan't have the heart to sup without you, and upon my word I have had no dinner. Give me your arm: give me the umbrella. Costigan, I'm sure you'll take care of Miss Fanny; and I shall think Mrs. Bolton angry with me, unless she will favour me with her society. And we will all sup quietly, and go back in a cab together."

The cab, the lobster salad, the frank and good-humoured look of Pendennis, as he smilingly invited the worthy matron, subdued her suspicions and her anger. Since he would be so obliging, she thought she could take a little bit of lobster, and so they all marched away to a box; and Costigan called for a waitther with such a loud and belligerent voice, as caused one of those officials instantly to run to him.

The carte was examined on the wall, and Fanny was asked to choose her favourite dish; upon which the young creature said she was fond of lobster, too, but also owned to a partiality for raspberry tart. This delicacy was provided by Pen, and a bottle of the most frisky champagne was moreover ordered for the delight of the ladies. Little Fanny drank this; — what other sweet intoxication had she not drunk in the course of the night?

When the supper, which was very brisk and gay, was over, and Captain Costigan and Mrs. Bolton had partaken of some of the rack-punch that is so fragrant at Vauxhall, the bill was called and discharged by Pen with great generosity — “loike a foin young English gentleman of th’ olden toime, be Jove,” Costigan enthusiastically remarked. And as, when they went out of the box, he stepped forward and gave Mrs. Bolton his arm, Fanny fell to Pen’s lot, and the young people walked away in high good-humour together, in the wake of their seniors.

The champagne and the rack-punch, though taken in moderation by all persons, except perhaps poor Cos, who lurched ever so little in his gait, had set them in high spirits and good-humour, so that Fanny began to skip and move her brisk little feet in time to the band, which was playing waltzes and galops for the dancers. As they came up to the dancing, the music and Fanny’s feet seemed to go quicker together — she seemed to spring, as if naturally, from the ground, and as if she required repression to keep her there.

“Shouldn’t you like a turn?” said the Prince of Fair Oaks. “What fun it would be! Mrs. Bolton, ma’am, do let me take her once round.” Upon which Mr. Costigan said, “Off wid you!” and Mrs. Bolton not refusing (indeed, she was an old war-horse, and would have liked, at the trumpet’s sound, to have entered the arena herself), Fanny’s shawl was off her back in a minute, and she and Arthur were whirling round in a waltz in the midst of a great deal of queer, but exceedingly joyful company.

Pen had no mishap this time with little Fanny, as he had with Miss Blanche in old days — at least, there was no mishap of his making. The pair danced away with great agility and contentment — first a waltz, then a galop, then a waltz again, until, in the second waltz, they were bumped by another couple who had joined the Terpsichorean choir. This was Mr. Huxter and his pink satin young friend, of whom we have already had a glimpse.

Mr. Huxter very probably had been also partaking of supper, for he was even more excited now than at the time when he had previously claimed Pen’s acquaintance; and, having run against Arthur and his partner, and nearly knocked them down, this amiable gentleman of course began to abuse the people whom he had injured, and broke out into a volley of slang against the unoffending couple. “Now then, stoopid! Don’t keep the ground if you can’t dance, old Slow Coach!” the young surgeon roared out (using, at the same time, other expressions far more emphatic), and was joined in his abuse by the shrill language and laughter of his partner; to the interruption of the ball, the terror of poor little Fanny, and the immense indignation of Pen.

Arthur was furious; and not so angry at the quarrel as at the shame attending it. A battle with a fellow like that! A row in a public garden, and with a porter’s daughter on his arm! What a position for Arthur Pendennis! He drew poor little Fanny hastily away from the dancers to her mother, and wished that lady, and Costigan, and poor Fanny underground, rather than there, in his companionship, and under his protection.

When Huxter commenced his attack, that free-spoken young gentleman had not seen who was his opponent; and directly he was aware that it was Arthur whom he had insulted, he began to make apologies. “Hold your stoopid tongue, Mary,” he said to his partner. “It’s an old friend and crony at home. I beg pardon, Pendennis; wasn’t aware it was you, old boy.” Mr. Huxter had been one of the boys of the Clavering School, who had been present at a combat which has been mentioned in the early part of this story, when young Pen knocked down the biggest champion of the academy, and Huxter knew that it was dangerous to quarrel with Arthur.

His apologies were as odious to the other as his abuse had been. Pen stopped his tipsy remonstrance, by telling him to hold his tongue, and desiring him not to use his (Pendennis’s) name in that place or any other; and he walked out of the gardens with a titter behind him from the crowd, every one of whom he would have liked to massacre for having been witness to the degrading broil. He walked out of the gardens, quite forgetting poor little Fanny, who came trembling behind him with her mother and the stately Costigan.

He was brought back to himself by a word from the Captain, who touched him on the shoulder just as they were passing the inner gate.

“There’s no ray-admittance except ye pay again,” the Captain said. “Hadn’t I better go back and take the fellow your message?”

Pen burst out laughing. “Take him a message! Do you think I would fight with such a fellow as that?” he asked.

“No, no! Don’t, don’t?” cried out little Fanny. “How can you be so wicked, Captain Costigan?” The Captain muttered something about honour, and winked knowingly at Pen, but Arthur said gallantly, “No, Fanny, don’t be frightened. It was

my fault to have danced in such a place — I beg your padon to have asked you to dance there.” And he gave her his arm once more, and called a cab, and put his three friends into it.

He was about to pay the driver, and to take another carriage for himself, when little Fanny, still alarmed, put her little hand out, and caught him by the coat, and implored him and besought him to come in.

“Will nothing satisfy you,” said Pen, in great good-humour, “that I am not going back to fight him? Well, I will come home with you. Drive to Shepherd’s Inn, cab.” The cab drove to its destination. Arthur was immensely pleased by the girl’s solicitude about him: her tender terrors quite made him forget his previous annoyance.

Pen put the ladies into their lodge, having shaken hands kindly with both of them; and the Captain again whispered to him that he would see um in the morning if he was inclined, and take his message to that “scounthrel.” But the Captain was in his usual condition when he made the proposal; and Pen was perfectly sure that neither he nor Mr. Huxter, when they awoke, would remember anything about the dispute.



CHAPTER XLVIII

A VISIT OF POLITENESS

Costigan never roused Pen from his slumbers; there was no hostile message from Mr. Huxter to disturb him; and when Pen woke, it was with a brisker and more lively feeling than ordinarily attends that moment in the day of the tired and blase London man. A City man wakes up to care and consols, and the thoughts of 'Change and the counting-house take possession of him as soon as sleep flies from under his night-cap; a lawyer rouses himself with the early morning to think of the case that will take him all his day to work upon, and the inevitable attorney to whom he has promised his papers ere night. Which of us has not his anxiety instantly present when his eyes are opened, to it and to the world, after his night's sleep? Kind strengthener that enables us to face the day's task with renewed heart! Beautiful ordinance of Providence that creates rest as it awards labour!

Mr. Pendennis's labour, or rather his disposition, was of that sort that his daily occupations did not much interest him, for the excitement of literary composition pretty soon subsides with the hired labourer, and the delight of seeing one's-self in print only extends to the first two or three appearances in the magazine or newspaper page. Pegasus put into harness, and obliged to run a stage every day, is as prosaic as any other hack, and won't work without his whip or his feed of corn. So, indeed, Mr. Arthur performed his work at the Pall Mall Gazette (and since his success as a novelist with an increased salary), but without the least enthusiasm, doing his best or pretty nearly, and sometimes writing ill and sometimes well. He was a literary hack, naturally fast in pace, and brilliant in action.

Neither did society, or that portion which he saw, excite or amuse him over much. In spite of his brag and boast to the contrary, he was too young as yet for women's society, which probably can only be had in perfection when a man has ceased to think about his own person, and has given up all designs of being a conqueror of ladies; he was too young to be admitted as an equal amongst men who had made their mark in the world, and of whose conversation he could scarcely as yet expect to be more than a listener. And he was too old for the men of pleasure of his own age; too much a man of pleasure for the men of business; destined in a word to be a good deal alone. Fate awards this lot of solitude to many a man; and many like it from taste, as many without difficulty bear it. Pendennis, in reality, suffered it very equanimously; but in words, and according to his wont, grumbled over it not a little.

"What a nice little artless creature that was," Mr. Pen thought at the very instant of waking after the Vauxhall affair; "what a pretty natural manner she has; how much pleasanter than the minauderies of the young ladies in the ballrooms" (and here he recalled to himself some instances of what he could not help seeing was the artful simplicity of Miss Blanche, and some of the stupid graces of other young ladies in the polite world); "who could have thought that such a pretty rose could grow in a porter's lodge, or bloom in that dismal old flower-pot of a Shepherd's Inn? So she learns to sing from old Bows? If her singing voice is as sweet as her speaking voice, it must be pretty. I like those low voilees voices. 'What would you like me to call you?' indeed, poor little Fanny! It went to my heart to adopt the grand air with her and tell her to call me, 'Sir.' But we'll have no nonsense of that sort — no Faust and Margaret business for me. That old Bows! So he teaches her to sing, does he? He's a dear old fellow, old Bows: a gentleman in those old clothes: a philosopher, and with a kind heart, too. How good he was to me in the Fotheringay business. He, too, has had his griefs and his sorrows. I must cultivate old Bows. A man ought to see people of all sorts. I am getting tired of genteel society. Besides, there's nobody in town. Yes, I'll go and see Bows, and Costigan too; what a rich character! begad, I'll study him, and put him into a book." In this way our young anthropologist talked with himself, and as Saturday was the holiday of the week, the Pall Mall Gazette making its appearance upon that day, and the contributors to that journal having no further calls upon their brains or ink-bottles, Mr. Pendennis determined he would take advantage of his leisure, and pay a visit to Shepherd's Inn — of course to see old Bows.

The truth is, that if Arthur had been the most determined roue and artful Lovelace who ever set about deceiving a young girl, he could hardly have adopted better means for fascinating and overcoming poor little Fanny Bolton than those which he had employed on the previous night. His dandified protecting air, his conceit, generosity, and good-humour, the very sense of good and honesty which had enabled him to check the tremulous advances of the young creature, and not to take advantage of that little fluttering sensibility — his faults and his virtues at once contributed to make her admire him;

and if we could peep into Fanny's bed (which she shared in a cupboard, along with those two little sisters to whom we have seen Mr. Costigan administering gingerbread and apples), we should find the poor little maid tossing upon her mattress, to the great disturbance of its other two occupants, and thinking over all the delights and events of that delightful, eventful night, and all the words, looks, and actions of Arthur, its splendid hero. Many novels had Fanny read, in secret and at home, in three volumes and in numbers. Periodical literature had not reached the height which it has attained subsequently, and the girls of Fanny's generation were not enabled to purchase sixteen pages of excitement for a penny, rich with histories of crime, murder, oppressed virtue, and the heartless seductions of the aristocracy; but she had had the benefit of the circulating library which, in conjunction with her school and a small brandy-ball and millinery business, Miss Minifer kept — and Arthur appeared to her at once as the type and realisation of all the heroes of all those darling greasy volumes which the young girl had devoured. Mr. Pen, we have seen, was rather a dandy about shirts and haberdashery in general. Fanny had looked with delight at the fineness of his linen, at the brilliancy of his shirt-studs, at his elegant cambric pocket-handkerchief and white gloves, and at the jetty brightness of his charming boots. The Prince had appeared and subjugated the poor little handmaid. His image traversed constantly her restless slumbers; the tone of his voice, the blue light of his eyes, the generous look, half love, half pity — the manly protecting smile, the frank, winning laughter — all these were repeated in the girl's fond memory. She felt still his arm encircling her, and saw him smiling so grand as he filled up that delicious glass of champagne. And then she thought of the girls, her friends, who used to sneer at her — of Emma Baker, who was so proud, forsooth, because she was engaged to a cheesemonger, in a white apron, near Clare Market; and of Betsy Rodgers, who make such a to-do about her young man — an attorney's clerk, indeed, that went about with a bag!

So that, at about two o'clock in the afternoon — the Bolton family having concluded their dinner (and Mr. B., who besides his place of porter of the Inn, was in the employ of Messrs. Tressler, the eminent undertakers of the Strand, being absent in the country with the Countess of Estrich's hearse), when a gentleman in a white hat and white trousers made his appearance under the Inn archway, and stopped at the porter's wicket, Fanny was not in the least surprised, only delightful, only happy, and blushing beyond all measure. She knew it could be no other than He. She knew He'd come. There he was; there was His Royal Highness beaming upon her from the gate. She called to her mother, who was busy in the upper apartment, "Mamma, mamma," and ran to the wicket at once, and opened it, pushing aside the other children. How she blushed as she gave her hand to him! How affably he took off his white hat as he came in; the children staring up at him! He asked Mrs. Bolton if she had slept well, after the fatigues of the night, and hoped she had no headache; and he said that as he was going that way, he could not pass the door without asking news of his little partner.

Mrs. Bolton was perhaps rather shy and suspicious about these advances; but Mr. Pen's good-humour was inexhaustible, he could not see that he was unwelcome. He looked about the premises for a seat, and none being disengaged, for a dish-cover was on one, a workbox on the other, and so forth, he took one of the children's chairs, and perched himself upon that uncomfortable eminence. At this, the children began laughing, the child Fanny louder than all — at least, she was more amused than any of them, and amazed at His Royal Highness's condescension. He to sit down in that chair — that little child's chair! — Many and many a time after, she regarded it: haven't we almost all, such furniture in our rooms, that our fancy peoples with dear figures, that our memory fills with sweet smiling faces, which may never look on us more?

So Pen sate down and talked away with great volubility to Mrs. Bolton. He asked about the undertaking business, and how many mutes went down with Lady Estrich's remains; and about the Inn, and who lived there. He seemed very much interested about Mr. Campion's cab and horse, and had met that gentleman in society. He thought he should like shares in the Polwheeldle and Tredyddlum; did Mrs. Bolton do for those chambers? Were there any chambers to let in the Inn? It was better than the Temple: he should like to come to live in Shepherd's Inn. As for Captain Strong, and — Colonel Altamont — was his name? he was deeply interested in them too. The Captain was an old friend at home. He had dined with him at chambers here, before the Colonel came to live with him. What sort of man was the Colonel? Wasn't he a stout man, with a large quantity of jewellery, and a wig and large black whiskers — very black (here Pen was immensely waggish, and caused hysteric giggles of delight from the ladies)— very black indeed; in fact, blue black; that is to say, a rich greenish purple? That was the man; he had met him, too, at Sir Fr — in Society.

"Oh, we know," said the ladies, "Sir F—— is Sir F. Clavering he's often here: two or three times a week with the Captain. My little boy has been out for bill-stamps for him. O Lor! I beg pardon, I shouldn't have mentioned no secrets,"

Mrs. Bolton blurted out, being talked perfectly into good-nature by this time. "But we know you to be a gentleman, Mr. Pendennis, for I'm sure you have shown that you can behave as such. Hasn't Mr. Pendennis, Fanny?"

Fanny loved her mother for that speech. She cast up her dark eyes to the low ceiling and said, "Oh, that he has, I'm sure, Ma," with a voice full of feeling.

Pen was rather curious about the bill-stamps, and concerning the transactions in Strong's chambers. And he asked, when Altamont came and joined the Chevalier, whether he too was out for bill-stamps, who he was, whether he saw many people, and so forth. These questions, put with considerable adroitness by Pen who was interested about Sir Francis Clavering's doings from private motives of his own, were artlessly answered by Mrs. Bolton, and to the utmost of her knowledge and ability, which, in truth, were not very great.

These questions answered, and Pen being at a loss for more, luckily recollected his privilege as a member of the Press, and asked the ladies whether they would like any orders for the play? The play was their delight, as it is almost always the delight of every theatrical person. When Bolton was away professionally (it appeared that of late the porter of Shepherd's Inn had taken a serious turn, drank a good deal, and otherwise made himself unpleasant to the ladies of his family), they would like of all things to slip out and go to the theatre — little Barney, their son, keeping the lodge; and Mr. Pendennis's most generous and most genteel compliment of orders was received with boundless gratitude by both mother and daughter.

Fanny clapped her hands with pleasure: her face beamed with it. She looked and nodded, and laughed at her mamma, who nodded and laughed in her turn. Mrs. Bolton was not superannuated for pleasure yet, or by any means too old for admiration, she thought. And very likely Mr. Pendennis, in his conversation with her, had insinuated some compliments, or shaped his talk so as to please her. At first against Pen, and suspicious of him, she was his partisan now, and almost as enthusiastic about him as her daughter. When two women get together to like a man, they help each other on — each pushes the other forward — and the second, out of sheer sympathy, becomes as eager as the principal:— at least, so it is said by philosophers who have examined this science.

So the offer of the play-tickets, and other pleasantries; put all parties into perfect good-humour, except for one brief moment, when one of the younger children, hearing the name of 'Astley's' pronounced, came forward and stated that she should like very much to go, too; on which, Fanny said, "Don't bother!" rather sharply; and Mamma said, "Git-long, Betsy-Jane, do now, and play in the court." so that the two little ones, namely, Betsy-Jane and Ameliar — Ann, went away in their little innocent pinafores, and disported in the courtyard on the smooth gravel, round about the statue of Shepherd the Great.

And here, as they were playing, they very possibly communicated with an old friend of theirs and dweller in the Inn; for while Pen was making himself agreeable to the ladies at the lodge, who were laughing delighted at his sallies, an old gentleman passed under the archway from the Inn-square, and came and looked in at the door of the lodge.

He made a very blank and rueful face when he saw Mr. Arthur seated upon a table, like Macheath in the play, in easy discourse with Mrs. Bolton and her daughter.

"What! Mr. Bows? How d'you do, Bows?" cried out Pen, in a cheery, loud voice. "I was coming to see you, and was asking your address of these ladies."

"You were coming to see me, were you, sir?" Bows said, and came in with a sad face, and shook hands with Arthur. "Plague on that old man!" somebody thought in the room: and so, perhaps, some one else besides her.



CHAPTER XLIX

IN SHEPHERD'S INN

Our friend Pen said "How d'ye do, Mr. Bows," in a loud cheery voice on perceiving that gentleman, and saluted him in a dashing off-hand manner, yet you could have seen a blush upon Arthur's face (answered by Fanny, whose cheek straightway threw out a similar fluttering red signal); and after Bows and Arthur had shaken hands, and the former had ironically accepted the other's assertion that he was about to pay Mr. Costigan's chambers a visit, there was a gloomy and rather guilty silence in the company, which Pen presently tried to dispel by making a great rattling noise. The silence of course departed at Mr. Arthur's noise, but the gloom remained and deepened, as the darkness does in a vault if you light up a single taper in it. Pendennis tried to describe, in a jocular manner, the transactions of the previous night, and attempted to give an imitation of Costigan vainly expostulating with the check-taker at Vauxhall. It was not a good imitation. What stranger can imitate that perfection? Nobody laughed. Mrs. Bolton did not in the least understand what part Mr. Pendennis was performing, and whether it was the check-taker or the Captain he was taking off. Fanny wore an alarmed face, and tried a timid giggle; old Mr. Bows looked as glum as when he fiddled in the orchestra, or played a difficult piece upon the old piano at the Back Kitchen. Pen felt that his story was a failure; his voice sank and dwindled away dismally at the end of it — flickered, and went out; and it was all dark again. You could hear the ticket-porter, who lolls about Shepherd's Inn, as he passed on the flags under the archway: the clink of his boot-heels was noted by everybody.

"You were coming to see me, sir," Mr. Bows said. "Won't you have the kindness to walk up to my chambers with me? You do them a great honour, I am sure. They are rather high up; but —"

"Oh! I live in a garret myself, and Shepherd's Inn is twice as cheerful as Lamb Court," Mr. Pendennis broke in.

"I knew that you had third-floor apartments," Mr. Bows said; "and was going to say — you will please not take my remark as discourteous — that the air up three pair of stairs is wholesomer for gentlemen, than the air of a porter's lodge."

"Sir!" said Pen, whose candle flamed up again in his wrath, and who was disposed to be as quarrelsome as men are when they are in the wrong. "Will you permit me to choose my society without —?"

"You were so polite as to say that you were about to honour my umble domicile with a visit," Mr. Bows said, with his sad voice. "Shall I show you the way? Mr. Pendennis and I are old friends, Mrs. Bolton — very old acquaintances; and at the earliest dawn of his life we crossed each other."

The old man pointed towards the door with a trembling finger, and a hat in the other hand, and in an attitude slightly theatrical; so were his words when he spoke somewhat artificial, and chosen from the vocabulary which he had heard all his life from the painted lips of the orators before the stage-lamps. But he was not acting or masquerading, as Pen knew very well, though he was disposed to pooh-pooh the old fellow's melodramatic airs. "Come along, sir," he said, "as you are so very pressing. Mrs. Bolton, I wish you a good day. Good-bye, Miss Fanny; I shall always think of our night at Vauxhall with pleasure; and be sure I will remember the theatre tickets." And he took her hand, pressed it, was pressed by it, and was gone.

"What a nice young man, to be sure!" cried Mrs. Bolton.

"D'you think so, ma?" said Fanny.

"I was a-thinkin who he was like. When I was at the Wells with Mrs. Serle," Mrs. Bolton continued, looking through the window-curtain after Pen, as he went up the court with Bows, "there was a young gentleman from the city, that used to come in a tilbry, in a white at, the very image of him, only his whiskers was black, and Mr. P.'s is red."

"Law, ma! they are a most beautiful hawburn," Fanny said.

"He used to come for Emly Budd, who danced Columbine in 'Arleykin Ornpipe, or the Battle of Navarino,' when Miss De la Bosky was took ill — a pretty dancer, and a fine stage figure of a woman — and he was a great sugar-baker in the city, with a country ouse at Omerton; and he used to drive her in the tilbry down Goswell Street Road; and one day they drove and was married at St. Bartholomew's Church, Smithfield, where they ad their bands read quite private; and she now keeps her carriage, and I sor her name in the paper as patroness of the Manshing-House Ball for the Washywomen's Asylum.

And look at Lady Mirabel — captivg Costigan's daughter — she was profesnrl, as all very well know." Thus, and more to this purpose, Mrs. Bolton spoke, now peeping through the window-curtain, now cleaning the mugs and plates, and consigning them to their place in the corner cupboard; and finishing her speech as she and Fanny shook out and folded up the dinner-cloth between them, and restored it to its drawer in the table.

Although Costigan had once before been made pretty accurately to understand what Pen's pecuniary means and expectations were, I suppose Cos had forgotten the information acquired at Chatteris years ago, or had been induced by his natural enthusiasm to exaggerate his friend's income. He had described Fair Oaks Park in the most glowing terms to Mrs. Bolton, on the preceding evening, as he was walking about with her during Pen's little escapade with Fanny, had dilated upon the enormous wealth of Pen's famous uncle, the Major, and shown an intimate acquaintance with Arthur's funded and landed property. Very likely Mrs. Bolton, in her wisdom, had speculated upon these matters during the night; and had had visions of Fanny driving in her carriage, like Mrs. Bolton's old comrade, the dancer of Sadler's Wells.

In the last operation of table-cloth folding, these two foolish women, of necessity, came close together; and as Fanny took the cloth and gave it the last fold, her mother put her finger under the young girl's chin, and kissed her. Again the red signal flew out, and fluttered on Fanny's cheek. What did it mean? It was not alarm this time. It was pleasure which caused the poor little Fanny to blush so. Poor little Fanny! What? is love sin? that it is so pleasant at the beginning, and so bitter at the end?

After the embrace, Mrs. Bolton thought proper to say that she was a-goin out upon business, and that Fanny must keep the lodge; which Fanny, after a very faint objection indeed, consented to do. So Mrs. Bolton took her bonnet and market-basket, and departed; and the instant she was gone, Fanny went and sae by the window which commanded Bows's door, and never once took her eyes away from that quarter of Shepherd's Inn.

Betsy-Jane and Ameliar-Ann were buzzing in one corner of the place, and making believe to read out of a picture-book, which one of them held topsy-turvy. It was a grave and dreadful tract, of Mr. Bolton's collection. Fanny did not hear her sisters prattling over it. She noticed nothing but Bows's door.

At last she gave a little shake, and her eyes lighted up. He had come out. He would pass the door again. But her poor little countenance fell in an instant more. Pendennis, indeed, came out; but Bows followed after him. They passed under the archway together. He only took off his hat, and bowed as he looked in. He did not stop to speak.

In three or four minutes — Fanny did not know how long, but she looked furiously at him when he came into the lodge — Bows returned alone, and entered into the porter's room.

"Where's your Ma, dear?" he said to Fanny.

"I don't know," Fanny said, with an angry toss. "I don't follow Ma's steps wherever she goes, I suppose, Mr. Bows."

"Am I my mother's keeper?" Bows said, with his usual melancholy bitterness. "Come here, Betsy-Jane and Ameliar-Ann; I've brought a cake for the one who can read her letters best, and a cake for the other who can read them the next best."

When the young ladies had undergone the examination through which Bows put them, they were rewarded with their gingerbread medals, and went off to discuss them in the court. Meanwhile Fanny took out some work, and pretended to busy herself with it, her mind being in great excitement and anger, as she plied her needle. Bows sate so that he could command the entrance from the lodge to the street. But the person whom, perhaps, he expected to see, never made his appearance again. And Mrs. Bolton came in from market, and found Mr. Bows in place of the person whom she had expected to see. The reader perhaps can guess what was his name?

The interview between Bows and his guest, when those two mounted to the apartment occupied by the former in common with the descendant of the Milesian kings, was not particularly satisfactory to either party. Pen was sulky. If Bows had anything on his mind, he did not care to deliver himself of his thoughts in the presence of Captain Costigan, who remained in the apartment during the whole of Pen's visit; having quitted his bedchamber, indeed, but a very few minutes before the arrival of that gentleman. We have witnessed the deshahille of Major Pendennis: will any man wish to be valet-de-chambre to our other hero, Costigan? It would seem that the Captain, before issuing from his bedroom, scented himself with otto-of-whisky. A rich odour of that delicious perfume breathed from out him, as he held out the grasp of cordiality to his visitor. The hand which performed that grasp shook wofully: it was a wonder how it could hold the razor with which the poor gentleman daily operated on his chin.

Bows's room was as neat, on the other hand, as his comrade's was disorderly. His humble wardrobe hung behind a curtain. His books and manuscript music were trimly arranged upon shelves. A lithographed portrait of Miss Fotheringay, as Mrs. Haller, with the actress's sprawling signature at the corner, hung faithfully over the old gentleman's bed. Lady Mirabel wrote much better than Miss Fotheringay had been able to do. Her Ladyship had laboured assiduously to acquire the art of penmanship since her marriage; and, in a common note of invitation or acceptance, acquitted herself very genteelly. Bows loved the old handwriting best, though; the fair artist's earlier manner. He had but one specimen of the new style, a note in reply to a song composed and dedicated to Lady Mirabel, by her most humble servant Robert Bows; and which document was treasured in his desk amongst his other state papers. He was teaching Fanny Bolton now to sing and to write, as he had taught Emily in former days. It was the nature of the man to attach himself to something. When Emily was torn from him he took a substitute: as a man looks out for a crutch when he loses a leg; or lashes himself to a raft when he has suffered shipwreck. Latude had given his heart to a woman, no doubt, before he grew to be so fond of a mouse in the Bastille. There are people who in their youth have felt and inspired an heroic passion, and end by being happy in the caresses, or agitated by the illness of a poodle. But it was hard upon Bows, and grating to his feelings as a man and a sentimentalist, that he should find Pen again upon his track, and in pursuit of this little Fanny.

Meanwhile, Costigan had not the least idea but that his company was perfectly welcome to Messrs. Pendennis and Bows, and that the visit of the former was intended for himself. He expressed himself greatly pleased with that mark of poloightness and promised, in his own mind, that he would repay that obligation at least — which was not the only debt which the Captain owed in life — by several visits to his young friend. He entertained him affably with news of the day, or rather of ten days previous; for Pen, in his quality of Journalist, remembered to have seen some of the Captain's opinions in the Sporting and Theatrical Newspaper, which was Costigan's oracle. He stated that Sir Charles and Lady Mirabel were gone to Baden-Baden, and were most pressing in their invitations that he should join them there. Pen replied with great gravity, that he had heard that Baden was very pleasant, and the Grand Duke exceedingly hospitable to English. Costigan answered, that the laws of hospitalitee bekeam a Grand Juke; that he sariously would think about visiting him; and made some remarks upon the splendid festivities at Dublin Castle, when his Excellency the Earl of Portansherry held the Viceraygal Coort there, and of which he, Costigan, had been a humble but pleased spectator. And Pen — as he heard these oft-told well-remembered legends — recollected the time when he had given a sort of credence to them, and had a certain respect for the Captain. Emily and first love, and the little room at Chatteris, and the kind talk with Bows on the bridge, came back to him. He felt quite kindly disposed towards his two old friends; and cordially shook the hands of both of them when he rose to go away.

He had quite forgotten about little Fanny Bolton whilst the Captain was talking, and Pen himself was absorbed in other selfish meditations. He only remembered her again as Bows came hobbling down the stairs after him, bent evidently upon following him out of Shepherd's Inn.

Mr. Bows's precaution was not a lucky one. The wrath of Mr. Arthur Pendennis rose at the poor old fellow's feeble persecution. Confound him, what does he mean by dogging me? thought Pen. And he burst out laughing when he was in the Strand and by himself, as he thought of the elder's stratagem. It was not an honest laugh, Arthur Pendennis. Perhaps the thought struck Arthur himself, and he blushed at his own sense of humour.

He went off to endeavour to banish the thoughts which occupied him, whatever those thoughts might be, and tried various places of amusement with but indifferent success. He struggled up the highest stairs of the Panorama; but when he had arrived, panting at the height of the eminence, Care had come up with him, and was bearing him company. He went to the Club, and wrote a long letter home, exceedingly witty and sarcastic, and in which, if he did not say a single word about Vauxhall and Fanny Bolton, it was because he thought that subject, however interesting to himself, would not be very interesting to his mother and Laura. Nor could the novels or the library table fix his attention, nor the grave and respectable Jawkins (the only man in town), who wished to engage him in conversation; nor any of the amusements which he tried, after flying from Jawkins. He passed a Comic Theatre on his way home, and saw 'Stunning Farce,' 'Roars of Laughter,' 'Good Old English Fun and Frolic,' placarded in vermilion letters on the gate. He went into the pit, and saw the lovely Mrs. Leary, as usual, in a man's attire; and that eminent buffo actor, Tom Horseman, dressed as a woman. Horseman's travesty seemed to him a horrid and hideous degradation; Mrs. Leary's glances and ankles had not the least effect. He laughed again, and bitterly, to himself, as he thought of the effect which she had produced upon him, on the first night of his arrival in London, a short time — what a long long time ago!

CHAPTER L

OR NEAR THE TEMPLE GARDEN

Fashion has long deserted the green and pretty Temple Garden, which in Shakespeare makes York and Lancaster to pluck the innocent white and red roses which became the badges of their bloody wars; and the learned and pleasant writer of the Handbook of London tells us that “the commonest and hardiest kind of rose has long ceased to put forth a bud” in that smoky air. Not many of the present occupiers of the buildings round about the quarter know or care, very likely, whether or not roses grow there, or pass the old gate, except on their way to chambers. The attorneys’ clerks don’t carry flowers in their bags, or posies under their arms, as they run to the counsel’s chambers — the few lawyers who take constitutional walks think very little about York and Lancaster, especially since the railroad business is over. Only antiquarians and literary amateurs care to look at the gardens with much interest, and fancy good Sir Roger de Coverley and Mr. Spectator with his short face pacing up and down the road; or dear Oliver Goldsmith in the summer-house, perhaps meditating about the next ‘Citizen of the World,’ or the new suit that Mr. Filby, the tailor, is fashioning for him, or the dunning letter that Mr. Newbery has sent. Treading heavily on the gravel, and rolling majestically along in a snuff-coloured suit, and a wig that sadly wants the barber’s powder and irons, one sees the Great Doctor step up to him (his Scotch lackey following at the lexicographer’s heels, a little the worse for port wine that they have been taking at the Mitre), and Mr. Johnson asks Mr. Goldsmith to come home and take a dish of tea with Miss Williams. Kind faith of Fancy! Sir Roger and Mr. Spectator are as real to us now as the two doctors and the boozy and faithful Scotchman. The poetical figures live in our memory just as much as the real personages — and as Mr. Arthur Pendennis was of a romantic and literary turn, by no means addicted to the legal pursuits common in the neighbourhood of the place, we may presume that he was cherishing some such poetical reflections as these, when, upon the evening after the events recorded in the last chapter, the young gentleman chose the Temple Gardens as a place for exercise and meditation.

On the Sunday evening the Temple is commonly calm. The chambers are for the most part vacant: the great lawyers are giving grand dinner-parties at their houses in the Belgravian or Tyburnian districts; the agreeable young barristers are absent, attending those parties, and paying their respects to Mr. Kewsey’s excellent claret, or Mr. Justice Ermine’s accomplished daughters the uninvited are partaking of the economic joint and the modest half-pint of wine at the Club, entertaining themselves, and the rest of the company in the Club-room, with Circuit jokes and points of wit and law. Nobody is in chambers at all, except poor Mr. Cockle, who is ill, and whose laundress is making him gruel; or Mr. Toodle, who is an amateur of the flute, and whom you may hear piping solitary from his chambers in the second floor; or young Tiger, the student, from whose open windows comes a great gush of cigar smoke, and at whose door are a quantity of dishes and covers, bearing the insignia of Dicks’ or the Cock. But stop! Whither does Fancy lead us? It is vacation time; and with the exception of Pendennis, nobody is in Chambers at all.

Perhaps it was solitude, then, which drove Pen into the garden; for although he had never before passed the gate, and had looked rather carelessly at the pretty flower-beds, and the groups of pleased citizens sauntering over the trim lawn and the broad gravel-walks by the river, on this evening it happened, as we have said, that the young gentleman, who had dined alone at a tavern in the neighbourhood of the Temple, took a fancy, as he was returning home to his chambers, to take a little walk in the gardens, and enjoy the fresh evening air, and the sight of the shining Thames. After walking for a brief space, and looking at the many peaceful and happy groups round about him, he grew tired of the exercise, and betook himself to one of the summer-houses which flank either end of the main walk, and there modestly seated himself. What were his cogitations? The evening was delightfully bright and calm; the sky was cloudless; the chimneys on the opposite bank were not smoking; the wharfs warehouses looked rosy in the sunshine, and as clear as if they, too, had washed for the holiday. The steamers rushed rapidly up and down the stream, laden with holiday passengers. The bells of the multitudinous city churches were ringing to evening prayers — such peaceful Sabbath evenings as this Pen may have remembered in his early days, as he paced, with his arm round his mother’s waist, on the terrace before the lawn at home. The sun was lighting up the little Brawl, too, as well as the broad Thames, and sinking downwards majestically behind the Clavering elms, and the tower of the familiar village church. Was it thoughts of these, or the sunset merely, that caused the blush in the young man’s face? He beat time on the bench, to the chorus of the bells without; flicked the dust off his shining

boots with his pocket-handkerchief, and starting up, stamped with his foot and said, "No, by Jove, I'll go home." And with this resolution, which indicated that some struggle as to the propriety of remaining where he was, or of quitting the garden, had been going on in his mind, he stepped out of the summer-house.

He nearly knocked down two little children, who did not indeed reach much higher than his knee, and were trotting along the gravel-walk, with their long blue shadows slanting towards the east.

One cried out "Oh!" the other began to laugh; and with a knowing little infantile chuckle, said, "Missa Pendennis!" And Arthur, looking down, saw his two little friends of the day before, Mesdemoiselles Ameliar-Ann and Betsy-Jane. He blushed more than ever at seeing them, and seizing the one whom he had nearly upset, jumped her up into the air, and kissed her: at which sudden assault Ameliar-Ann began to cry in great alarm.

This cry brought up instantly two ladies in clean collars and new ribbons, and grand shawls, namely: Mrs. Bolton in a rich scarlet Caledonian Cashmere, and a black silk dress, and Miss F. Bolton with a yellow scarf and a sweet sprigged muslin, and a parasol — quite the lady. Fanny did not say one single word: though; her eyes flashed a welcome, and shone as bright — as bright as the most blazing windows in Paper Buildings. But Mrs. Bolton, after admonishing Betsy-Jane, said, "Lor sir — how very odd that we should meet you year! I ope you ave your ealth well, sir. — Ain't it odd, Fanny, that we should meet Mr. Pendennis?" What do you mean by sniggering, Mesdames? When young Croesus has been staying at a country-house, have you never, by any singular coincidence, been walking with your Fanny in the shrubberies? Have you and your Fanny never happened to be listening to the band of the Heavies at Brighton, when young De Boots and Captain Padmore came clinking down the Pier? Have you and your darling Frances never chanced to be visiting old widow Wheezy at the cottage on the common, when the young curate has stepped in with a tract adapted to the rheumatism? Do you suppose that, if singular coincidences occur at the Hall, they don't also happen at the Lodge?

It was a coincidence, no doubt: that was all. In the course of the conversation on the day previous, Mr. Pendennis had merely said, in the simplest way imaginable, and in reply to a question of Miss Bolton, that although some of the courts were gloomy, parts of the Temple were very cheerful and agreeable, especially the chambers looking on the river and around the gardens, and that the gardens were a very pleasant walk on Sunday evenings and frequented by a great number of people — and here, by the merest chance, all our acquaintances met together, just like so many people in genteel life. What could be more artless, good-natured, or natural?

Pen looked very grave, pompous, and dandified. He was unusually smart and brilliant in his costume. His white duck trousers and white hat, his neckcloth of many colours, his light waistcoat, gold chains, and shirt-studs, gave him the air of a prince of the blood at least. How his splendour became his figure! Was anybody ever like him? some one thought. He blushed — how his blushes became him! the same individual said to herself. The children, on seeing him the day before, had been so struck with him, that after he had gone away they had been playing at him. And Ameliar-Ann, sticking her little chubby fingers into the arm-holes of her pinafore, as Pen was wont to do with his waistcoat, had said, "Now, Bessy-Jane, I'll be Missa Pendennis." Fanny had laughed till she cried, and smothered her sister with kisses for that feat. How happy, too, she was to see Arthur embracing the child!

If Arthur was red, Fanny, on the contrary, was very worn and pale. Arthur remarked it, and asked kindly why she looked so fatigued.

"I was awake all night," said Fanny, and began to blush a little.

"I put out her candle, and hordered her to go to sleep and leave off readin," interposed the fond mother.

"You were reading! And what was it that interested you so?" asked Pen, amused.

"Oh, it's so beautiful!" said Fanny.

"What?"

"Walter Lorraine," Fanny sighed out. "How I do hate that Neaera — Neaera — I don't know the pronunciation. And I love Leonora, and Walter, oh, how dear he is!"

How had Fanny discovered the novel of 'Walter Lorraine,' and that Pen was the author? This little person remembered every single word which Mr. Pendennis had spoken on the night previous, and how he wrote in books and newspapers. What books? She was so eager to know, that she had almost a mind to be civil to old Bows, who was suffering under her displeasure since yesterday, but she determined first to make application to Costigan. She began by coaxing the Captain and smiling upon him in her most winning way, as she helped to arrange his dinner and set his humble apartment in

order. She was sure his linen wanted mending (and indeed the Captain's linen-closet contained some curious specimens of manufactured flax and cotton). She would mend his shirts — all his shirts. What horrid holes — what funny holes! She put her little face through one of them, and laughed at the old warrior in the most winning manner. She would have made a funny little picture looking through the holes. Then she daintily removed Costigan's dinner things, tripping about the room as she had seen the dancers do at the play; and she danced to the Captain's cupboard, and produced his whisky-bottle, and mixed him a tumbler, and must taste a drop of it — a little drop; and the Captain must sing her one of his songs, his dear songs, and teach it to her. And when he had sung an Irish melody in his rich quavering voice, fancying it was he who was fascinating the little siren, she put her little question about Arthur Pendennis and his novel, and having got an answer, cared for nothing more, but left the Captain at the piano about to sing her another song, and the dinner-tray on the passage, and the shirts on the chair, and ran downstairs quickening her pace as she sped.

Captain Costigan, as he said, was not a literary cyarkter, nor had he as yet found time to peruse his young friend's ellygant perfaurumance, though he intended to teak an early opporchunitee of purchasing a cawpee of his work. But he knew the name of Pen's novel from the fact that Messrs. Finucane, Bludyer, and other frequenters of the Back Kitchen, spoke of Mr. Pendennis (and not all of them with great friendship; for Bludyer called him a confounded coxcomb, and Hoolan wondered that Doolan did not kick him etc.) by the sobriquet of Walter Lorraine — and was hence enabled to give Fanny the information which she required.

"And she went and ast for it at the libery," Mrs. Bolton said — several liberies — and some ad it and it was bout, and some adn't it. And one of the liberies as ad it wouldn't let er ave it without a sovering; and she adn't one, and she came back a-cryin to me — didn't you, Fanny? — and I gave her a sovering."

"And, oh, I was in such a fright lest any one should have come to the libery and took it while I was away," Fanny said, her cheeks and eyes glowing. "And, oh, I do like it so!"

Arthur was touched by this artless sympathy, immensely flattered and moved by it. "Do you like it?" he said. "If you will come up to my chambers I will — No, I will bring you one — no, I will send you one. Good night. Thank you, Fanny. God bless you. I mustn't stay with you. Good-bye, good-bye." And, pressing her hand once, and nodding to her mother and the other children, he strode out of the gardens.

He quickened his pace as he went from them, and ran out of the gate talking to himself. "Dear, dear little thing," he said — "darling little Fanny! You are worth them all. I wish to heaven Shandon was back. I'd go home to my mother. I mustn't see her. I won't. I won't, so help me —"

As he was talking thus, and running, the passers-by turning to look at him, he ran against a little old man, and perceived it was Mr. Bows.

"Your very umble servant, sir," said Mr. Bows, making a sarcastic bow, and lifting his old hat from his forehead.

"I wish you a good day," Arthur answered sulkily. "Don't let me detain you, or give you the trouble to follow me again. I am in a hurry, sir. Good evening."

Bows thought Pen had some reason for hurrying to his rooms. "Where are they?" exclaimed the old gentleman. "You know whom I mean. They're not in your rooms, sir, are they? They told Bolton they were going to church at the Temple, they weren't there. They are in your chambers: they mustn't stay in your chambers, Mr. Pendennis."

"Damn it, sir!" cried out Pendennis, fiercely. "Come and see if they are in my chambers: here's the court and the door — come in and see." And Bows, taking off his hat and bowing first, followed the young man.

They were not in Pen's chambers, as we know. But when the gardens were closed, the two women, who had r had but a melancholy evening's amusement, walked away sadly with the children, and they entered into Lamb Court, and stood under the lamp-post which cheerfully ornaments the centre of that quadrangle, and looked up to the third floor of the house where Pendennis's chambers were, and where they saw a light presently kindled. Then this couple of fools went away, the children dragging wearily after them, and returned to Mr. Bolton, who was immersed in rum-and-water at his lodge in Shepherd's Inn.

Mr. Bows looked round the blank room which the young man occupied, and which had received but very few ornaments or additions since the last time we saw them. Warrington's old bookcase and battered library, Pen's writing-table with its litter of papers, presented an aspect cheerless enough. "Will you like to look in the bedrooms, Mr. Bows, and see if my victims are there?" he said bitterly; "or whether I have made away with the little girls, and hid them in the coal-

hole?"

"Your word is sufficient, Mr. Pendennis," the other said in his sad tone. "You say they are not here, and I know they are not. And I hope they never have been here, and never will come."

"Upon my word, sir, you are very good, to choose my acquaintances for me," Arthur said, in a haughty tone; "and to suppose that anybody would be the worse for my society. I remember you, and owe you kindness from old times, Mr. Bows; or I should speak more angrily than I do, about a very intolerable sort of persecution to which you seem inclined to subject me. You followed me out of your Inn yesterday, as if you wanted to watch that I shouldn't steal something." Here Pen stammered and turned red, directly he had said the words; he felt he had given the other an opening, which Bows instantly took.

"I do think you came to steal something, as you say the words, sir," Bows said. "Do you mean to say that you came to pay a visit to poor old Bows, the fiddler; or to Mrs. Bolton, at the porter's lodge? O fie! Such a fine gentleman as Arthur Pendennis, Esquire, doesn't condescend to walk up to my garret, or to sit in a laundress's kitchen, but for reasons of his own. And my belief is that you came to steal a pretty girl's heart away, and to ruin it, and to spurn it afterwards, Mr. Arthur Pendennis. That's what the world makes of you young dandies, you gentlemen of fashion, you high and mighty aristocrats that trample upon the people. It's sport to you, but what is it to the poor, think you; the toys of your pleasures, whom you play with and whom you fling into the streets when you are tired? I know your order, sir. I know your selfishness, and your arrogance, and your pride. What does it matter to my lord, that the poor man's daughter is made miserable, and her family brought to shame? You must have your pleasures, and the people of course must pay for them. What are we made for, but for that? It's the way with you all — the way with you all, sir."

Bows was speaking beside the question, and Pen had his advantage here, which he was not sorry to take — not sorry to put off the debate from the point upon which his adversary had first engaged it. Arthur broke out with a sort of laugh, for which he asked Bows's pardon. "Yes, I am an aristocrat," he said, "in a palace up three pair of stairs, with a carpet nearly as handsome as yours, Mr. Bows. My life is passed in grinding the people, is it? — in ruining virgins and robbing the poor? My good sir, this is very well in a comedy, where Job Thornberry slaps his breast, and asks my Lord how dare he trample on an honest man and poke out an Englishman's fireside; but in real life, Mr. Bows, to a man who has to work for his bread as much as you do — how can you talk about aristocrats tyrannising over the people? Have I ever done you a wrong? or assumed airs of superiority over you? Did you not have an early regard for me — in days when we were both of us romantic young fellows, Mr. Bows? Come, don't be angry with me now, and let us be as good friends as we were before."

"Those days were very different," Mr. Bows answered; "and Mr. Arthur Pendennis was an honest, impetuous young fellow then; rather selfish and conceited, perhaps, but honest. He liked you then, because you were ready to ruin yourself for a woman."

"And now, sir?" Arthur asked.

"And now times are changed, and you want a woman to ruin herself for you," Bows answered. "I know this child, sir. I've always said this lot was hanging over her. She has heated her little brain with novels, until her whole thoughts are about love and lovers, and she scarcely sees that she treads on a kitchen floor. I have taught the little thing. She is full of many talents and winning ways, I grant you. I am fond of the girl, sir. I'm a lonely old man; I lead a life that I don't like, among boon companions, who make me melancholy. I have but this child that I care for. Have pity upon me, and don't take her away from me, Mr. Pendennis — don't take her away."

The old man's voice broke as he spoke. Its accents touched Pen, much more than the menacing or sarcastic tone which Bows had commenced by adopting.

"Indeed," said he, kindly, "you do me a wrong if you fancy I intend one to poor little Fanny. I never saw her till Friday night. It was the merest chance that our friend Costigan threw her into my way. I have no intentions regarding her — that is —"

"That is, you know very well that she is a foolish girl, and her mother a foolish woman — that is, you meet her in the Temple Gardens, and of course without previous concert — that is, that when I found her yesterday reading the book you've wrote, she scorned me," Bows said. "What am I good for but to be laughed at? a deformed old fellow like me; an old fiddler, that wears a threadbare coat, and gets his bread by playing tunes at an ale-house? You are a fine gentleman, you are. You wear scent in your handkerchief, and a ring on your finger. You go to dine with great people. Who ever gives a

crust to old Bows? And yet I might have been as good a man as the best of you. I might have been a man of genius, if I had had the chance; ay, and have lived with the master-spirits of the land. But everything had ailed with me. I'd ambition once, and wrote plays, poems, music — nobody would give me a hearing. I never loved a woman, but she laughed at me; and here I am in my old age alone — alone! Don't take this girl from me, Mr. Pendennis, I say again. Leave her with me a little longer. She was like a child to me till yesterday. Why did you step in, and made her to mock my deformity and old age?"

"I am guiltless of that, at least," Arthur said, with something of a sigh. "Upon my word of honour, I wish I had never seen the girl. My calling is not seduction, Mr. Bows. I did not imagine that I had made an impression on poor Fanny, until — until to-night. And then, sir, I was sorry, and was flying from my temptation, as you came upon me. And," he added, with a glow upon his cheek, which, in the gathering darkness, his companion could not see, and with an audible tremor in his voice, "I do not mind telling you, sir, that on this Sabbath evening, as the church bells were ringing, I thought of my own home, and of women angelically pure and good, who dwell there; and I was running hither as I met you, that I might avoid the danger which beset me, and ask strength of God Almighty to do my duty."

After these words from Arthur a silence ensued, and when the conversation was resumed by his guest, the latter spoke in a tone which was much more gentle and friendly. And on taking farewell of Pen, Bows asked leave to shake hands with him, and with a very warm and affectionate greeting on both sides, apologised to Arthur for having mistaken him, and paid him some compliments which caused the young man to squeeze his old friend's hand heartily again. And as they parted at Pen's door, Arthur said he had given a promise, and he hoped and trusted that Mr. Bows might rely on it?

"Amen to that prayer," said Mr. Bows, and went slowly down the stair.



CHAPTER LI

THE HAPPY VILLAGE AGAIN

Early in this history, we have had occasion to speak of the little town of Clavering, near which Pen's paternal home of Fair Oaks stood, and of some of the people who inhabit the place; and as the society there was by no means amusing or pleasant, our reports concerning it were not carried to any very great length. Mr. Samuel Huxter, the gentleman whose acquaintance we lately made at Vauxhall, was one of the choice spirits of the little town, when he visited it during his vacation, and enlivened the tables of his friends there, by the wit of Bartholomew's and the gossip of the fashionable London circles which he frequented.

Mr. Hobnell, the young gentleman whom Pen had thrashed in consequence of the quarrel in the Fotheringay affair, was, whilst a pupil at the Grammar School at Clavering, made very welcome at the tea-table of Mrs. Huxter, Samuel's mother, and was free of the surgery, where he knew the way to the tamarind-pots, and could scent his pocket-handkerchief with rose-water. And it was at this period of his life that he formed an attachment for Miss Sophy Huxter, whom, on his father's demise, he married, and took home to his house of the Warren, at a few miles from Clavering.

The family had possessed and cultivated an estate there for many years, as yeomen and farmers. Mr. Hobnell's father pulled down the old farmhouse; built a flaring new whitewashed mansion, with capacious stables; and a piano in the drawing-room; kept a pack of harriers; and assumed the title of Squire Hobnell. When he died, and his son reigned in his stead, the family might be fairly considered to be established as county gentry. And Sam Huxter, at London, did no great wrong in boasting about his brother-in-law's place, his hounds, horses, and hospitality, to his admiring comrades at Bartholomew's. Every year, at a time commonly when Mrs. Hobnell could not leave the increasing duties of her nursery, Hobnell came up to London for a lark, had rooms at the Tavistock, and he and Sam indulged in the pleasures of the town together. Ascot, the theatres, Vauxhall, and the convivial taverns in the joyous neighbourhood of Covent Garden, were visited by the vivacious squire, in company with his learned brother. When he was in London, as he said, he liked to do as London does, and to "go it a bit," and when he returned to the west, he took a new bonnet and shawl to Mrs. Hobnell, and relinquished, for country sports and occupations during the next eleven months, the elegant amusements of London life.

Sam Huxter kept up a correspondence with his relative, and supplied him with choice news of the metropolis, in return for the baskets of hares, partridges, and clouted cream which the squire and his good-natured wife forwarded to Sam. A youth more brilliant and distinguished they did not know. He was the life and soul of their house, when he made his appearance in his native place. His songs, jokes, and fun kept the Warren in a roar. He had saved their eldest darling's life, by taking a fish-bone out of her throat: in fine, he was the delight of their circle.

As ill-luck would have it, Pen again fell in with Mr. Huxter, only three days after the rencontre at Vauxhall. Faithful to his vow, he had not been to see little Fanny. He was trying to drive her from his mind by occupation, or other mental excitement. He laboured, though not to much profit, incessantly in his rooms; and, in his capacity of critic for the Pall Mall Gazette, made woful and savage onslaught on a poem and a romance which came before him for judgment. These authors slain, he went to dine alone at the lonely club of the Polyanthus, where the vast solitudes frightened him, and made him only the more moody. He had been to more theatres for relaxation. The whole house was roaring with laughter and applause, and he saw only an ignoble farce that made him sad. It would have damped the spirits of the buffoon on the stage to have seen Pen's dismal face. He hardly knew what was happening; the scene and the drama passed before him like a dream or a fever. Then he thought he would go to the Back Kitchen, his old haunt with Warrington — he was not a bit sleepy yet. The day before he had walked twenty miles in search after rest, over Hampstead Common and Hendon lanes, and had got no sleep at night. He would go to the Back Kitchen. It was a sort of comfort to him to think he should see Bows. Bows was there, very calm, presiding at the old piano. Some tremendous comic songs were sung, which made the room crack with laughter. How strange they seemed to Pen! He could only see Bows. In an extinct volcano, such as he boasted that his breast was, it was wonderful how he should feel such a flame! Two days' indulgence had kindled it; two days' abstinence had set it burning in fury. So, musing upon this, and drinking down one glass after another, as ill luck would have it, Arthur's eyes lighted upon Mr. Huxter, who had been to the theatre, like himself, and, with two or three comrades, now entered the room. Huxter whispered to his companions, greatly to Pen's annoyance. Arthur felt that the

other was talking about him. Huxter then worked through the room, followed by his friends, and came and took a place opposite Pen, nodding familiarly to him, and holding him out a dirty hand to shake.

Pen shook hands with his fellow-townsmen. He thought he had been needlessly savage to him on the last night when they had met. As for Huxter, perfectly at good-humour with himself, and the world, it never entered his mind that he could be disagreeable to anybody; and the little dispute, or “chaff,” as he styled it, of Vauxhall, was a trifle which he did not in the least regard.

The disciple of Galen having called for “four stouts,” with which he and his party refreshed themselves, began to think what would be the most amusing topic of conversation with Pen, and hit upon that precise one which was most painful to our young gentleman.

“Jolly night at Vauxhall — wasn’t it?” he said, and winked in a very knowing way.

“I’m glad you liked it,” poor Pen said, groaning in spirit.

“I was devilish cut — uncommon — been dining with some chaps at Greenwich. That was a pretty bit of muslin hanging on your arm — who was she?” asked the fascinating student.

The question was too much for Arthur. “Have I asked you any questions about yourself, Mr. Huxter?” he said.

“I didn’t mean any offence — beg pardon — hang it, you cut up quite savage,” said Pen’s astonished interlocutor.

“Do you remember what took place between us the other night?” Pen asked, with gathering wrath. “You forget? Very probably. You were tipsy, as you observed just now, and very rude.”

“Hang it, sir, I asked your pardon,” Huxter said, looking red.

“You did certainly, and it was granted with all my heart. I am sure. But if you recollect, I begged that you would have the goodness to omit me from the list of your acquaintance for the future; and when we met in public, that you would not take the trouble to recognise me. Will you please to remember this, hereafter? and as the song is beginning, permit me to leave you to the unrestrained enjoyment of the music.”

He took his hat, and making a bow to the amazed Mr. Huxter left the table, as Huxter’s comrades, after a pause of wonder, set up such a roar of laughter at Huxter, as called for the intervention of the president of the room; who bawled out, “Silence, gentlemen; do have silence for the Body Snatcher!” which popular song began as Pen left the Back Kitchen. He flattered himself that he had commanded his temper perfectly. He rather wished that Huxter had been pugnacious. He would have liked to fight him or somebody. He went home. The day’s work, the dinner, the play, the whisky-and-water, the quarrel — nothing soothed him. He slept no better than on the previous night.

A few days afterwards, Mr. Sam Huxter wrote home a letter to Mr. Hobnell in the country, of which Mr. Arthur Pendennis formed the principal subject. Sam described Arthur’s pursuits in London, and his confounded insolence of behaviour to his old friends from home. He said he was an abandoned criminal, a regular Don Juan, a fellow who, when he did come into the country, ought to be kept out of honest people’s houses. He had seen him at Vauxhall, dancing with an innocent girl in the lower ranks of life, of whom he was making a victim. He had found out from an Irish gentleman (formerly in the army), who frequented a club of which he, Huxter, was member, who the girl was, on whom this conceited humbug was practising his infernal arts; and he thought he should warn her father, etc. etc. — the letter then touched on general news, conveyed the writer’s thanks for the last parcel and the rabbits, and hinted his extreme readiness for further favours.

About once a year, as we have stated, there was occasion for a christening at the Warren, and it happened that this ceremony took place a day after Hobnell had received the letter of his brother-in-law in town. The infant (a darling little girl) was christened Myra Lucretia, after its two godmothers, Miss Portman and Mrs. Pybus of Clavering, and as of course Hobnell had communicated Sam’s letter to his wife, Mrs. Hobnell imparted its horrid contents to her two gossips. A pretty story it was, and prettily it was told throughout Clavering in the course of that day.

Myra did not — she was too much shocked to do so — speak on the matter to her mamma, but Mrs. Pybus had no such feelings of reserve. She talked over the matter not only with Mrs. Portman, but with Mr. and the Honourable Mrs. Simcoe, with Mrs. Glanders, her daughters being to that end ordered out of the room, with Madame Fribsby, and, in a word, with the whole of the Clavering society. Madame Fribsby looking furtively up at her picture of the dragoon, and inwards into her own wounded memory, said that men would be men, and as long as they were men would be deceivers; and she pensively quoted some lines from Marmion, requesting to know where deceiving lovers should rest? Mrs. Pybus had no words of

hatred, horror, contempt, strong enough for a villain who could be capable of conduct so base. This was what came of early indulgence, and insolence, and extravagance, and aristocratic airs (it is certain that Pen had refused to drink tea with Mrs. Pybus, and attending the corrupt and horrid parties in the dreadful modern Babylon! Mrs. Portman was afraid that she must acknowledge that the mother's fatal partiality had spoiled this boy, that his literary successes had turned his head, and his horrid passions had made him forget the principles which Doctor Portman had instilled into him in early life. Glanders, the atrocious Captain of Dragoons, when informed of the occurrence by Mrs. Glanders, whistled and made jocular allusions to it at dinner-time; on which Mrs. Glanders called him a brute, and ordered the girls again out of the room, as the horrid Captain burst out laughing. Mr. Simcoe was calm under the intelligence; but rather pleased than otherwise; it only served to confirm the opinion which he had always had of that wretched young man: not that he knew anything about him — not that he had read one line of his dangerous and poisonous works; Heaven forbid that he should: but what could be expected from such a youth, and such frightful, such lamentable, such deplorable want of seriousness? Pen formed the subject for a second sermon at the Clavering chapel-of-ease: where the dangers of London, and the crime of reading or writing novels, were pointed out on a Sunday evening to a large and warm congregation. They did not wait to hear whether he was guilty or not. They took his wickedness for granted: and with these admirable moralists, it was who should fling the stone at poor Pen.

The next day Mrs. Pendennis, alone and almost fainting with emotion and fatigue, walked or rather ran to Dr. Portman's house to consult the good Doctor. She had had an anonymous letter; — some Christian had thought it his or her duty to stab the good soul who had never done mortal a wrong — an anonymous letter with references to Scripture, pointing out the doom of such sinners and a detailed account of Pen's crime. She was in a state of terror and excitement pitiable to witness. Two or three hours of this pain had aged her already. In her first moment of agitation she had dropped the letter, and Laura had read it. Laura blushed when she read it; her whole frame trembled, but it was with anger. "The cowards," she said. — It isn't true. — No, mother, it isn't true."

"It is true, and you've done it, Laura," cried out Helen fiercely. "Why did you refuse him when he asked you? Why did you break my heart and refuse him? It is you who led him into crime. It is you who flung him into the arms of this — this woman. — Don't speak to me. — Don't answer me. I will never forgive you, never. Martha, bring me my bonnet and shawl. I'll go out. I won't have you come with me. Go away. Leave me, cruel girl; why have you brought this shame on me?" And bidding her daughter and her servants keep away from her, she ran down the road to Clavering.

Doctor Portman, glancing over the letter, thought he knew the handwriting, and, of course, was already acquainted with the charge made against poor Pen. Against his own conscience, perhaps (for the worthy Doctor, like most of us, had a considerable natural aptitude for receiving any report unfavourable to his neighbours, he strove to console Helen; he pointed out that the slander came from an anonymous quarter, and therefore must be the work of a rascal; that the charge might not be true — was not true, most likely — at least, that Pen must be heard before he was condemned; that the son of such a mother was not likely to commit such a crime, etc. etc.

Helen at once saw through his feint of objection and denial. "You think he has done it," she said — "you know you think he has done it. Oh, why did I ever leave him, Doctor Portman, or suffer him away from me? But he can't be dishonest — pray God, not dishonest — you don't think that, do you? Remember his conduct about that other — person — how madly he was attached to her. He was an honest boy then — he is now. And I thank God — yes, I fall down on my knees and thank God he paid Laura. You said he was good — you did yourself. And now — if this woman loves him — and you know they must — if he has taken her from her home, or she tempted him, which is most likely — why still, she must be his wife and my daughter. And he must leave the dreadful world and come back to me — to his mother, Doctor Portman. Let us go away and bring him back — yes — bring him back — and there shall be joy for the — the sinner that repenteth. Let us go now, directly, dear friend — this very—"

Helen could say no more. She fell back and fainted. She was carried to a bed in the house of the pitying Doctor, and the surgeon was called to attend her. She lay all night in an alarming state. Laura came to her, or to the rectory rather; for she would not see Laura. And Doctor Portman, still beseeching her to be tranquil, and growing bolder and more confident of Arthur's innocence as he witnessed the terrible grief of the poor mother, wrote a letter to Pen warning him of the rumours that were against him and earnestly praying that he would break off and repent of a connexion so fatal to his best interests and his soul's welfare. And Laura? — was her heart not wrung by the thought of Arthur's crime and Helen's estrangement? Was it not a bitter blow for the innocent girl to think that at one stroke she should lose all the love which she cared for in the world?

CHAPTER LII

WHICH HAD VERY NEARLY BEEN THE LAST OF THE STORY

Doctor Portman's letter was sent off to its destination in London, and the worthy clergyman endeavoured to soothe down Mrs. Pendennis into some state of composure until an answer should arrive, which the Doctor tried to think, or at any rate persisted in saying, would be satisfactory as regarded the morality of Mr. Pen. At least Helen's wisdom of moving upon London and appearing in person to warn her son of his wickedness, was impracticable for a day or two. The apothecary forbade her moving even so far as Fair Oaks for the first day, and it was not until the subsequent morning that she found herself again back on her sofa at home, with the faithful, though silent, Laura nursing at her side.

Unluckily for himself and all parties, Pen never read that homily which Doctor Portman addressed to him, until many weeks after the epistle had been composed; and day after day the widow waited for her son's reply to the charges against him; her own illness increasing with every day's delay. It was a hard task for Laura to bear the anxiety; to witness her dearest friend's suffering; worst of all, to support Helen's estrangement, and the pain caused to her by that averted affection. But it was the custom of this young lady to the utmost of her power, and by means of that gracious assistance which Heaven awarded to her pure and constant prayers, to do her duty. And; as that duty was performed quite noiselessly — while the supplications, which endowed her with the requisite strength for fulfilling it, also took place in her own chamber, away from all mortal sight — we, too, must be perforce silent about these virtues of hers, which no more bear public talking about, than a flower will bear to bloom in a ballroom. This only we will say — that a good woman is the loveliest flower that blooms under heaven; and that we look with love and wonder upon its silent grace, its pure fragrance, its delicate bloom of beauty. Sweet and beautiful! — the fairest and the most spotless! — is it not pity to see them bowed down or devoured by Grief or Death inexorable — wasting in disease — pining with long pain — or cut off by sudden fate in their prime? We may deserve grief — but why should these be unhappy? — except that we know that Heaven chastens those whom it loves best; being pleased, by repeated trials, to make these pure spirits more pure.

So Pen never got the letter, although it was duly posted and faithfully discharged by the postman into his letter-box in Lamb Court, and thence carried by the laundress to his writing-table with the rest of his lordship's correspondence; into which room, have we not seen a picture of him, entering from his little bedroom adjoining, as Mrs. Flanagan, his laundress, was in the act of drinking his gin?

Those kind readers who have watched Mr. Arthur's career hitherto, and have made, as they naturally would do, observations upon the moral character and peculiarities of their acquaintance, have probably discovered by this time what was the prevailing fault in Mr. Pen's disposition, and who was that greatest enemy, artfully indicated in the title-page, with whom he had to contend. Not a few of us, my beloved public, have the very same rascal to contend with: a scoundrel who takes every opportunity of bringing us into mischief, of plunging us into quarrels, of leading us into idleness and unprofitable company, and what not. In a word, Pen's greatest enemy was himself: and as he had been pampering, and coaxing, and indulging that individual all his life, the rogue grew insolent, as all spoiled servants will be; and at the slightest attempt to coerce him, or make him do that which was unpleasant to him, became frantically rude and unruly. A person who is used to making sacrifices — Laura, for instance, who had got such a habit of giving up her own pleasure for others — can do the business quite easily; but Pen, unaccustomed as he was to any sort of self-denial, suffered woundily when called on to pay his share, and savagely grumbled at being obliged to forgo anything he liked.

He had resolved in his mighty mind then that he would not see Fanny; and he wouldn't. He tried to drive the thoughts of that fascinating little person out of his head, by constant occupation, by exercise, by dissipation and society. He worked then too much; he walked and rode too much; he ate, drank, and smoked too much: nor could all the cigars and the punch of which he partook drive little Fanny's image out of his inflamed brain, and at the end of a week of this discipline and self-denial our young gentleman was in bed with a fever. Let the reader who has never had a fever in chambers pity the wretch who is bound to undergo that calamity.

A committee of marriageable ladies, or of any Christian persons interested in the propagation of the domestic virtues, should employ a Cruikshank or a Leech, or some other kindly expositor of the follies of the day, to make a series of designs representing the horrors of a bachelor's life in chambers, and leading the beholder to think of better things, and a more

wholesome condition. What can be more uncomfortable than the bachelor's lonely breakfast? — with the black kettle in the dreary fire in midsummer; or, worse still, with the fire gone out at Christmas, half an hour after the laundress has quitted the sitting-room? Into this solitude the owner enters shivering, and has to commence his day by hunting for coals and wood; and before he begins the work of a student, has to discharge the duties of a housemaid, vice Mrs. Flanagan, who is absent without leave. Or, again, what can form a finer subject for the classical designer than the bachelor's shirt — that garment which he wants to assume just at dinner-time, and which he finds without any buttons to fasten it? Then there is the bachelor's return to chambers, after a merry Christmas holiday, spent in a cosy country-house, full of pretty faces, and kind welcomes and regrets. He leaves his portmanteau at the barber's in the Court: he lights his dismal old candle at the sputtering little lamp on the stair: he enters the blank familiar room, where the only tokens to greet him, that show any interest in his personal welfare, are the Christmas bills, which are lying in wait for him, amiably spread out on his reading-table. Add to these scenes an appalling picture of bachelor's illness, and the rents in the Temple will begin to fall from the day of the publication of the dismal diorama. To be well in chambers is melancholy, and lonely and selfish enough; but to be ill in chambers — to pass long nights of pain and watchfulness — to long for the morning and the laundress — to serve yourself your own medicine by your own watch — to have no other companion for long hours but your own sickening fancies and fevered thoughts: no kind hand to give you drink if you are thirsty, or to smooth the hot pillow that crumples under you — this, indeed, is a fate so dismal and tragic, that we shall not enlarge upon its horrors, and shall only heartily pity those bachelors in the Temple, who brave it every day.

This lot befell Arthur Pendennis after the various excesses which we have mentioned, and to which he had subjected his unfortunate brains. One night he went to bed ill, and the next day awoke worse. His only visitor that day, besides the laundress, was the Printer's Devil, from the Pall Mall Gazette office, whom the writer endeavoured, as best he could, to satisfy. His exertions to complete his work rendered his fever the greater: he could only furnish a part of the quantity of "copy" usually supplied by him; and Shandon being absent, and Warrington not in London to give a help, the political and editorial columns of the Gazette looked very blank indeed; nor did the sub-editor know how to fill them.

Mr. Finucane rushed up to Pen's chambers, and found that gentleman so exceedingly unwell, that the good-natured Irishman set to work to supply his place, if possible, and produced a series of political and critical compositions, such as no doubt greatly edified the readers of the periodical in which he and Pen were concerned. Allusions to the greatness of Ireland, and the genius and virtue of the inhabitants of that injured country, flowed magnificently from Finucane's pen; and Shandon, the Chief of the paper, who was enjoying himself placidly at Boulogne-sur-Mer, looking over the columns of the journal, which was forwarded to him, instantly recognised the hand of the great Sub-editor, and said, laughing, as he flung over the paper to his wife, "Look here, Mary, my dear, here is Jack at work again." Indeed, Jack was a warm friend, and a gallant partisan, and when he had the pen in hand, seldom let slip an opportunity of letting the world know that Rafferty was the greatest painter in Europe, and wondering at the petty jealousy of the Academy, which refused to make him an R.A.: of stating that it was generally reported at the West End, that Mr. Rooney, M.P., was appointed Governor of Barataria; or of introducing into the subject in hand, whatever it might be, a compliment to the Round Towers, or the Giant's Causeway. And besides doing Pen's work for him, to the best of his ability, his kind-hearted comrade offered to forgo his Saturday's and Sunday's holiday, and pass those days of holiday and rest as nurse-tender to Arthur, who, however, insisted, that the other should not forgo his pleasure, and thankfully assured him that he could bear best his malady alone.

Taking his supper at the Back Kitchen on the Friday night, after having achieved the work of the paper, Finucane informed Captain Costigan of the illness of their young friend in the Temple; and remembering the fact two days afterwards, the Captain went to Lamb Court and paid a visit to the invalid on Sunday afternoon.

He found Mrs. Flanagan, the laundress, in tears in the sitting-room, and got a bad report of the poor dear young gentleman within. Pen's condition had so much alarmed her, that she was obliged to have recourse to the stimulus of brandy to enable her to support the grief which his illness occasioned. As she hung about his bed, and endeavoured to minister to him, her attentions became intolerable to the invalid, and he begged her peevishly not to come near him. Hence the laundress's tears and redoubled grief, and renewed application to the bottle, which she was accustomed to use as an anodyne. The Captain rated the woman soundly for her intemperance, and pointed out to her the fatal consequences which must ensue if she persisted in her imprudent courses.

Pen, who was by this time in a very fevered state, yet was greatly pleased to receive Costigan's visit. He heard the ell-

known voice in his sitting-room, as he lay in the bedroom within, and called the Captain eagerly to him, and thanked him for coming, and begged him to take a chair and talk to him. The Captain felt the young man's pulse with great gravity — (his own tremulous and clammy hand growing steady for the instant while his finger pressed Arthur's throbbing vein) — the pulse was beating very fiercely — Pen's face was haggard and hot — his eyes were bloodshot and gloomy; his "bird," as the Captain pronounced the word, afterwards giving a description of his condition, had not been shaved for nearly a week. Pen made his visitor sit down, and, tossing and turning in his comfortless bed, began to try and talk to the Captain in a lively manner, about the Back Kitchen, about Vauxhall and when they should go again, and about Fanny — how was little Fanny?

Indeed how was she? We know how she went home very sadly on the previous Sunday evening, after she had seen Arthur light his lamp in his chambers, whilst he was having his interview with Bows. Bows came back to his own rooms presently, passing by the lodge door, and looking into Mrs. Bolton's, according to his wont, as he passed, but with a very melancholy face. She had another weary night that night. Her restlessness wakened her little bedfellows more than once. She dared not read more of 'Walter Lorraine.' Father was at home, and would suffer no light. She kept the book under her pillow, and felt for it in the night. She had only just got to sleep, when the children began to stir with the morning, almost as early as the birds. Though she was very angry with Bows, she went to his room at her accustomed hour in the day, and there the good-hearted musician began to talk to her.

"I saw Mr. Pendennis last night, Fanny," he said.

"Did you? I thought you did," Fanny answered, looking fiercely at the melancholy old gentleman.

"I've been fond of you ever since we came to live in this place," he continued. "You were a child when I came; and you used to like me, Fanny, until three or four days ago: until you saw this gentleman."

"And now, I suppose, you are going to say ill of him," said Fanny. "Do, Mr. Bows — that will make me like you better."

"Indeed I shall do no such thing," Bows answered; "I think he is a very good and honest young man."

"Indeed! you know that if you said a word against him, I would never speak a word to you again — never!" cried Miss Fanny; and clenched her little hand, and paced up and down the room. Bows noted, watched, and followed the ardent little creature with admiration and gloomy sympathy. Her cheeks flushed, her frame trembled; her eyes beamed love, anger, defiance. "You would like to speak ill of him," she said; "but you daren't — you know you daren't!"

"I knew him many years since," Bows continued, "when he was almost as young as you are, and he had a romantic attachment for our friend the Captain's daughter — Lady Mirabel that is now."

Fanny laughed. "I suppose there was other people, too, that had romantic attachments for Miss Costigan," she said: "I don't want to hear about 'em."

"He wanted to marry her; but their ages were quite disproportionate: and their rank in life. She would not have him because he had no money. She acted very wisely in refusing him; for the two would have been very unhappy, and she wasn't a fit person to go and live with his family, or to make his home comfortable. Mr. Pendennis has his way to make in the world, and must marry a lady of his own rank. A woman who loves a man will not ruin his prospects, cause him to quarrel with his family, and lead him into poverty and misery for her gratification. An honest girl won't do that, for her own sake, or for the man's."

Fanny's emotion, which but now had been that of defiance and anger, here turned to dismay and supplication. "What do I know about marrying, Bows?" she said. "When was there any talk of it? What has there been between this young gentleman and me that's to make people speak so cruel? It was not my doing; nor Arthur's — Mr. Pendennis's — that I met him at Vauxhall. It was the Captain took me and Ma there. We never thought of nothing wrong, I'm sure. He came and rescued us, and he was so very kind. Then he came to call and ask after us: and very, very good it was of a such grand gentleman to be so polite to humble folks like us! And yesterday Ma and me just went to walk in the Temple Gardens, and — and" — here she broke out with that usual, unanswerable female argument of tears — and cried, "Oh! I wish I was dead! I wish I was laid in my grave; and had never, never seen him!"

"He said as much himself, Fanny," Bows said; and Fanny asked through her sobs, Why, why should he wish he had never seen her? Had she ever done him any harm? Oh, she would perish rather than do him any harm. Whereupon the musician informed her of the conversation of the day previous, showed her that Pen could not and must not think of her as a wife fitting for him, and that she, as she valued her honest reputation, must strive too to forget him. And Fanny, leaving the musician, convinced, but still of the same mind, and promising that she would avoid the danger which menaced her,

went back to the porter's lodge, and told her mother all. She talked of her love for Arthur, and bewailed, in her artless manner, the inequality of their condition, that set barriers between them. "There's the 'Lady of Lyons,'" Fanny said; "Oh, Ma! how I did love Mr. Macready when I saw him do it; and Pauline, for being faithful to poor Claude, and always thinking of him; and he coming back to her, an officer, through all his dangers! And if everybody admires Pauline — and I'm sure everybody does, for being so true to a poor man — why should a gentleman be ashamed of loving a poor girl? Not that Mr. Arthur loves me — Oh no, no! I ain't worthy of him; only a princess is worthy of such a gentleman as him. Such a poet! — writing so beautifully, and looking so grand! I am sure he's a nobleman, and of ancient family, and kep' out of his estate. Perhaps his uncle has it. Ah, if I might, oh, how I'd serve him, and work for him, and slave for him, that I would. I wouldn't ask for more than that, Ma, just to be allowed to see him of a morning; and sometimes he'd say 'How d'you, Fanny?' or 'God bless you, Fanny!' as he said on Sunday. And I'd work, and work; and I'd sit up all night, and read, and learn, and make myself worthy of him. The Captain says his mother lives in the country, and is a grand lady there. Oh, how I wish I might go and be her servant, Ma! I can do plenty of things, and work very neat; and — and sometimes he'd come home, and I should see him!"

The girl's head fell on her mother's shoulder, as she spoke, and she gave way to a plentiful outpouring of girlish tears, to which the matron, of course, joined her own. "You mustn't think no more of him, Fanny," she said. "If he don't come to you, he's a horrid, wicked man."

"Don't call him so, Mother," Fanny replied. "He's the best of men, the best and the kindest. Bows says he thinks he is unhappy at leaving poor little Fanny. It wasn't his fault, was it, that we met? — and it ain't his that I mustn't see him again. He says I mustn't — and I mustn't, Mother. He'll forget me, but I shall never forget him. No! I'll pray for him, and love him always — until I die — and I shall die, I know I shall — and then my spirit will always go and be with him."

"You forget your poor mother, Fanny, and you'll break my heart by goin on so," Mrs. Bolton said. "Perhaps you will see him. I'm sure you'll see him. I'm sure he'll come today. If ever I saw a man in love, that man is him. When Emily Budd's young man first came about her, he was sent away by old Budd, a most respectable man, and violoncello in the orchestra at the Wells; and his own family wouldn't hear of it neither. But he came back. We all knew he would. Emily always said so; and he married her; and this one will come back too; and you mark a mother's words, and see if he don't, dear."

At this point of the conversation Mr. Bolton entered the lodge for his evening meal. At the father's appearance, the talk between mother and daughter ceased instantly. Mrs. Bolton caressed and cajoled the surly undertaker's aide-de-camp, and said, "Lor, Mr. B. who'd have thought to see you away from the Club of a Saturday night. Fanny, dear, get your pa some supper. What will you have, B.? The poor gurl's got a gathering in her eye, or somethink in it — I was lookin at it just now as you came in." And she squeezed her daughter's hand as a signal of prudence and secrecy; and Fanny's tears were dried up likewise; and by that wondrous hypocrisy and power of disguise which women practise, and with which weapons of defence nature endows them, the traces of her emotion disappeared; and she went and took her work, and sate in the corner so demure and quiet, that the careless male parent never suspected that anything ailed her.

Thus, as if fate seemed determined to inflame and increase the poor child's malady and passion, all circumstances and all parties round about her urged it on. Her mother encouraged and applauded it; and the very words which Bows used in endeavouring to repress her flame only augmented this unlucky fever. Pen was not wicked and a seducer: Pen was high-minded in wishing to avoid her. Pen loved her: the good and the great, the magnificent youth, with the chains of gold and the scented auburn hair! And so he did: or so he would have loved her five years back perhaps, before the world had hardened the ardent and reckless boy — before he was ashamed of a foolish and imprudent passion, and strangled it as poor women do their illicit children, not on account of the crime, but of the shame, and from dread that the finger of the world should point to them.

What respectable person in the world will not say he was quite right to avoid a marriage with an ill-educated person of low degree, whose relations a gentleman could not well acknowledge, and whose manners would not become her new station? — and what philosopher would not tell him that the best thing to do with these little passions if they spring up, is to get rid of them, and let them pass over and cure them: that no man dies about a woman or vice versa: and that one or the other having found the impossibility of gratifying his or her desire in the particular instance, must make the best of matters, forget each other, look out elsewhere, and choose again? And yet, perhaps, there may be something said on the other side. Perhaps Bows was right in admiring that passion of Pen's, blind and unreasoning as it was, that made him ready to stake his all for his love; perhaps if self-sacrifice is a laudable virtue, mere worldly self-sacrifice is not very much to

be praised; — in fine, let this be a reserved point to be settled by the individual moralist who chooses to debate it.

So much is certain, that with the experience of the world which Mr. Pen now had, he would have laughed at and scouted the idea of marrying a penniless girl out of a kitchen. And this point being fixed in his mind, he was but doing his duty as an honest man, in crushing any unlucky fondness which he might feel towards poor little Fanny.

So she waited and waited in hopes that Arthur would come. She waited for a whole week, and it was at the end of that time that the poor little creature heard from Costigan of the illness under which Arthur was suffering.

It chanced on that very evening after Costigan had visited Pen, that Arthur's uncle the excellent Major arrived in town from Buxton, where his health had been mended, and sent his valet Morgan to make inquiries for Arthur, and to request that gentleman to breakfast with the Major the next morning. The Major was merely passing through London on his way to the Marquis of Steyne's house of Stillbrook, where he was engaged to shoot partridges.

Morgan came back to his master with a very long face. He had seen Mr. Arthur; Mr. Arthur was very bad indeed; Mr. Arthur was in bed with a fever. A doctor ought to be sent to him; and Morgan thought his case most alarming.

Gracious goodness! this was sad news indeed. He had hoped that Arthur could come down to Stillbrook: he had arranged that he should go, and procured an invitation for his nephew from Lord Steyne. He must go himself; he couldn't throw Lord Steyne over: the fever might be catching: it might be measles: he had never himself had the measles; they were dangerous when contracted at his age. Was anybody with Mr. Arthur?

Morgan said there was somebody a-nussing of Mr. Arthur.

The Major then asked, had his nephew taken any advice? Morgan said he had asked that question, and had been told that Mr. Pendennis had had no doctor.

Morgan's master was sincerely vexed at hearing of Arthur's calamity. He would have gone to him, but what good could it do Arthur that he, the Major, should catch a fever? His own ailments rendered it absolutely impossible that he should attend to anybody but himself. But the young man must have advice — the best advice; and Morgan was straightway despatched with a note from Major Pendennis to his friend Doctor Goodenough, who by good luck happened to be in London and at home, and who quitted his dinner instantly, and whose carriage was in half an hour in Upper Temple Lane, near Pen's chambers.

The Major had asked the kind-hearted physician to bring him news of his nephew at the Club where he himself was dining, and in the course of the night the Doctor made his appearance. The affair was very serious: the patient was in a high fever: he had had Pen bled instantly: and would see him the first thing in the morning. The Major went disconsolate to bed with this unfortunate news. When Goodenough came to see him according to his promise the next day, the Doctor had to listen for a quarter of an hour to an account of the Major's own maladies, before the latter had leisure to hear about Arthur.

He had had a very bad night — his — his nurse said: at one hour he had been delirious. It might end badly: his mother had better be sent for immediately. The Major wrote the letter to Mrs. Pendennis with the greatest alacrity, and at the same time with the most polite precautions. As for going himself to the lad, in his state it was impossible. "Could I be of any use to him, my dear Doctor?" he asked.

The Doctor, with a peculiar laugh, said, No: he didn't think the Major could be of any use: that his own precious health required the most delicate treatment, and that he had best go into the country and stay: that he himself would take care to see the patient twice a day, and do all in his power for him.

The Major declared upon his honour, that if he could be of any use he would rush to Pen's chambers. As it was, Morgan should go and see that everything was right. The Doctor must write to him by every post to Stillbrook: it was but forty miles distant from London, and if anything happened he would come up at any sacrifice.

Major Pendennis transacted his benevolence by deputy and by post. "What else could he do," as he said? "Gad, you know, in these cases, it's best not disturbing a fellow. If a poor fellow goes to the bad, why, Gad, you know he's disposed of. But in order to get well (and in this, my dear Doctor, I'm sure that you will agree with me), the best way is to keep him quiet — perfectly quiet."

Thus it was the old gentleman tried to satisfy his conscience and he went his way that day to Stillbrook by railway (for railways have sprung up in the course of this narrative, though they have not quite penetrated into Pen's country yet), and made his appearance in his usual trim order and curly wig, at the dinner-table of the Marquis of Steyne. But we must do

the Major the justice to say, that he was very unhappy and gloomy in demeanour. Wagg and Wenham rallied him about his low spirits; asked whether he was crossed in love? and otherwise diverted themselves at his expense. He lost his money at whist after dinner, and actually trumped his partner's highest spade. And the thoughts of the suffering boy, of whom he was proud, and whom he loved after his manner, kept the old fellow awake half through the night, and made him feverish and uneasy.

On the morrow he received a note in a handwriting which he did not know: it was that of Mr. Bows, indeed, saying that Mr. Arthur Pendennis had had a tolerable night; and that as Dr. Goodenough had stated that the Major desired to be informed of his nephew's health, he, R. B., had sent him the news per rail.

The next day he was going out shooting, about noon, with some of the gentlemen staying at Lord Steyne's house; and the company, waiting for the carriages, were assembled on the terrace in front of the house, when a fly drove up from the neighbouring station, and a grey-headed, rather shabby old gentleman jumped out, and asked for Major Pendennis. It was Mr. Bows. He took the Major aside and spoke to him; most of the gentlemen round about saw that something serious had happened, from the alarmed look of the Major's face.

Wagg said, "It's a bailiff come down to nab the Major," but nobody laughed at the pleasantry.

"Hullo! What's the matter, Pendennis?" cried Lord Steyne, with his strident voice; — "anything wrong?"

"It's — it's — my boy that's dead," said the Major, and burst into a sob — the old man was quite overcome.

"Not dead, my Lord; but very ill when I left London," Mr. Bows said, in a low voice.

A britzka came up at this moment as the three men were speaking. The Peer looked at his watch. "You've twenty minutes to catch the mail-train. Jump in, Pendennis; and drive like h — — sir, do you hear?"

The carriage drove off swiftly with Pendennis and his companions, and let us trust that the oath will be pardoned to the Marquis of Steyne.

The Major drove rapidly from the station to the Temple, and found a travelling carriage already before him, and blocking up the narrow Temple Lane. Two ladies got out of it, and were asking their way of the porters; the Major looked by chance at the panel of the carriage, and saw the worn-out crest of the Eagle looking at the Sun, and the motto, "Nec tenui penna," painted beneath. It was his brother's old carriage, built many, many years ago. It was Helen and Laura that were asking their way to Pen's room.

He ran up to them; hastily clasped his sister's arm and kissed her hand; and the three entered into Lamb Court, and mounted the long gloomy stair.

They knocked very gently at the door, on which Arthur's name was written, and it was opened by Fanny Bolton.



CHAPTER LIII

A CRITICAL CHAPTER

As Fanny saw the two ladies and the anxious countenance of the eider, who regarded her with a look of inscrutable alarm and terror, the poor girl at once knew that Pen's mother was before her; there was a resemblance between the widow's haggard eyes and Arthur's as he tossed in his bed in fever. Fanny looked wistfully at Mrs. Pendennis and at Laura afterwards; there was no more expression in the latter's face than if it had been a mass of stone. Hard-heartedness and gloom dwelt on the figures of both the new-comers; neither showed any the faintest gleam of mercy or sympathy for Fanny. She looked desperately from them to the Major behind them. Old Pendennis dropped his eyelids, looking up ever so stealthily from under them at Arthur's poor little nurse.

"I— I wrote to you yesterday, if you please, ma'am," Fanny said, trembling in every limb as she spoke; and as pale as Laura, whose sad menacing face looked over Mrs. Pendennis's shoulder.

"Did you, madam?" Mrs. Pendennis said. "I suppose I may now relieve you from nursing my son. I am his mother, you understand."

"Yes, ma'am. I— this is the way to his — Oh, wait a minute," cried out Fanny. "I must prepare you for his —"

The widow, whose face had been hopelessly cruel and ruthless, here started back with a gasp and a little cry, which she speedily stifled.

"He's been so since yesterday," Fanny said, trembling very much, and with chattering teeth.

A horrid shriek of laughter came out of Pen's room, whereof the door was open; and, after several shouts, the poor wretch began to sing a college drinking-song, and then to hurray and to shout as if he was in the midst of a wine-party, and to thump with his fist against the wainscot. He was quite delirious.

"He does not know me, ma'am," Fanny said.

"Indeed. Perhaps he will know his mother; let me pass, if you please, and go in to him." And the widow hastily pushed by little Fanny, and through the dark passage which led into Pen's sitting-room. Laura sailed by Fanny, too, without a word; and Major Pendennis followed them. Fanny sat down on a bench in the passage, and cried, and prayed as well as she could. She would have died for him; and they hated her. They had not a word of thanks or kindness for her, the fine ladies. She sate there in the passage, she did not know how long. They never came out to speak to her. She sate there until Doctor Goodenough came to pay his second visit that day; he found the poor little thing at the door.

"What, nurse? How's your patient?" asked the good-natured Doctor. "Has he had any rest?"

"Go and ask them. They're inside," Fanny answered.

"Who? his mother?"

Fanny nodded her head and didn't speak.

"You must go to bed yourself, my poor little maid," said the Doctor. "You will be ill, too, if you don't."

"Oh, mayn't I come and see him: mayn't I come and see him! I— I— love him so," the little girl said; and as she spoke she fell down on her knees and clasped hold of the Doctor's hand in such an agony that to see her melted the kind physician's heart, and caused a mist to come over his spectacles.

"Pooh, pooh! Nonsense! Nurse, has he taken his draught? Has he had any rest? Of course you must come and see him. So must I."

"They'll let me sit here, won't they, sir? I'll never make no noise. I only ask to stop here," Fanny said. On which the Doctor called her a stupid little thing; put her down upon the bench where Pen's printer's devil used to sit so many hours; tapped her pale cheek with his finger, and bustled into the farther room.

Mrs. Pendennis was ensconced pale and solemn in a great chair by Pen's bedside. Her watch was on the bed-table by Pen's medicines. Her bonnet and cloaks were laid in the window. She had her Bible in her lap, without which she never travelled. Her first movement, after seeing her son, had been to take Fanny's shawl and bonnet which were on his drawers, and bring them out and drop them down upon his study-table. She had closed the door upon Major Pendennis, and Laura

too; and taken possession of her son.

She had had a great doubt and terror lest Arthur should not know her; but that pang was spared to her in part at least. Pen knew his mother quite well, and familiarly smiled and nodded at her. When she came in, he instantly fancied that they were at home at Fair Oaks; and began to talk and chatter and laugh in a rambling wild way. Laura could hear him outside. His laughter shot shafts of poison into her heart. It was true, then. He had been guilty — and with that creature! — an intrigue with a servant-maid, and she had loved him — and he was dying most likely raving and unrepentant. The Major now and then hummed out a word of remark or consolation, which Laura scarce heard.

A dismal sitting it was for all parties; and when Goodenough appeared, he came like an angel into the room.

It is not only for the sick man, it is for the sick man's friends that the Doctor comes. His presence is often as good for them as for the patient, and they long for him yet more eagerly. How we have all watched after him! what an emotion the thrill of his carriage-wheels in the street, and at length at the door, has made us feel! how we hang upon his words, and what a comfort we get from a smile or two, if he can vouchsafe that sunshine to lighten our darkness! Who hasn't seen the mother prying into his face, to know if there is hope for the sick infant that cannot speak, and that lies yonder, its little frame battling with fever? Ah how she looks into his eyes! What thanks if there is light there; what grief and pain if he casts them down, and dares not say "hope!" Or it is the house-father who is stricken. The terrified wife looks on, while the Physician feels his patient's wrist, smothering her agonies, as the children have been called upon to stay their plays and their talk. Over the patient in the fever, the wife expectant, the children unconscious, the Doctor stands as if he were Fate, the dispenser of life and death: he must let the patient off this time: the woman prays so for his respite! One can fancy how awful the responsibility must be to a conscientious man: how cruel the feeling that he has given the wrong remedy, or that it might have been possible to do better: how harassing the sympathy with survivors, if the case is unfortunate — how immense the delight of victory!

Having passed through a hasty ceremony of introduction to the new-comers, of whose arrival he had been made aware by the heartbroken little nurse in waiting without, the Doctor proceeded to examine the patient, about whose condition of high fever there could be no mistake, and on whom he thought it necessary to exercise the strongest antiphlogistic remedies in his power. He consoled the unfortunate mother as best he might; and giving her the most comfortable assurances on which he could venture, that there was no reason to despair yet, that everything might still be hoped from his youth, the strength of his constitution, and so forth; and having done his utmost to allay the horrors of the alarmed matron, he took the elder Pendennis aside into the vacant room (Warrington's bedroom), for the purpose of holding a little consultation.

The case was very critical. The fever, if not stopped, might and would carry off the young fellow: he must be bled forthwith: the mother must be informed of this necessity. Why was that other young lady brought with her? She was out of place in a sick-room.

"And there was another woman still, be hanged to it!" the Major said, "the — the little person who opened the door." His sister-in-law had brought the poor little devil's bonnet and shawl out, flung them upon the study-table. Did Goodenough know anything about the — the little person? "I just caught a glimpse of her as we passed in," the Major said, "and begad she was uncommonly nice-looking." The Doctor looked queer: the Doctor smiled — in the very gravest moments, with life and death pending, such strange contrasts and occasions of humour will arise, and such smiles will pass, to satirise the gloom, as it were, and to make it more gloomy!

"I have it," at last he said, re-entering the study; and he wrote a couple of notes hastily at the table there, and sealed one of them. Then, taking up poor Fanny's shawl and bonnet, and the notes, he went out in the passage to that poor little messenger, and said, "Quick, nurse; you must carry this to the surgeon, and bid him come instantly; and then go to my house, and ask for my servant Harbottle, and tell him to get this prescription prepared, and wait until I — until it is ready. It may take a little in preparation."

So poor Fanny trudged away with her two notes, and found the apothecary, who lived in the Strand hard by, and who came straightway, his lancet in his pocket, to operate on his patient; and then Fanny made for the Doctor's house, in Hanover Square.

The Doctor was at home again before the prescription was made up, which took Harbottle, his servant, such a long time in compounding; and, during the remainder of Arthur's illness, poor Fanny never made her appearance in the quality

of nurse at his chambers any more. But for that day and the next, a little figure might be seen lurking about Pen's staircase — a sad, sad little face looked at and interrogated the apothecary, and the apothecary's boy, and the laundress, and the kind physician himself, as they passed out of the chambers of the sick man. And on the third day, the kind Doctor's chariot stopped at Shepherd's Inn, and the good, and honest, and benevolent man went into the porter's lodge, and tended a little patient whom he had there, for the best remedy he found was on the day when he was enabled to tell Fanny Bolton that the crisis was over, and that there was at length every hope for Arthur Pendennis.

J. Costigan, Esquire, late of Her Majesty's service, saw the Doctor's carriage, and criticised its horses and appointments. "Green liveries, bedad!" the General said, "and as foin a pair of high-stepping bee horses as ever a gentleman need sit behoidin, let alone a docthor. There's no ind to the proide and ar'gance of them docthors, nowadays — not but that is a good one, and a scoientific cyarkter, and a roight good fellow, bedad; and he's brought the poor little girl well troo her faver, Bows, me boy;" and so pleased was Mr. Costigan with the Doctor's behaviour and skill, that, whenever he met Dr. Goodenough's carriage in future, he made a point of saluting it and the physician inside, in as courteous and magnificent a manner, as if Dr. Goodenough had been the Lord Liftenant himself, and Captain Costigan had been in his glory in Phaynix Park.

The widow's gratitude to the physician knew no bounds — or scarcely any bounds, at least. The kind gentleman laughed at the idea of taking a fee from a literary man, or the widow of a brother practitioner; and she determined when she got to Fair Oaks that she would send Goodenough the silver-gilt vase, the jewel of the house, and the glory of the late John Pendennis, preserved in green baize, and presented to him at Bath, by the Lady Elizabeth Firebrace, on the recovery of her son, the late Sir Anthony Firebrace, from the scarlet fever. Hippocrates, Hygeia, King Bladud, and a wreath of serpents surmount the cup to this day; which was executed in their finest manner by Messrs. Abednego, of Milsom Street; and the inscription was by Mr. Birch, tutor to the young baronet.

This priceless gem of art the widow determined to devote to Goodenough, the preserver of her son; and there was scarcely any other favour which her gratitude would not have conferred upon him, except one, which he desired most, and which was that she should think a little charitably and kindly of poor Fanny, of whose artless, sad story he had got something during his interviews with her, and of whom he was induced to think very kindly — not being disposed, indeed, to give much credit to Pen for his conduct in the affair, or not knowing what that conduct had been. He knew enough, however, to be aware that the poor infatuated little girl was without stain as yet; that while she had been in Pen's room it was to see the last of him, as she thought, and that Arthur was scarcely aware of her presence; and that she suffered under the deepest and most pitiful grief, at the idea of losing him, dead or living.

But on the one or two occasions when Goodenough alluded to Fanny, the widow's countenance, always soft and gentle, assumed an expression so cruel and inexorable, that the Doctor saw it was in vain to ask her for justice or pity, and he broke off all entreaties, and ceased making any further allusions regarding his little client. There is a complaint which neither poppy, nor mandragora, nor all the drowsy syrups of the East could allay, in the men in his time, as we are informed by a popular poet of the days of Elizabeth; and which, when exhibited in women, no medical discoveries or practice subsequent — neither homoeopathy, nor hydropathy, nor mesmerism, nor Dr. Simpson, nor Dr. Locock can cure, and that is — we won't call it jealousy, but rather gently denominate rivalry and emulation in ladies.

Some of those mischievous and prosaic people who carp and calculate at every detail of the romancer, and want to know, for instance, how, when the characters in the 'Critic' are at a dead lock with their daggers at each other's throats, they are to be got out of that murderous complication of circumstances, may be induced to ask how it was possible in a set of chambers in the Temple, consisting of three rooms, two cupboards, a passage, and a coal-box, Arthur a sick gentleman, Helen his mother, Laura her adopted daughter, Martha their country attendant, Mrs. Wheezer a nurse from St. Bartholomew's Hospital, Mrs. Flanagan an Irish laundress, Major Pendennis a retired military officer, Morgan his valet, Pidgeon Mr. Arthur Pendennis's boy, and others could be accommodated — the answer is given at once, that almost everybody in the Temple was out of town, and that there was scarcely a single occupant of Pen's house in Lamb Court except those who were occupied round the sick-bed of the sick gentleman, about whose fever we have not given a lengthy account, neither enlarge we very much upon the more cheerful theme of his recovery.

Everybody we have said was out of town, and of course such a fashionable man as young Mr. Sibwright, who occupied chambers on the second floor in Pen's staircase, could not be supposed to remain in London. Mrs. Flanagan, Mr. Pendennis's laundress was acquainted with Mrs. Rouncy who did for Mr. Sibwright; and that gentleman's bedroom was

got ready for Miss Bell, or Mrs. Pendennis, when the latter should be inclined to leave her son's sick-room, to try and seek for a little rest for herself.

If that young buck and flower of Baker Street, Percy Sibwright, could have known who was the occupant of his bedroom, how proud he would have been of that apartment:— what poems he would have written about Laura! (several of his things have appeared in the annuals, and in manuscript in the nobility's albums)— he was a Camford man and very nearly got the English Prize Poem, it was said — Sibwright, however, was absent and his bed given up to Miss Bell. It was the prettiest little brass bed in the world, with chintz curtains lined with pink — he had a mignonette-box in his bedroom window, and the mere sight of his little exhibition of shiny boots, arranged in trim rows over his wardrobe, was a gratification to the beholder. He had a museum of scent, pomatum, and bear's-grease pots, quite curious to examine, too; and a choice selection of portraits of females, almost always in sadness and generally in disguise or deshabelle, glittered round the neat walls of his elegant little bower of repose. Medora with dishevelled hair was consoling herself over her banjo for the absence of her Conrad — the Princesse Fleur de Marie (of Rudolstein and the Mysteres de Paris) was sadly ogling out of the bars of her convent cage, in which, poor prisoned bird, she was moulting away — Dorothea of Don Quixote was washing her eternal feet:— in fine, it was such an elegant gallery as became a gallant lover of the sex. And in Sibwright's sitting-room, while there was quite an infantine law library clad in skins of fresh new-born calf, there was a tolerably large collection of classical books which he could not read, and of English and French works of poetry and fiction which he read a great deal too much. His invitation cards of the past season still decorated his looking-glass: and scarce anything told of the lawyer but the wig-box beside the Venus upon the middle shelf of the bookcase, on which the name of P. Sibwright, Esquire, was gilded.

With Sibwright in chambers was Mr. Bangham. Mr. Bangham was a sporting man married to a rich widow. Mr. Bangham had no practice — did not come to chambers thrice in a term: went a circuit for those mysterious reasons which make men go circuit — and his room served as a great convenience to Sibwright when that young gentleman gave his little dinners. It must be confessed that these two gentlemen have nothing to do with our history, will never appear in it again probably, but we cannot help glancing through their doors as they happen to be open to us, and as we pass to Pen's rooms; as in the pursuit of our own business in life through the Strand, at the Club, nay at church itself, we cannot help peeping at the shops on the way, or at our neighbour's dinner, or at the faces under the bonnets in the next pew.

Very many years after the circumstances about which we are at present occupied, Laura, with a blush and a laugh showing much humour, owned to having read a French novel once much in vogue, and when her husband asked her, wondering where on earth she could have got such a volume, she owned that it was in the Temple, when she lived in Mr. Percy Sibwright's chambers.

"And, also, I never confessed," she said, "on that same occasion, what I must now own to: that I opened the japanned box, and took out that strange-looking wig inside it, and put it on and looked at myself in the glass in it."

Suppose Percy Sibwright had come in at such a moment as that? What would he have said — the enraptured rogue? What would have been all the pictures of disguised beauties in his room compared to that living one? Ah, we are speaking of old times, when Sibwright was a bachelor and before he got a county court — when people were young — when most people were young. Other people are young now; but we no more.

When Miss Laura played this prank with the wig, you can't suppose that Pen could have been very ill upstairs; otherwise, though she had grown to care for him ever so little, common sense of feeling and decorum would have prevented her from performing any tricks or trying any disguises.

But all sorts of events had occurred in the course of the last few days which had contributed to increase or account for her gaiety, and a little colony of the reader's old friends and acquaintances was by this time established in Lamb Court, Temple, and round Pen's sick-bed there. First, Martha, Mrs. Pendennis's servant, had arrived from Fairoaks, being summoned thence by the Major who justly thought her presence would be comfortable and useful to her mistress and her young master, for neither of whom the constant neighbourhood of Mrs. Flanagan (who during Pen's illness required more spirituous consolation than ever to support her) could be pleasant. Martha then made her appearance in due season to wait upon Mr. Pendennis, nor did that lady go once to bed until the faithful servant had reached her, when, with a heart full of maternal thankfulness she went and lay down upon Warrington's straw mattress, and among his mathematical books as has been already described.

It is true that ere that day a great and delightful alteration in Pen's condition had taken place. The fever, subjugated by Dr. Goodenough's blisters, potions, and lancet, had left the young man, or only returned at intervals of feeble intermittence; his wandering senses had settled in his weakened brain: he had had time to kiss and bless his mother for coming to him, and calling for Laura and his uncle (who were both affected according to their different natures by his wan appearance, his lean shrunken hands, his hollow eyes and voice, his thin bearded face) to press their hands and thank them affectionately; and after this greeting, and after they had been turned out of the room by his affectionate nurse, he had sunk into a fine sleep which had lasted for about sixteen hours, at the end of which period he awoke calling out that he was very hungry. If it is hard to be ill and to loathe food, oh, how pleasant to be getting well and to be feeling hungry — how hungry! Alas, the joys of convalescence become feebler with increasing years, as other joys do — and then — and then comes that illness when one does not convalesce at all.

On the day of this happy event, too, came another arrival in Lamb Court. This was introduced into the Pen-Warring sitting-room by large puffs of tobacco smoke — the puffs of were followed by an individual with a cigar in his mouth, and a carpet-bag under his arm — this was Warrington who had run back from Norfolk, when Mr. Bows thoughtfully wrote to inform him of his friend's calamity. But he had been from home when Bows's letter had reached his brother's house — the Eastern Counties did not then boast of a railway (for we beg the reader to understand that we only commit anachronisms when we choose and when by a daring violation of those natural laws some great ethical truth is to be advanced)— in fine, Warrington only appeared with the rest of the good luck upon the lucky day after Pen's convalescence may have been said to have begun.

His surprise was, after all, not very great when he found the chambers of his sick friend occupied, and his old acquaintance the Major seated demurely in an easy-chair (Warrington had let himself into the rooms with his own passkey), listening, or pretending to listen, to a young lady who was reading to him a play of Shakspeare in a low sweet voice. The lady stopped and started, and laid down her book, at the apparition of the tall traveller with the cigar and the carpet-bag. He blushed, he flung the cigar into the passage: he took off his hat, and dropped that too, and going up to the Major, seized that old gentleman's hand, and asked questions about Arthur.

The Major answered in a tremulous, though cheery voice — it was curious how emotion seemed to olden him — and returning Warrington's pressure with a shaking hand, told him the news of Arthur's happy crisis, of his mother's arrival — with her young charge — with Miss —

"You need not tell me her name," Mr. Warrington said with great animation, for he was affected and elated with the thought of his friend's recovery — "you need not tell me your name. I knew at once it was Laura." And he held out his hand and took hers. Immense kindness and tenderness gleamed from under his rough eyebrows, and shook his voice as he gazed at her and spoke to her. "And this is Laura!" his looks seemed to say. "And this is Warrington!" the generous girl's heart beat back. "Arthur's hero — the brave and the kind — he has come hundreds of miles to succour him, when he heard of his friend's misfortune!"

"Thank you, Mr. Warrington," was all that Laura said, however; and as she returned the pressure of his kind hand, she blushed so, that she was glad the lamp was behind her to conceal her flushing face.

As these two were standing in this attitude, the door of Pen's bedchamber was opened stealthily as his mother was wont to open it, and Warrington saw another lady, who first looked at him, and then turning round towards the bed, said, "Hsh!" and put up her hand.

It was to Pen Helen was turning, and giving caution. He called out with a feeble, tremulous, but cheery voice, "Come in, Stunner — come in, Warrington. I knew it was you — by the — by the smoke, old boy," he said, as holding his worn hand out, and with tears at once of weakness and pleasure in his eyes, he greeted his friend.

"I— I beg pardon, ma'am, for smoking," Warrington said, who now almost for the first time blushed for his wicked propensity.

Helen only said, "God bless you, Mr. Warrington." She was so happy, she would have liked to kiss George. Then, and after the friends had had a brief, very brief interview, the delighted and inexorable mother, giving her hand to Warrington, sent him out of the room, too, back to Laura and the Major, who had not resumed their play of Cymbeline where they had left it off at the arrival of the rightful owner of Pen's chambers.

CHAPTER LIV

CONVALESCENCE

Our duty now is to record a fact concerning Pendennis, which, however shameful and disgraceful, when told regarding the chief personage and godfather of a novel, must, nevertheless, be made known to the public who reads his veritable memoirs. Having gone to bed ill with fever, and suffering to a certain degree under the passion of love, after he had gone through his physical malady, and had been bled and had been blistered, and had had his head shaved, and had been treated and medicamented as the doctor ordained:— it is a fact, that, when he rallied up from his bodily ailment, his mental malady had likewise quitted him, and he was no more in love with Fanny Bolton than you or I, who are much too wise, or too moral, to allow our hearts to go gadding after porters' daughters.

He laughed at himself as he lay on his pillow, thinking of this second cure which had been effected upon him. He did not care the least about Fanny now: he wondered how he ever should have cared: and according to his custom made an autopsy of that dead passion, and anatomised his own defunct sensation for his poor little nurse. What could have made him so hot and eager about her but a few weeks back? Not her wit, not her breeding, not her beauty — there were hundreds of women better-looking than she. It was out of himself that the passion had gone: it did not reside in her. She was the same; but the eyes which saw were changed; and, alas, that it should be so! were not particularly eager to see her any more. He felt very well disposed towards the little thing, and so forth, but as for violent personal regard, such as he had but a few weeks ago, it had fled under the influence of the pill and lancet, which had destroyed the fever in his frame. And an immense source of comfort and gratitude it was to Pendennis (though there was something selfish in that feeling, as in most others of our young man), that he had been enabled to resist temptation at the time when the danger was greatest, and had no particular cause of self-reproach as he remembered his conduct towards the young girl. As from a precipice down which he might have fallen, so from the fever from which he had recovered, he reviewed the Fanny Bolton snare, now that he had escaped out of it, but I'm not sure that he was not ashamed of the very satisfaction which he experienced. It is pleasant, perhaps, but it is humiliating to own that you love no more.

Meanwhile the kind smiles and tender watchfulness of the mother at his bedside, filled the young man with peace and security. To see that health was returning, was all the unwearied nurse demanded: to execute any caprice or order of her patient's, her chiefest joy and reward. He felt himself environed by her love, and thought himself almost as grateful for it as he had been when weak and helpless in childhood.

Some misty notions regarding the first part of his illness, and that Fanny had nursed him, Pen may have had, but they were so dim that he could not realise them with accuracy, or distinguish them from what he knew to be delusions which had occurred and were remembered during the delirium of his fever. So as he had not thought proper on former occasions to make any allusions about Fanny Bolton to his mother, of course he could not now confide to her his sentiments regarding Fanny, or make this worthy lady a confidante. It was on both sides an unlucky precaution and want of confidence; and a word or two in time might have spared the good lady, and those connected with her, a deal of pain and anguish.

Seeing Miss Bolton installed as nurse and tender to Pen, I am sorry to say Mrs. Pendennis had put the worst construction on the fact of the intimacy of these two unlucky young persons, and had settled in her own mind that the accusations against Arthur were true. Why not have stopped to inquire? — There are stories to a man's disadvantage that the women who are fondest of him are always the most eager to believe. Isn't a man's wife often the first to be jealous of him? Poor Pen got a good stock of this suspicious kind of love from the nurse who was now watching over him; and the kind and pure creature thought that her boy had gone through a malady much more awful and debasing than the mere physical fever, and was stained by crime as well as weakened by illness. The consciousness of this she had to bear perforce silently, and to try to put a mask of cheerfulness and confidence over her doubt and despair and inward horror.

When Captain Shandon, at Boulogne, read the next number of the Pall Mall Gazette, it was to remark to Mrs. Shandon that Jack Finucane's hand was no longer visible in the leading articles, and that Mr. Warrington must be at work there again. "I know the crack of his whip in a hundred, and the cut which the fellow's thong leaves. There's Jack Bludyer, goes to work like a butcher, and mangles a subject. Mr. Warrington finished a man, and lays his cuts neat and regular, straight

down the back, and drawing blood every line;" at which dreadful metaphor, Mrs. Shandon said, "Law, Charles, how can you talk so! I always thought Mr. Warrington very high, but a kind gentleman; and I'm sure he was most kind to the children." Upon which Shandon said, "yes; he's kind to the children; but he's savage to the men; and to be sure, my dear, you don't understand a word about what I'm saying; and it's best you shouldn't; for it's little good comes out of writing for newspapers; and it's better here, living easy at Boulogne, where the wine's plenty, and the brandy costs but two francs a bottle. Mix us another tumbler, Mary, my dear; we'll go back into harness soon. 'Cras ingens iterabimus aequor' bad luck to it."

In a word, Warrington went to work with all his might, in place of his prostrate friend, and did Pen's portion of the Pall Mall Gazette "with a vengeance," as the saying is. He wrote occasional articles and literary criticisms; he attended theatres and musical performances, and discoursed about them with his usual savage energy. His hand was too strong for such small subjects, and it pleased him to tell Arthur's mother, and uncle, and Laura, that there was no hand in all the band of penmen more graceful and light, more pleasant and more elegant, than Arthur's. "The people in this country, ma'am, don't understand what style is, or they would see the merits of our young one," he said to Mrs. Pendennis. "I call him ours, ma'am, for I bred him; and I am as proud of him as you are; and, bating a little wilfulness, and a little selfishness, and a little dandification, I don't know a more honest, or loyal, or gentle creature. His pen is wicked sometimes, but he is as kind as a young lady — as Miss Laura here — and I believe he would not do any living mortal harm."

At this, Helen, though she heaved a deep, deep sigh, and Laura, though she, too, was sadly wounded, nevertheless were most thankful for Warrington's good opinion of Arthur, and loved him for being so attached to their Pen. And Major Pendennis was loud in his praises of Mr. Warrington — more loud and enthusiastic than it was the Major's wont to be. "He is a gentleman, my dear creature," he said to Helen, "every inch a gentleman, my good madam — the Suffolk Warringtons — Charles the First's baronets:— what could he be but a gentleman, come out of that family? — father — Sir Miles Warrington; ran away with — beg your pardon, Miss Bell. Sir Miles was a very well known man in London, and a friend of the Prince of Wales, This gentleman is a man of the greatest talents, the very highest accomplishments — sure to get on, if he had a motive to put his energies to work."

Laura blushed for herself whilst the Major was talking and praising Arthur's hero. As she looked at Warrington's manly face, and dark, melancholy eyes, this young person had been speculating about him, and had settled in her mind that he must have been the victim of an unhappy attachment; and as she caught herself so speculating, why, Miss Bell blushed.

Warrington got chambers hard by — Grenier's chambers in Flag Court; and having executed Pen's task with great energy in the morning, his delight and pleasure of an afternoon was to come and sit with the sick man's company in the sunny autumn evenings; and he had the honour more than once of giving Miss Bell his arm for a walk in the Temple Gardens; to take which pastime, when the frank Laura asked of Helen permission, the Major eagerly said, "Yes, yes, begad — of course you go out with him — it's like the country, you know; everybody goes out with everybody in the Gardens, and there are beades, you know, and that sort of thing — everybody walks in the Temple Gardens." If the great arbiter of morals did not object, why should simple Helen? She was glad that her girl should have such fresh air as the river could give, and to see her return with heightened colour and spirits from these harmless excursions.

Laura and Helen had come, you must know, to a little explanation. When the news arrived of Pen's alarming illness, Laura insisted upon accompanying the terrified mother to London, would not hear of the refusal which the still angry Helen gave her, and, when refused a second time yet more sternly, and when it seemed that the poor lost lad's life was despaired of, and when it was known that his conduct was such as to render all thoughts of union hopeless, Laura had, with many tears, told her mother a secret with which every observant person who reads this story was acquainted already. Now she never could marry him, was she to be denied the consolation of owning how fondly, how truly, how entirely she had loved him? The mingling tears of the woman appeased the agony of their grief somewhat; and the sorrows and terrors of their journey were at least in so far mitigated that they shared them together.

What could Fanny expect when suddenly brought up for sentence before a couple of such judges? Nothing but swift condemnation, awful punishment, merciless dismissal! Women are cruel critics in cases such as that in which poor Fanny was implicated; and we like them to be so; for, besides the guard which a man places round his own harem, and the defences which a woman has in her heart, her faith, and honour, hasn't she all her own friends of her own sex to keep watch that she does not go astray, and to tear her to pieces if she is found erring? When our Mahmouds or Selims of Baker

Street or Belgrave Square visit their Fatimas with condign punishment, their mothers sew up Fatima's sack for her, and her sisters and sisters-in-law see her well under water. And this present writer does not say nay. He protests most solemnly he is a Turk, too. He wears a turban and a beard like another, and is all for the sack practice, Bismillah! But O you spotless, who have the right of capital punishment vested in you, at least be very cautious that you make away with the proper (if so she may be called) person. Be very sure of the fact before you order the barge out: and don't pop your subject into the Bosphorus, until you are quite certain that she deserves it. This is all I would urge in poor Fatima's behalf — absolutely all — not a word more, by the beard of the Prophet. If she's guilty, down with her — heave over the sack, away with it into the Golden Horn bubble and squeak, and justice being done, give way, men, and let us pull back to supper.

So the Major did not in any way object to Warrington's continued promenades with Miss Laura, but, like a benevolent old gentleman, encouraged in every way the intimacy of that couple. Were there any exhibitions in town? he was for Warrington conducting her to them. If Warrington had proposed to take her to Vauxhall itself, this most complaisant of men would have seen no harm — nor would Helen, if Pendennis the elder had so ruled it — nor would there have been any harm between two persons whose honour was entirely spotless — between Warrington, who saw in intimacy a pure, and high-minded, and artless woman for the first time in his life — and Laura, who too for the first time was thrown into the constant society of a gentleman of great natural parts and powers of pleasing; who possessed varied acquirements, enthusiasm, simplicity, humour, and that freshness of mind which his simple life and habits gave him, and which contrasted so much with Pen's dandy indifference of manner and faded sneer. In Warrington's very uncouthness there was a refinement, which the other's finery lacked. In his energy, his respect, his desire to please, his hearty laughter, or simple confiding pathos, what a difference to Sultan Pen's yawning sovereignty and languid acceptance of homage! What had made Pen at home such a dandy and such a despot? The women had spoiled him, as we like them and as they like to do. They had cloyed him with obedience, and surfeited him with sweet respect and submission, until he grew weary of the slaves who waited upon him, and their caresses and cajoleries excited him no more. Abroad, he was brisk and lively, and eager and impassioned enough — most men are so constituted and so nurtured. — Does this, like the former sentence, run a chance of being misinterpreted, and does any one dare to suppose that the writer would incite the women to revolt? Nevert, by the whiskers of the Prophet again, he says. He wears a beard, and he likes his women to be slaves. What man doesn't? What man would be henpecked, I say? We will cut off all the heads in Christendom or Turkeydom rather than that.

Well, then, Arthur being so languid, and indifferent, and careless about the favours bestowed upon him, how came it that Laura should have such a love and rapturous regard for him, that a mere inadequate expression of it should have kept the girl talking all the way from Fairoaks to London, as she and Helen travelled in the post-chaise? As soon as Helen had finished one story about the dear fellow, and narrated, with a hundred sobs and ejaculations, and looks up to heaven, some thrilling incidents which occurred about the period when the hero was breeched, Laura began another equally interesting and equally ornamented with tears, and told how heroically he had a tooth out or wouldn't have it out, or how daringly he robbed a bird's nest or how magnanimously he spared it; or how he gave a shilling to the old woman on the common, or went without his bread-and-butter for the beggar-boy who came into the yard — and so on One to another the sobbing women sang laments upon their hero, who, my worthy reader has long since perceived, is no more a hero than one of us. Being as he was, why should a sensible girl be so fond of him?

This point has been argued before in a previous unfortunate sentence (which lately drew down all the wrath of Ireland upon the writer's head), and which said that the greatest rascal-cut-throats have had somebody to be fond of them, and if those monsters, why not ordinary mortals? And with whom shall a young lady fall in love but with the person she sees? She is not supposed to lose her heart in a dream, like a Princess in the Arabian Nights; or to plight her young affections to the portrait of a gentleman in the Exhibition, or a sketch in the Illustrated London News. You have an instinct within you which inclines you to attach yourself to some one: you meet Somebody: you hear Somebody constantly praised: you walk, or ride, or waltz, or talk or sit in the same pew at church with Somebody: you meet again, and again, and — "Marriages are made in Heaven," your dear mamma says, pinning your orange-flowers wreath on, with her blessed eyes dimmed with tears — and there is a wedding breakfast, and you take off your white satin and retire to your coach-and-four, and you and he are a happy pair. — Or, the affair is broken off, and then, poor wounded heart! why, then you meet Somebody Else, and twine your young affections round number two. It is your nature so to do. Do you suppose it is all for the man's sake that you love, and not a bit for your own? Do you suppose you would drink if you were not thirsty, or eat if you were not hungry?

So then Laura liked Pen because she saw scarcely anybody else at Fair Oaks except Doctor Portman and Captain Glanders, and because his mother constantly praised her Arthur, and because he was gentlemanlike, tolerably good-looking and witty, and because, above all, it was of her nature to like somebody. And having once received this image into her heart, she there tenderly nursed it and clasped it — she there, in his long absences and her constant solitudes, silently brooded over it and fondled it — and when after this she came to London, and had an opportunity of becoming rather intimate with Mr. George Warrington, what on earth was to prevent her from thinking him a most odd, original, agreeable, and pleasing person?

A long time afterwards, when these days were over, and Fate in its own way had disposed of the various persons now assembled in the dingy building in Lamb Court, perhaps some of them looked back and thought how happy the time was, and how pleasant had been their evening talks and little walks and simple recreations round the sofa of Pen the convalescent. The Major had a favourable opinion of September in London from that time forward, and declared at his clubs and in society that the dead season in town was often pleasant, doosid pleasant, begad. He used to go home to his lodgings in Bury Street of a night, wondering that it was already so late, and that the evening had passed away so quickly. He made his appearance at the Temple pretty constantly in the afternoon, and tugged up the long black staircase with quite a benevolent activity and perseverance. And he made interest with the chef at Bays's (that renowned cook, the superintendence of whose work upon Gastronomy compelled the gifted author to stay in the metropolis), to prepare little jellies, delicate clear soups, aspics, and other trifles good for invalids, which Morgan the valet constantly brought down to the little Lamb Court colony. And the permission to drink a glass or two of pure sherry being accorded to Pen by Doctor Goodenough, the Major told with almost tears in his eyes how his noble friend the Marquis of Steyne, passing through London on his way to the Continent, had ordered any quantity of his precious, his priceless Amontillado, that had been a present from King Ferdinand to the noble Marquis, to be placed at the disposal of Mr. Arthur Pendennis. The widow and Laura tasted it with respect (though they didn't in the least like the bitter flavour) but the invalid was greatly invigorated by it, and Warrington pronounced it superlatively good, and proposed the Major's health in a mock speech after dinner on the first day when the wine was served, and that of Lord Steyne and the aristocracy in general.

Major Pendennis returned thanks with the utmost gravity and in a speech in which he used the words, 'the present occasion,' at least the proper number of times. Pen cheered with his feeble voice from his armchair. Warrington taught Miss Laura to cry "Hear! hear!" and tapped the table with his knuckles. Pidgeon the attendant grinned, and honest Doctor Goodenough found the party so merrily engaged, when he came in to pay his faithful gratuitous visit.

Warrington knew Sibwright, who lived below and that gallant gentleman, in reply to a letter informing him of the use to which his apartment had been put, wrote back the most polite and flowery letter of acquiescence. He placed his chambers at the service of their fair occupants, his bed at their disposal, his carpets at their feet. Everybody was kindly disposed towards the sick man and his family. His heart (and his mother's too, as we may fancy) melted within him at the thought of so much good-feeling and good-nature. Let Pen's biographer be pardoned for alluding to a time not far distant when a somewhat similar mishap brought him a providential friend, a kind physician, and a thousand proofs of a most touching and surprising kindness and sympathy.

There was a piano in Mr. Sibwright's chamber (indeed, this gentleman, a lover of all the arts, performed himself — and excellently ill too — upon the instrument; and had had a song dedicated to him, the words by himself, the air by his devoted friend Leopoldo Twankidillo), and at this music-box, as Mr. Warrington called it, Laura, at first with a great deal of tremor and blushing (which became her very much), played and sang, sometimes of an evening, simple airs, and old songs of home. Her voice was a rich contralto, and Warrington, who scarcely knew one tune from another and who had but one tune or bray in his repertoire — a most discordant imitation of 'God save the King' — sat rapt in delight listening to these songs. He could follow their rhythm if not their harmony; and he could watch, with a constant and daily growing enthusiasm, the pure and tender and generous creature who made the music.

I wonder how that poor pale little girl in the black bonnet, who used to stand at the lamp-post in Lamb Court sometimes of an evening, looking up to the open windows from which the music came, liked to hear it? When Pen's bedtime came the songs were hushed. Lights appeared in the upper room: his room, whither the widow used to conduct him; and then the Major and Mr. Warrington, and sometimes Miss Laura, would have a game at *ecarte* or backgammon; or she would sit by working a pair of slippers in worsted — a pair of gentleman's slippers — they might have been for Arthur or for George or for Major Pendennis: one of those three would have given anything for the slippers.

Whilst such business as this was going on within, a rather shabby old gentleman would come and lead away the pale girl in the black bonnet, who had no right to be abroad in the night air; and the Temple porters, the few laundresses, and other amateurs who had been listening to the concert, would also disappear.

Just before ten o'clock there was another musical performance, namely that of the chimes of St. Clement's clock in the Strand, which played the clear cheerful notes of a psalm, before it proceeded to ring its ten fatal strokes. As they were ringing, Laura began to fold up the slippers; Martha from Fairoaks appeared with a bed-candle, and a constant smile on her face; the Major said, "God bless my soul, is it so late?" Warrington and he left their unfinished game, and got up and shook hands with Miss Bell. Martha from Fairoaks lighted them out of the passage and down the stair, and, as they descended, they could hear her bolting and locking "the sporting door" after them, upon her young mistress and herself. If there had been any danger, grinning Martha said she would have got down "that thar hooky soord which hung up in gentleman's room,"— meaning the Damascus scimitar with the names of the prophet engraved on the blade and the red velvet scabbard, which Percy Sibwright, Esquire, brought back from his tour in the Levant, along with an Albanian dress, and which he wore with such elegant effect at Lady Mullingar's fancy ball, Gloucester Square, Hyde Park. It entangled itself in Miss Kewsey's train, who appeared in the dress in which she, with her mamma, had been presented to their sovereign (the latter by the L— d Ch-nc-ll-r's lady), and led to events which have nothing to do with this history. Is not Miss Kewsey now Mrs. Sibwright? Has Sibwright not got a county court? — Good night, Laura and Fairoaks Martha. Sleep well and wake happy, pure and gentle lady.

Sometimes after these evenings Warrington would walk a little way with Major Pendennis — just a little way just as far as the Temple gate — as the Strand — as Charing Cross — as the Club — he was not going into the Club? Well, as far as Bury Street, where he would laughingly shake hands on the Major's own door-step. They had been talking about Laura all the way. It was wonderful how enthusiastic the Major, who, as we know, used to dislike her, had grown to be regarding the young lady — "Dev'lish fine girl, begad. Dev'lish well-mannered girl — my sister-inlaw has the manners of a duchess and would bring up any girl well. Miss Bell's a little countryfied. But the smell of the hawthorn is pleasant, demmy. How she blushes! Your London girls would give many a guinea for a bouquet like that — natural flowers, begad! And she's a little money too — nothing to speak of — but a pooty little bit of money." In all which opinions no doubt Mr. Warrington agreed; and though he laughed as he shook hands with the Major, his face fell as he left his veteran companion; and he strode back to chambers, and smoked pipe after pipe long into the night, and wrote article upon article, more and more savage, in lieu of friend Pen disabled.

Well, it was a happy time for almost all parties concerned. Pen mended daily. Sleeping and eating were his constant occupations. His appetite was something frightful. He was ashamed of exhibiting it before Laura, and almost before his mother who laughed and applauded him. As the roast chicken of his dinner went away he eyed the departing friend with sad longing, and began to long for jelly, or tea, or what not. He was like an ogre in devouring. The Doctor cried stop, but Pen would not. Nature called out to him more loudly than the Doctor, and that kind and friendly physician handed him over with a very good grace to the other healer.

And here let us speak very tenderly and in the strictest confidence of an event which befell him, and to which he never liked an allusion. During his delirium the ruthless Goodenough ordered ice to be put to his head, and all his lovely hair to be cut. It was done in the time of — of the other nurse, who left every single hair of course in a paper for the widow to count and treasure up. She never believed but that the girl had taken away some of it, but then women are so suspicious upon these matters.

When this direful loss was made visible to Major Pendennis as of course it was the first time the elder saw the poor young man's shorn pate, and when Pen was quite out of danger, and gaining daily vigour, the Major, with something like blushes and a queer wink of his eyes, said he knew of a — a person — a coiffeur, in fact — a good man, whom he would send down to the Temple, and who would — a — apply — a — a temporary remedy to that misfortune.

Laura looked at Warrington with the archest sparkle in her eyes — Warrington fairly burst out into a boohoo of laughter: even the widow was obliged to laugh: and the Major erubescant confounded the impudence of the young folks, and said when he had his hair cut he would keep a lock of it for Miss Laura.

Warrington voted that Pen should wear a barrister's wig. There was Sibwright's down below, which would become him hugely. Pen said "Stuff," and seemed as confused as his uncle; and the end was that a gentleman from Burlington Arcade waited next day upon Mr. Pendennis, and had a private interview with him in his bedroom; and a week afterwards the

same individual appeared with a box under his arm, and an ineffable grin of politeness on his face, and announced that he had brought 'ome Mr. Pendennis's 'ead of 'air.

It must have been a grand but melancholy sight to see Pen in the recesses of his apartment, sadly contemplating his ravaged beauty, and the artificial means of hiding its ruin. He appeared at length in the 'ead of 'air; but Warrington laughed so, that Pen grew sulky, and went back for his velvet cap, a neat turban which the fondest of mammas had worked for him. Then Mr. Warrington and Miss Bell got some flowers off the ladies' bonnets and made a wreath, with which they decorated the wig and brought it out in procession, and did homage before it. In fact they indulged in a hundred sports, jularities, waggeries, and petits jeux innocens: so that the second and third floors of Number 6 Lamb Court, Temple, rang with more cheerfulness and laughter than had been known in those precincts for many a long day.

At last, after about ten days of this life, one evening when the little spy of the court came out to take her usual post of observation at the lamp, there was no music from the second-floor window, there were no lights in the third-story chambers, the windows of each were open, and the occupants were gone. Mrs. Flanagan, the laundress, told Fanny what had happened. The ladies and all the party had gone to Richmond for change of air. The antique travelling chariot was brought out again and cushioned with many pillows for Pen and his mother; and Miss Laura went in the most affable manner in the omnibus under the guardianship of Mr. George Warrington. He came back and took possession of his old bed that night in the vacant and cheerless chambers, and to his old books and his old pipes, but not perhaps to his old sleep.

The widow had left a jar full of flowers upon his table, prettily arranged, and when he entered they filled the solitary room with odour. They were memorials of the kind, gentle souls who had gone away, and who had decorated for a little while that lonely cheerless place. He had had the happiest days of his whole life George felt — he knew it now they were just gone: he went and took up the flowers and put his face to them, and smelt them — perhaps kissed them. As he put them down, he rubbed his rough hand across his eyes with a bitter word and laugh. He would have given his whole life and soul to win that prize which Arthur rejected. Did she want fame? he would have won it for her:— devotion? — a great heart full of pent-up tenderness and manly love and gentleness was there for her, if she might take it. But it might not be. Fate had ruled otherwise. "Even if I could, she would not have me," George thought. "What has an ugly, rough old fellow like me, to make any woman like him? I'm getting old, and I've made no mark in life. I've neither good looks, nor youth, nor money, nor reputation. A man must be able to do something besides stare at her and offer on his knees his smooth devotion, to make a woman like him. What can I do? Lots of young fellows have passed me in the race — what they call the prizes of life didn't seem to me worth the trouble of the struggle. But for her. If she had been mine and liked a diamond — ah! shouldn't she have worn it! Psha, what a fool I am to brag of what I would have done! We are the slaves of destiny. Our lots are shaped for us, and mine is ordained long ago. Come, let us have a pipe, and put the smell of these flowers out of court, poor little silent flowers! you'll be dead tomorrow. What business had you to show your red cheeks in this dingy place?"

By his bedside George found a new Bible which the widow had placed there, with a note inside saying that she had not seen the book amongst his collection in a room where she had spent a number of hours, and where God had vouchsafed to her prayers the life of her son, and that she gave to Arthur's friend the best thing she could, and besought him to read in the volume sometimes, and to keep it as a token of a grateful mother's regard and affection. Poor George mournfully kissed the book as he had done the flowers; and the morning found him still reading in its awful pages, in which so many stricken hearts, in which so many tender and faithful souls, have found comfort under calamity, and refuge and hope in affliction.



CHAPTER LV

FANNY'S OCCUPATION'S GONE

Good Helen, ever since her son's illness, had taken, as we have seen, entire possession of the young man, of his drawers and closets and all which they contained: whether shirts that wanted buttons, or stockings that required mending, or, must it be owned? letters that lay amongst those articles of raiment, and which of course it was necessary that somebody should answer during Arthur's weakened and incapable condition. Perhaps Mrs. Pendennis was laudably desirous to have some explanations about the dreadful Fanny Bolton mystery, regarding which she had never breathed a word to her son, though it was present in her mind always, and occasioned her inexpressible anxiety and disquiet. She had caused the brass knocker to be screwed off the inner door of the chambers, where upon the postman's startling double rap would, as she justly argued, disturb the rest of her patient, and she did not allow him to see any letter which arrived, whether from bootmakers who importuned him, or hatters who had a heavy account to make up against next Saturday, and would be very much obliged if Mr. Arthur Pendennis would have the kindness to settle, etc. Of these documents, Pen, who was always freehanded and careless, of course had his share, and though no great one, one quite enough to alarm his scrupulous and conscientious mother. She had some savings; Pen's magnificent self-denial, and her own economy, amounting from her great simplicity and avoidance of show to parsimony almost, had enabled her to put by a little sum of money, a part of which she delightedly consecrated to the paying off the young gentleman's obligations. At this price, many a worthy youth and respected reader would hand over his correspondence to his parents; and perhaps there is no greater test of a man's regularity and easiness of conscience, than his readiness to face the postman. Blessed is he who is made happy by the sound of the rat-tat! The good are eager for it: but the naughty tremble at the sound thereof. So it was very kind of Mrs. Pendennis doubly to spare Pen the trouble of hearing or answering letters during his illness.

There could have been nothing in the young man's chest of drawers and wardrobes which could be considered as inculcating him in any way, nor any satisfactory documents regarding the Fanny Bolton affair found there, for the widow had to ask her brother-inlaw if he knew anything about the odious transaction, and the dreadful intrigue about which her son was engaged. When they were at Richmond one day, and Pen with Warrington had taken a seat on a bench on the terrace, the widow kept Major Pendennis in consultation, and laid her terrors and perplexities before him, such of them at least (for as is the wont of men and women, she did not make quite a clean confession, and I suppose no spendthrift asked for a schedule of his debts, no lady of fashion asked by her husband for her dressmaker's bills, ever sent in the whole of them yet)—such, we say, of her perplexities, at least, as she chose to confide to her Director for the time being.

When, then, she asked the Major what course she ought to pursue, about this dreadful — this horrid affair, and whether he knew anything regarding it? the old gentleman puckered up his face, so that you could not tell whether he was smiling or not; gave the widow one queer look with his little eyes; cast them down to the carpet again, and said, "My dear, good creature, I don't know anything about it; and I don't wish to know anything about it; and, as you ask me my opinion, I think you had best know nothing about it too. Young men will be young men; begad, and, my good ma'am, if you think our boy is a Jo —"

"Pray, spare me this," Helen broke in, looking very stately.

"My dear creature, I did not commence the conversation, permit me to say," the Major said, bowing very blandly.

"I can't bear to hear such a sin — such a dreadful sin — spoken of in such a way," the widow said, with tears of annoyance starting from her eyes. "I can't bear to think that my boy should commit such a crime. I wish he had died, almost, before he had done it. I don't know how I survive it myself; for it is breaking my heart, Major Pendennis, to think that his father's son — my child — whom I remember so good — oh, so good, and full of honour! — should be fallen so dreadfully low, as to — as to —"

"As to flirt with a little grisette, my dear creature?" said the Major. "Egad, if all the mothers in England were to break their hearts because — Nay, nay; upon my word and honour, now, don't agitate yourself — don't cry. I can't bear to see a woman's tears — I never could — never. But how do we know that anything serious has happened? Has Arthur said anything?"

"His silence confirms it," sobbed Mrs. Pendennis, behind her pocket-handkerchief.

"Not at all. There are subjects, my dear, about which a young fellow cannot surely talk to his mamma," insinuated the brother-in-law.

"She has written to him," cried the lady, behind the cambric.

"What, before he was ill? Nothing more likely."

"No, since," the mourner with the batiste mask gasped out; not before; that is, I don't think so — that is, I——"

"Only since; and you have — yes, I understand. I suppose when he was too ill to read his own correspondence, you took charge of it, did you?"

"I am the most unhappy mother in the world," cried out the unfortunate Helen.

"The most unhappy mother in the world, because your son is a man and not a hermit! Have a care, my dear sister. If you have suppressed any letters to him, you may have done yourself a great injury; and, if I know anything of Arthur's spirit, may cause a difference between him and you, which you'll rue all your life — a difference that's a dev'lish deal more important, my good madam, than the little — little — trumpery cause which originated it."

"There was only one letter," broke out Helen — "only a very little one — only a few words. Here it is — Oh — how can you, how can you speak so?"

When the good soul said "only a very little one," the Major could not speak at all, so inclined was he to laugh, in spite of the agonies of the poor soul before him, and for whom he had a hearty pity and liking too. But each was looking at the matter with his or her peculiar eyes and views of morals, and the Major's morals, as the reader knows, were not those of an ascetic.

"I recommend you," he gravely continued, "if you can, to seal it up — those letters ain't unfrequently sealed with wafers — and to put it amongst Pen's other letters, and let him have them when he calls for them. Or if we'll can't seal it, we mistook it for a bill."

"I can't tell my son a lie," said the widow. It had been put silently into the letter-box two days previous to their departure from the Temple, and had been brought to Mrs. Pendennis by Martha. She had never seen Fanny's handwriting, of course; but when the letter was put into her hands she knew the author at once. She had been on the watch for that letter every day since Pen had been ill. She had opened some of his other letters because she wanted to get at that one. She had the horrid paper poisoning her bag at that moment. She took it out and offered it to her brother-in-law.

"Arther Pendennis, Esq.," he read in a timid little sprawling handwriting, and with a sneer on his face. "No, my dear, I won't read any more. But you who have read it may tell me what the letter contains — only prayers for his health in bad spelling, you say — and a desire to see him? Well — there's no harm in that. And as you ask me —" Here the Major began to look a little queer for his own part, and put on his demure look — "as you ask me, my dear, for information, why, I don't mind telling you that — ah — that — Morgan, my man, has made some inquiries regarding this affair, and that — my friend Doctor Goodenough also looked into it — and it appears that this person was greatly smitten with Arthur; that he paid for her and took her to Vauxhall Gardens, as Morgan heard from an old acquaintance of Pen's and ours, an Irish gentleman, who was very nearly once having the honour of being the — from an Irishman, in fact; — that the girl's father, a violent man of intoxicated habits, has beaten her mother, who persists in declaring her daughter's entire innocence to her husband on the one hand, while on the other she told Goodenough, that Arthur has acted like a brute to her child. And so you see the story remains in a mystery. Will you have it cleared up? I have but to ask Pen, and he will tell me at once — he is as honourable a man as ever lived."

"Honourable!" said the widow with bitter scorn. "Oh, brother, what is this you call honour? If my boy has been guilty, he must marry her. I would go down on my knees and pray him to do so."

"Good God! are you mad?" screamed out the Major; and remembering former passages in Arthur's history and Helen's, the truth came across his mind that, were Helen to make this prayer to her son, he would marry the girl: he was wild enough and obstinate enough to commit any folly when a woman he loved was in the case. "My dear sister, have you lost your senses?" he continued (after an agitated pause, during which the above dreary reflection crossed him); and in a softened tone, "What right have we to suppose that anything has passed between this girl and him? Let's see the letter. Her heart is breaking; pray, pray, write to me — home unhappy — unkind father — your nurse — poor little Fanny — spelt, as you say, in a manner to outrage all sense of decorum. But, good heavens! my dear, what is there in this? only that the little

devil is making love to him still. Why, she didn't come into his chambers until he was so delirious that he didn't know her. What-d'-you-call-'em, Flanagan, the laundress, told Morgan, my man, so. She came in company of an old fellow, an old Mr. Bows, who came most kindly down to Stillbrook and brought me away — by the way, I left him in the cab, and never paid the fare; and dev'lish kind it was of him. No, there's nothing in the story."

"Do you think so? Thank Heaven — thank God!" Helen cried. "I'll take the letter to Arthur and ask him now. Look at him there. He's on the terrace with Mr. Warrington. They are talking to some children. My boy was always fond of children. He's innocent, thank God — thank God! Let me go to him."

Old Pendennis had his own opinion. When he briskly took the not guilty side of the case, but a moment before, very likely the old gentleman had a different view from that which he chose to advocate, and judged of Arthur by what he himself would have done. If she goes to Arthur, and he speaks the truth, as the rascal will, it spoils all, he thought. And he tried one more effort.

"My dear, good soul," he said, taking Helen's hand and kissing it, "as your son has not acquainted you with this affair, think if you have any right to examine it. As you believe him to be a man of honour, what right have you to doubt his honour in this instance? Who is his accuser? An anonymous scoundrel who has brought no specific charge against him. If there were any such, wouldn't the girl's parents have come forward? He is not called upon to rebut, nor you to entertain an anonymous accusation; and as for believing him guilty because a girl of that rank happened to be in his rooms acting as nurse to him, begad you might as well insist upon his marrying that dem'd old Irish gin-drinking laundress, Mrs. Flanagan."

The widow burst out laughing through her tears — the victory was gained by the old general.

"Marry Mrs. Flanagan, by Ged," he continued, tapping her slender hand. "No. The boy has told you nothing about it, and you know nothing about it. The boy is innocent — of course. And what, my good soul, is the course for us to pursue? Suppose he is attached to this girl — don't look sad again, it's merely a supposition — and begad a young fellow may have an attachment, mayn't he? — Directly he gets well he will be at her again."

"He must come home! We must go off directly to Fair Oaks," the widow cried out.

"My good creature, he'll bore himself to death at Fair Oaks. He'll have nothing to do but to think about his passion there. There's no place in the world for making a little passion into a big one, and where a fellow feeds on his own thoughts, like a dem'd lonely country-house where there's nothing to do. We must occupy him: amuse him: we must take him abroad: he's never been abroad except to Paris for a lark. We must travel a little. He must have a nurse with him, to take great care of him, for Goodenough says he had a dev'lish narrow squeak of it (don't look frightened), and so you must come and watch: and I suppose you'll take Miss Bell, and I should like to ask Warrington to come. Arthur's dev'lish fond of Warrington. He can't do without Warrington. Warrington's family is one of the oldest in England, and he is one of the best young fellows I ever met in my life. I like him exceedingly."

"Does Mr. Warrington know anything about this — this affair?" asked Helen. "He had been away, I know, for two months before it happened; Pen wrote me so."

"Not a word — I — I've asked him about it. I've pumped him. He never heard of the transaction, never; I pledge you my word," cried out the Major, in some alarm. "And, my dear, I think you had much best not talk to him about it — much best not — of course not: the subject is most delicate and painful."

The simple widow took her brother's hand and pressed it. "Thank you, brother," she said. "You have been very, very kind to me. You have given me a great deal of comfort. I'll go to my room, and think of what you have said. This illness and these — these emotions — have agitated me a great deal; and I'm not very strong, you know. But I'll go and thank God that my boy is innocent. He is innocent. Isn't he, sir?"

"Yes, my dearest creature, yes," said the old fellow, kissing her affectionately, and quite overcome by her tenderness. He looked after her as she retreated, with a fondness which was rendered more piquant, as it were, by the mixture of a certain scorn which accompanied it. "Innocent!" he said; "I'd swear, till I was black in the face, he was innocent, rather than give that good soul pain."

Having achieved this victory, the fatigued and happy warrior laid himself down on the sofa, and put his yellow silk pocket-handkerchief over his face, and indulged in a snug little nap, of which the dreams, no doubt, were very pleasant, as he snored with refreshing regularity. The young men sate, meanwhile, dawdling away the sunshiny hours on the terrace,

very happy, and Pen, at least, very talkative. He was narrating to Warrington a plan for a new novel, and a new tragedy. Warrington laughed at the idea of his writing a tragedy? By Jove, he would show that he could; and he began to spout some of the lines of his play.

The little solo on the wind instrument which the Major was performing was interrupted by the entrance of Miss Bell. She had been on a visit to her old friend, Lady Rockminster, who had taken a summer villa in the neighbourhood; and who, hearing of Arthur's illness, and his mother's arrival at Richmond, had visited the latter; and, for the benefit of the former, whom she didn't like, had been prodigal of grapes, partridges, and other attentions. For Laura the old lady had a great fondness, and longed that she should come and stay with her; but Laura could not leave her mother at this juncture. Worn out by constant watching over Arthur's health, Helen's own had suffered very considerably; and Doctor Goodenough had had reason to prescribe for her as well as for his younger patient.

Old Pendennis started up on the entrance of the young lady. His slumbers were easily broken. He made her a gallant speech — he had been full of gallantry towards her of late. Where had she been gathering those roses which she wore on her cheeks? How happy he was to be disturbed out of his dreams by such a charming reality! Laura had plenty of humour and honesty; and these two caused her to have on her side something very like a contempt for the old gentleman. It delighted her to draw out his worldlinesses, and to make the old habitue of clubs and drawing-rooms tell his twaddling tales about great folks, and expound his views of morals.

Not in this instance, however, was she disposed to be satirical. She had been to drive with Lady Rockminster in the Park, she said; and she had brought home game for Pen, and flowers for mamma. She looked very grave about mamma. She had just been with Mrs. Pendennis. Helen was very much worn, and she feared she was very, very ill. Her large eyes filled with tender marks of the sympathy which she felt in her beloved friend's condition. She was alarmed about her. Could not that good — that dear Dr. Goodenough cure her?

"Arthur's illness, and other mental anxiety," the Major slowly said, "had, no doubt, shaken Helen." A burning blush upon the girl's face showed that she understood the old man's allusion. But she looked him full in the face and made no reply. "He might have spared me that," she thought. "What is he aiming at in recalling that shame to me?"

That he had an aim in view is very possible. The old diplomatist seldom spoke without some such end. Doctor Goodenough had talked to him, he said, about their dear friend's health, and she wanted rest and change of scene — yes, change of scene. Painful circumstances which had occurred must be forgotten and never alluded to; he begged pardon for even hinting at them to Miss Bell — he never should do so again — nor, he was sure, would she. Everything must be done to soothe and comfort their friend, and his proposal was that they should go abroad for the autumn to a watering-place in the Rhine neighbourhood, where Helen might rally her exhausted spirits, and Arthur try and become a new man. Of course, Laura would not forsake her mother?

Of course not. It was about Helen, and Helen only — that is, about Arthur too for her sake, that Laura was anxious. She would go abroad or anywhere with Helen.

And Helen having thought the matter over for an hour in her room, had by that time grown to be as anxious for the tour as any schoolboy, who has been reading a book of voyages, is eager to go to sea. Whither should they go? the farther the better — to some place so remote that even recollection could not follow them thither: so delightful that Pen should never want to leave it — anywhere so that he could be happy. She opened her desk with trembling fingers and took out her banker's book, and counted up her little savings. If more was wanted, she had the diamond cross. She would borrow from Laura again. "Let us go — let us go," she thought; "directly he can bear the journey let us go away. Come, kind Doctor Goodenough — come quick, and give us leave to quit England."

The good Doctor drove over to dine with them that very day. "If you agitate yourself so," he said to her, "and if your heart beats so, and if you persist in being so anxious about a young gentleman who is getting well as fast as he can, we shall have you laid up, and Miss Laura to watch you; and then it will be her turn to be ill, and I should like to know how the deuce a doctor is to live who is obliged to come and attend you all for nothing? Mrs. Goodenough is already jealous of you, and says, with perfect justice, that I fall in love with my patients. And you must please to get out of the country as soon as ever you can, that I may have a little peace in my family."

When the plan of going abroad was proposed, it was received by that gentleman with the greatest alacrity and enthusiasm. He longed to be off at once. He let his mustachios grow from that very moment, in order, I suppose, that he

might get his mouth into training for a perfect French and German pronunciation; and he was seriously disquieted in his mind because the mustachios, when they came, were of a decidedly red colour. He had looked forward to an autumn at Fair Oaks; and perhaps the idea of passing two or three months there did not amuse the young man. "There is not a soul to speak to in the place," he said to Warrington. "I can't stand old Portman's sermons, and pompous after-dinner conversation. I know all old Glanders's stories about the Peninsular war. The Claverings are the only Christian people in the neighbourhood, and they are not to be at home before Christmas, my uncle says: besides, Warrington, I want to get out of the country. Whilst you were away, confound it, I had a temptation, from which I am very thankful to have escaped, and which I count that even my illness came very luckily to put an end to." And here he narrated to his friend the circumstances of the Vauxhall affair, with which the reader is already acquainted.

Warrington looked very grave when he heard this story. Putting the moral delinquency out of the question, he was extremely glad for Arthur's sake that the latter had escaped from a danger which might have made his whole life wretched; "which certainly," said Warrington, "would have occasioned the wretchedness and ruin of the other party. And your mother and — and your friends — what a pain it would have been to them!" urged Pen's companion, little knowing what grief and annoyance these good people had already suffered.

"Not a word to my mother!" Pen cried out, in a state of great alarm. "She would never get over it. An esclandre of that sort would kill her, I do believe. And," he added, with a knowing air, and as if, like a young rascal of a Lovelace, he had been engaged in what are called *affaires de coeur*, all his life; "the best way, when a danger of that sort menaces, is not to face it, but to turn one's back on it and run."

"And were you very much smitten?" Warrington asked.

"Hm!" said Lovelace. "She dropped her h's, but she was a dear little girl."

O Clarissas of this life, O you poor little ignorant vain foolish maidens! if you did but know the way in which the Lovelaces speak of you: if you could but hear Jack talking to Tom across the coffee-room of a Club; or see Ned taking your poor little letters out of his cigar-case, and handing them over to Charley, and Billy, and Harry across the messroom table, you would not be so eager to write, or so ready to listen! There's a sort of crime which is not complete unless the lucky rogue boasts of it afterwards; and the man who betrays your honour in the first place, is pretty sure, remember that, to betray your secret too.

"It's hard to fight, and it's easy to fall," said Warring gloomily. "And as you say, Pendennis, when a danger like this is imminent, the best way is to turn your back on it and run."

After this little discourse upon a subject about which Pen would have talked a great deal more eloquently a month back, the conversation reverted to the plans for going abroad, and Arthur eagerly pressed his friend to be of the party. Warrington was a part of the family — a part of the cure. Arthur said he should not have half the pleasure without Warrington.

But George said no, he couldn't go. He must stop at home and take Pen's place. The other remarked that that was needless, for Shandon was now come back to London, and Arthur was entitled to a holiday.

"Don't press me," Warrington said, "I can't go. I've particular engagements. I'm best at home. I've not got the money to travel, that's the long and short of it — for travelling costs money, you know."

This little obstacle seemed fatal to Pen. He mentioned it to his mother: Mrs. Pendennis was very sorry; Mr. Warrington had been exceedingly kind; but she supposed he knew best about his affairs. And then, no doubt, she reproached herself, for selfishness in wishing to carry the boy off and have him to herself altogether.

"What is this I hear from Pen, my dear Mr. Warrington?" the Major asked one day, when the pair were alone and after Warrington's objection had been stated to him. "Not go with us? We can't hear of such a thing — Pen won't get well without you. I promise you, I'm not going to be his nurse. He must have somebody with him that's stronger and gayer and better able to amuse him than a rheumatic old foggy like me. I shall go to Carlsbad very likely, when I've seen you people settle down. Travelling costs nothing nowadays — or so little! And — and, pray, Warrington, remember that I was your father's very old friend, and if you and your brother are not on such terms as to — to enable you to — to anticipate your younger brother's allowance, I beg you to make me your banker, for hasn't Pen been getting into your debt these three weeks past, during which you have been doing what he informs me is his work, with such exemplary talent and genius, begad?"

Still, in spite of this kind offer and unheard-of generosity on the part of the Major, George Warrington refused, and said he would stay at home. But it was with a faltering voice and an irresolute accent which showed how much he would like to go, though his tongue persisted in saying nay.

But the Major's persevering benevolence was not to be balked in this way. At the tea-table that evening, Helen happening to be absent from the room for the moment, looking for Pen who had gone to roost, old Pendennis returned to the charge and rated Warrington for refusing to join in their excursion. "Isn't it ungallant, Miss Bell?" he said, turning to that young lady. "Isn't it unfriendly? Here we have been the happiest party in the world, and this odious selfish creature breaks it up!"

Miss Bell's long eyelashes looked down towards her teacup: and Warrington blushed hugely but did not speak. Neither did Miss Bell speak: but when he blushed she blushed too.

"You ask him to come, my dear," said the benevolent old gentleman, "and then perhaps he will listen to you —"

"Why should Mr. Warrington listen to me?" asked the young lady, putting the query to her teaspoon seemingly and not to the Major.

"Ask him; you have not asked him," said Pen's artless uncle.

"I should be very glad, indeed, if Mr. Warrington would come," remarked Laura to the teaspoon.

"Would you?" said George.

She looked up and said, "Yes." Their eyes met. "I will go anywhere you ask me, or do anything," said George, lowly, and forcing out the words as if they gave him pain.

Old Pendennis was delighted; the affectionate old creature clapped his hands and cried "Bravo! bravo! It's a bargain — a bargain, begad! Shake hands on it, young people!" And Laura, with a look full of tender brightness, put out her hand to Warrington. He took hers; his face indicated a strange agitation. He seemed to be about to speak, when from Pen's neighbouring room Helen entered, looking at them as the candle which she held lighted her pale frightened face.

Laura blushed more red than ever and withdrew her hand.

"What is it?" Helen asked.

"It's a bargain we have been making, my dear creature," said the Major in his most caressing voice. "We have just bound over Mr. Warrington in a promise to come abroad with us."

"Indeed!" Helen said.



CHAPTER LVI

IN WHICH FANNY ENGAGES A NEW MEDICAL MAN

Could Helen have suspected that, with Pen's returning strength, his unhappy partiality for little Fanny would also reawaken? Though she never spoke a word regarding that young person, after her conversation with the Major, and though, to all appearances, she utterly ignored Fanny's existence, yet Mrs. Pendennis kept a particularly close watch upon all Master Arthur's actions; on the plea of ill-health would scarcely let him out of her sight; and was especially anxious that he should be spared the trouble of all correspondence for the present at least. Very likely Arthur looked at his own letters with some tremor; very likely, as he received them at the family table, feeling his mother's watch upon him (though the good soul's eye seemed fixed upon her teacup or her book), he expected daily to see a little handwriting, which he would have known, though he had never seen it yet, and his heart beat as he received the letters to his address. Was he more pleased or annoyed, that, day after day, his expectations were not realised; and was his mind relieved, that there came no letter from Fanny? Though, no doubt, in these matters, when Lovelace is tired of Clarissa (or the contrary) it is best for both parties to break at once, and each, after the failure of the attempt at union, to go his own way, and pursue his course through life solitary; yet our self-love, or our pity, or our sense of decency, does not like that sudden bankruptcy. Before we announce to the world that our firm of Lovelace and Co. can't meet its engagements, we try to make compromises: we have mournful meetings of partners: we delay the putting up of the shutters, and the dreary announcement of the failure. It must come: but we pawn our jewels to keep things going a little longer. On the whole, I dare say, Pen was rather annoyed that he had no remonstrances from Fanny. What! could she part from him, and never so much as once look round? could she sink, and never once hold a little hand out, or cry, "Help, Arthur?" Well, well: they don't all go down who venture on that voyage. Some few drown when the vessel founders; but most are only ducked, and scramble to shore. And the reader's experience of A. Pendennis, Esquire, of the Upper Temple, will enable him to state whether that gentleman belonged to the class of persons who were likely to sink or to swim.

Though Pen was as yet too weak to walk half a mile; and might not, on account of his precious health, be trusted to take a drive in a carriage by himself, and without a nurse in attendance; yet Helen could not keep watch over Mr. Warrington too, and had no authority to prevent that gentleman from going to London if business called him thither. Indeed, if he had gone and stayed, perhaps the widow, from reasons of her own, would have been glad; but she checked these selfish wishes as soon as she ascertained or owned them; and, remembering Warrington's great regard and services, and constant friendship for her boy, received him as a member of her family almost, with her usual melancholy kindness and submissive acquiescence. Yet somehow, one morning when his affairs called him to town, she divined what Warrington's errand was, and that he was gone to London to get news about Fanny for Pen.

Indeed, Arthur had had some talk with his friend, and told him more at large what his adventures had been with Fanny (adventures which the reader knows already), and what were his feelings respecting her. He was very thankful that he had escaped the great danger, to which Warrington said Amen heartily: that he had no great fault wherewith to reproach himself in regard of his behaviour to her, but that if they parted, as they must, he would be glad to say a God bless her, and to hope that she would remember him kindly. In his discourse with Warrington he spoke upon these matters with so much gravity, and so much emotion, that George, who had pronounced himself most strongly for the separation too, began to fear that his friend was not so well cured as he boasted of being; and that, if the two were to come together again, all the danger and the temptation might have to be fought once more. And with what result? "It is hard to struggle, Arthur, and it is easy to fall," Warrington said: "and the best courage for us poor wretches is to fly from danger. I would not have been what I am now, had I practised what I preach.

"And what did you practise, George?" Pen asked, eagerly. "I knew there was something. Tell us about it, Warrington."

"There was something that can't be mended, and that shattered my whole fortunes early," Warrington answered. "I said I would tell you about it some day, Pen: and will, but not now. Take the moral without the fable now, Pen, my boy; and if you want to see a man whose whole life has been wrecked, by an unlucky rock against which he struck as a boy — here he is, Arthur: and so I warn you."

We have shown how Mr. Huxter, in writing home to his Clavering friends, mentioned that there was a fashionable club

in London of which he was an attendant, and that he was there in the habit of meeting an Irish officer of distinction, who, amongst other news, had given that intelligence regarding Pendennis, which the young surgeon had transmitted to Clavering. This club was no other than the Back Kitchen, where the disciple of Saint Bartholomew was accustomed to meet the General, the peculiarities of whose brogue, appearance, disposition, and general conversation, greatly diverted many young gentlemen who used the Back Kitchen as a place of nightly entertainment and refreshment. Huxter, who had a fine natural genius for mimicking everything, whether it was a favourite tragic or comic actor, or a cock on a dunghill, a corkscrew going into a bottle and a cork issuing thence, or an Irish officer of genteel connexions who offered himself as an object of imitation with only too much readiness, talked his talk, and twanged his poor old long bow whenever drink, a hearer, and an opportunity occurred, studied our friend the General with peculiar gusto, and drew the honest fellow out many a night. A bait, consisting of sixpennyworth of brandy-and-water, the worthy old man was sure to swallow: and under the influence of this liquor, who was more happy than he to tell his stories of his daughter's triumphs and his own, in love, war, drink, and polite society? Thus Huxter was enabled to present to his friends many pictures of Costigan: of Costigan fighting a jewel in the Phaynix — of Costigan and his interview with the Duke of York — of Costigan at his son-in-law's teetle, surrounded by the nobility of his countree — of Costigan, when crying drunk, at which time he was in the habit of confidentially lamenting his daughter's ingratitude, and stating that his grey hairs were hastening to a praymature grave. And thus our friend was the means of bringing a number of young fellows to the Back Kitchen, who consumed the landlord's liquors whilst they relished the General's peculiarities, so that mine host pardoned many of the latter's foibles, in consideration of the good which they brought to his house. Not the highest position in life was this — certainly, or one which, if we had a reverence for an old man, we would be anxious that he should occupy: but of this aged buffoon it may be mentioned that he had no particular idea that his condition of life was not a high one, and that in his whiskied blood there was not a black drop, nor in his muddled brains a bitter feeling, against any mortal being. Even his child, his cruel Emily, he would have taken to his heart and forgiven with tears; and what more can one say of the Christian charity of a man than that he is actually ready to forgive those who have done him every kindness, and with whom he is wrong in a dispute!

There was some idea amongst the young men who frequented the Back Kitchen, and made themselves merry with the society of Captain Costigan, that the Captain made a mystery regarding his lodgings for fear of duns, or from a desire of privacy, and lived in some wonderful place. Nor would the landlord of the premises, when questioned upon this subject, answer any inquiries; his maxim being that he only knew gentlemen who frequented that room, in that room; that when they quitted that room, having paid their scores as gentlemen, and behaved as gentlemen, his communication with them ceased; and that, as a gentleman himself, he thought it was only impertinent curiosity to ask where any other gentleman lived. Costigan, in his most intoxicated and confidential moments, also evaded any replies to questions or hints addressed to him on this subject: there was no particular secret about it, as we have seen, who have had more than once the honour of entering his apartments, but in the vicissitudes of a long life he had been pretty often in the habit of residing in houses where privacy was necessary to his comfort, and where the appearance of some visitors would have brought him anything but pleasure. Hence all sorts of legends were formed by wags or credulous persons respecting his place of abode. It was stated that he slept habitually in a watch-box in the city: in a cab at a mews, where a cab-proprietor gave him a shelter: in the Duke of York's Column etc, the wildest of these theories being put abroad by the facetious and imaginative Huxter. For Huxter, when not silenced by the company of "swells," and when in the society of his own friends, was a very different fellow to the youth whom we have seen cowed by Pen's impertinent airs, and, adored by his family at home, was the life and soul of the circle whom he met, either round the festive board or the dissecting table. On one brilliant September morning, as Huxter was regaling himself with a cup of coffee at a stall in Covent Garden, having spent a delicious night dancing at Vauxhall, he spied the General reeling down Henrietta Street, with a crowd of hooting blackguard boys at his heels, who had left their beds under the arches of the river betimes, and were prowling about already for breakfast, and the strange livelihood of the day. The poor old General was not in that condition when the sneers and jokes of these young beggars had much effect upon him: the cabmen and watermen at the cabstand knew him and passed their comments upon him: the policemen gazed after him and warned the boys off him, with looks of scorn and pity; what did the scorn and pity of men, the jokes of ribald children, matter to the General? He reeled along the street with glazed eyes, having just sense enough to know whither he was bound, and to pursue his accustomed beat homewards. He went to bed not knowing how he had reached it, as often as any man in London. He woke and found himself there, and asked no questions, and he was

tacking about on this daily though perilous voyage, when, from his station at the coffee-stall, Huxter spied him. To note his friend, to pay his twopence (indeed, he had but eightpence left, or he would have had a cab from Vauxhall to take him home), was with the eager Huxter the work of an instant — Costigan dived down the alleys by Drury Lane Theatre, where gin-shops, oyster-shops, and theatrical wardrobes abound, the proprietors of which were now asleep behind their shutters, as the pink morning lighted up their chimneys; and through these courts Huxter followed the General, until he reached Oldcastle Street, in which is the gate of Shepherd's Inn.

Here, just as he was within sight of home, a luckless slice of orange-peel came between the General's heel and the pavement, and caused the poor old fellow to fall backwards.

Huxter ran up to him instantly, and after a pause, during which the veteran, giddy with his fall and his previous whisky, gathered, as he best might, his dizzy brains together, the young surgeon lifted up the limping General, and very kindly and good-naturedly offered to conduct him to his home. For some time, and in reply to the queries which the student of medicine put to him, the muzzy General refused to say where his lodgings were and declared that they were hard by, and that he could reach them without difficulty; and he disengaged himself from Huxter's arm, and made a rush as if to get to his own home unattended: but he reeled and lurched so, that the young surgeon insisted upon accompanying him, and, with many soothing expressions and cheering and consolatory phrases, succeeded in getting the General's dirty old hand under what he called his own fin, and led the old fellow, moaning piteously, across the street. He stopped when he came to the ancient gate, ornamented with the armorial bearings of the venerable Shepherd. "Here 'tis," said he, drawing up at the portal, and he made a successful pull at the gate bell, which presently brought out old Mr. Bolton, the porter, scowling fiercely, and grumbling as he was used to do every morning when it became his turn to let in that early bird.

Costigan tried to hold Bolton for a moment in genteel conversation, but the other surlily would not. "Don't bother me," said he; "go to your hown bed Capting, and don't keep honest men out of theirs." So the Captain tacked across the square and reached his own staircase, up which he stumbled with the worthy Huxter at his heels. Costigan had a key of his own, which Huxter inserted into the keyhole for him, so that there was no need to call up little Mr. Bows from the sleep into which the old musician had not long since fallen, and Huxter having aided to disrobe his tipsy patient, and ascertained that no bones were broken, helped him to bed and applied compresses an water to one of his knees and shins, which, with the pair of trousers which encased them, Costigan had severely torn in his fall. At the General's age, and with his habit of body, such wounds as he had inflicted on himself are slow to heal: a good deal of inflammation ensued, and the old fellow lay ill for some days, suffering both pain and fever.

Mr. Huxter undertook the case of his interesting patient with great confidence and alacrity, and conducted it with becoming skill. He visited his friend day after day, and consoled him with lively rattle and conversation for the absence of the society which Costigan needed, and of which he was an ornament; and he gave special instructions to the invalid's nurse about the quantity of whisky which the patient was to take — instructions which, as the poor old fellow could not for many days get out of his bed or sofa himself, he could not by any means infringe. Bows, Mrs. Bolton, and our little friend Fanny, when able to do so, officiated at the General's bedside, and the old warrior was made as comfortable as possible under his calamity.

Thus Huxter, whose affable manners and social turn made him quickly intimate with persons in whose society he fell, and whose over-refinement did not lead them to repulse the familiarities of this young gentleman, became pretty soon intimate in Shepherd's Inn, both with our acquaintances in the garrets and those in the porter's lodge. He thought he had seen Fanny somewhere: he felt certain that he had: but it is no wonder that he should not accurately remember her, for the poor little thing never chose to tell him where she had met him: he himself had seen her at a period, when his own views both of persons and of right and wrong were clouded by the excitement of drinking and dancing, and also little Fanny was very much changed and worn by the fever and agitation, and passion and despair, which the past three weeks had poured upon the head of that little victim. Borne down was the head now, and very pale and wan the face; and many and many a time the sad eyes had looked into the postman's, as he came to the Inn, and the sickened heart had sunk as he passed away. When Mr. Costigan's accident occurred, Fanny was rather glad to have an opportunity of being useful and doing something kind — something that would make her forget her own little sorrows perhaps: she felt she bore them better whilst she did her duty, though I dare say many a tear dropped into the old Irishman's gruel. Ah, me! stir the gruel well, and have courage, little Fanny! If everybody who has suffered from your complaint were to die of it straightway, what a fine year the undertakers would have!

Whether from compassion for his only patient, or delight in his society, Mr. Huxter found now occasion to visit Costigan two or three times in the day at least, and if any of the members of the porter's lodge family were not in attendance on the General, the young doctor was sure to have some particular directions to address to those at their own place of habitation. He was a kind fellow; he made or purchased toys for the children; he brought them apples and brandy-balls; he brought a mask and frightened them with it, and caused a smile upon the face of pale Fanny. He called Mrs. Bolton Mrs. B., and was very intimate, familiar, and facetious with that lady, quite different from that "aughty, artless beast," as Mrs. Bolton now denominated a certain young gentleman of our acquaintance, and whom she now vowed she never could abear.

It was from this lady, who was very free in her conversation, that Huxter presently learnt what was the illness which was evidently preying upon little Fan, and what had been Pen's behaviour regarding her. Mrs. Bolton's account of the transaction was not, it may be imagined, entirely an impartial narrative. One would have thought from her story that the young gentleman had employed a course of the most persevering and flagitious artifices to win the girl's heart, had broken the most solemn promises made to her and was a wretch to be hated and chastised by every champion of woman. Huxter, in his present frame of mind respecting Arthur, and suffering under the latter's contumely, was ready, of course, to take all for granted that was said in the disfavour of this unfortunate convalescent. But why did he not write home to Clavering, as he had done previously, giving an account of Pen's misconduct, and of the particulars regarding it, which had now come to his knowledge? He soon, in a letter to his brother-in-law, announced that that nice young man, Mr. Pendennis, had escaped narrowly from a fever, and that no doubt all Clavering, where he was so popular, would be pleased at his recovery; and he mentioned that he had an interesting case of compound fracture, an officer of distinction, which kept him in town; but as for Fanny Bolton, he made no more mention of her in his letters — no more than Pen himself had made mention of her. O you mothers at home, how much do you think you know about your lads? How much do you think you know?

But with Bows, there was no reason why Huxter should not speak his mind, and so, a very short time after his conversation with Mrs. Bolton, Mr. Sam talked to the musician about his early acquaintance with Pendennis; described him as a confounded conceited blackguard, and expressed a determination to punch his impudent head as soon as ever he should be well enough to stand up like a man.

Then it was that Bows on his part spoke and told his version of the story, whereof Arthur and little Fan were the hero and heroine; how they had met by no contrivance of the former, but by a blunder of the old Irishman, now in bed with a broken shin — how Pen had acted with manliness and self-control in the business — how Mrs Bolton was an idiot; and he related the conversation which he, Bows, had had with Pen, and the sentiments uttered by the young man. Perhaps Bow's story caused some twinges of conscience in the breast of Pen's accuser, and that gentleman frankly owned that he had been wrong with regard to Arthur, and withdrew his project for punching Mr. Pendennis's head.

But the cessation of his hostility for Pen did not diminish Huxter's attentions to Fanny, which unlucky Mr Bows marked with his usual jealousy and bitterness of spirit, "I have but to like anybody" the old fellow thought, "and somebody is sure to come and be preferred to me. It has been the same ill-luck with me since I was a lad, until now that I am sixty years old. What can such a man as I am expect better than to be laughed at? It is for the young to succeed, and to be happy, and not for old fools like me. I've played a second fiddle through life," he said, with a bitter laugh; "how can I suppose the luck is to change after it has gone against me so long?" This was the selfish way in which Bows looked at the state of affairs: though few persons would have thought there was any cause for his jealousy, who looked at the pale and grief-stricken countenance of the hapless little girl, its object. Fanny received Huxter's good-natured efforts at consolation and kind attentions kindly. She laughed now and again at his jokes and games with her little sisters, but relapsed quickly into a dejection which ought to have satisfied Mr. Bows that the new-comer had no place in her heart as yet, had jealous Mr. Bows been enabled to see with clear eyes.

But Bows did not. Fanny attributed Pen's silence somehow to Bows's interference. Fanny hated him. Fanny treated Bows with constant cruelty and injustice. She turned from him when he spoke — she loathed his attempts at consolation. A hard life had Mr. Bows, and a cruel return for his regard.

When Warrington came to Shepherd's Inn as Pen's ambassador, it was for Mr. Bows's apartments he inquired (no doubt upon a previous agreement with the principal for whom he acted in this delicate negotiation), and he did not so much as catch a glimpse of Miss Fanny when he stopped at the Inn-gate and made his inquiry. Warrington was, of course, directed to the musician's chambers, and found him tending the patient there, from whose chamber he came out to wait

upon his guest. We have said that they had been previously known to one another, and the pair shook hands with sufficient cordiality. After a little preliminary talk, Warrington said that he had come from his friend Arthur Pendennis, and from his family, to thank Bows for his attention at the commencement of Pen's illness, and for his kindness in hastening into the country to fetch the Major.

Bows replied that it was but his duty: he had never thought to have seen the young gentleman alive again when he went in search of Pen's relatives, and he was very glad of Mr. Pendennis's recovery, and that he had his friends with him. "Lucky are they who have friends, Mr. Warrington," said the musician. "I might be up in this garret and nobody would care for me, or mind whether I was alive or dead."

"What! not the General, Mr. Bows?" Warrington asked.

"The General likes his whisky-bottle more than anything in life," the other answered; "we live together from habit and convenience; and he cares for me no more than you do. What is it you want to ask me, Mr. Warrington? You ain't come to visit me, I know very well. Nobody comes to visit me. It is about Fanny, the porter's daughter, you are come — I see that — very well. Is Mr. Pendennis, now he has got well, anxious to see her again? Does his lordship the Sultan propose to throw his 'andkerchief to her? She has been very ill, sir, ever since the day when Mrs. Pendennis turned her out of doors — kind of a lady, wasn't it? The poor girl and myself found the young gentleman raving in a fever, knowing nobody, with nobody to tend him but his drunken laundress — she watched day and night by him. I set off to fetch his uncle. Mamma comes and turns Fanny to the right-about. Uncle comes and leaves me to pay the cab. Carry my compliments to the ladies and gentleman, and say we are both very thankful, very. Why, a countess couldn't have behaved better, and for an apothecary's lady, as I'm given to understand Mrs. Pendennis was — I'm sure her behaviour is most uncommon aristocratic and genteel. She ought to have a double-gilt pestle and mortar to her coach."

It was from Mr. Huxter that Bows had learned Pen's parentage, no doubt, and if he took Pen's part against the young surgeon, and Fanny's against Mr. Pendennis, it was because the old gentleman was in so savage a mood, that his humour was to contradict everybody.

Warrington was curious, and not ill pleased at the musician's taunts and irascibility. "I never heard of these transactions," he said, "or got but a very imperfect account of them from Major Pendennis. What was a lady to do? I think (I have never spoken with her on the subject) she had some notion that the young woman and my friend Pen were on — on terms of — of an intimacy which Mrs. Pendennis could not, of course, recognise —"

"Oh, of course not, sir. Speak out, sir; say what you mean at once, that the young gentleman of the Temple had made a victim of the girl of Shepherd's Inn, eh? And so she was turned to be out of doors — or brayed alive in the double-gilt pestle and mortar, by Jove! No, Mr. Warrington, there was no such thing: there was no victimising, or if there was, Mr. Arthur was the victim, not the girl. He is an honest fellow, he is, though he is conceited, and a puppy sometimes. He can feel like a man, and run away from temptation like a man. I own it, though I suffer by it, I own it. He has a heart, he has: but the girl hasn't, sir. That girl will do anything to win a man, and fling him away without a pang, sir. If she's flung away herself, sir, she'll feel it and cry. She had a fever when Mrs. Pendennis turned her out of doors; and she made love to the Doctor, Doctor Goodenough, who came to cure her. Now she has taken on with another chap — another sawbones, ha, ha! d — — it, sir, she likes the pestle and mortar, and hangs round the pill-boxes, she's so fond of 'em, and she has got a fellow from Saint Bartholomew's, who grins through a horse-collar for her sisters, and charms away her melancholy. Go and see, sir: very likely he's in the lodge now. If you want news about Miss Fanny, you must ask at the Doctor's shop, sir, not of an old fiddler like me — Good-bye, sir. There's my patient calling."

And a voice was heard from the Captain's bedroom, a well-known voice, which said, "I'd loike a dthrop of dthrink, Bows, I'm thirstee." And not sorry, perhaps, to hear that such was the state of things, and that Pen's forsaken was consoling herself, Warrington took his leave of the irascible musician.

As luck would have it, he passed the lodge door just as Mr. Huxter was in the act of frightening the children with the mask whereof we have spoken, and Fanny was smiling languidly at his farces. Warrington laughed bitterly. "Are all women like that?" he thought. "I think there's one that's not," he added, with a sigh.

At Piccadilly, waiting for the Richmond omnibus, George fell in with Major Pendennis, bound in the same direction, and he told the old gentleman of what he had seen and heard respecting Fanny.

Major Pendennis was highly delighted: and as might be expected of such a philosopher, made precisely the same

observation as that which had escaped from Warrington. "All women are the same," he said. "La petite se console. Daymy, when I used to read 'Telemaque' at school, Calypso ne pouvait se consoler — you know the rest, Warrington — I used to say it was absurd. Absurd, by Gad, and so it is. And so she's got a new soupirant, has she, the little portress? Dayvlish nice little girl. How mad Pen will be — eh, Warrington? But we must break it to him gently, or he'll be in such a rage that he will be going after her again. We must menager the young fellow."

"I think Mrs. Pendennis ought to know that Pen acted very well in the business. She evidently thinks him guilty, and according to Mr. Bows, Arthur behaved like a good fellow," Warrington said.

"My dear Warrington," said the Major, with a look of some alarm, "in Mrs. Pendennis's agitated state of health and that sort of thing, the best way, I think, is not to say a single word about the subject — or, stay, leave it to me: and I'll talk to her — break it to her gently, you know, and that sort of thing. I give you my word I will. And so Calypso's consoled, is she," And he sniggered over this gratifying truth, happy in the corner of the omnibus during the rest of the journey.

Pen was very anxious to hear from his envoy what had been the result of the latter's mission; and as soon as the two young men could be alone, the ambassador spoke in reply to Arthur's eager queries.

"You remember your poem, Pen, of Ariadne in Naxos," Warrington said; "devilish bad poetry it was, to be sure."

"Apres?" asked Pen, in a great state of excitement.

"When Theseus left Ariadne, do you remember what happened to her, young fellow?"

"It's a lie, it's a lie! You don't mean that!" cried out Pen, starting up, his face turning red.

"Sit down, stoopid," Warrington said, and with two fingers pushed Pen back into his seat again. "It's better for you as it is, young one," he said sadly, in reply to the savage flush in Arthur's face.



CHAPTER LVII

FOREIGN GROUND

Worthy Major Pendennis fulfilled his promise to Warrington so far as to satisfy his own conscience, and in so far to ease poor Helen with regard to her son, as to make her understand that all connexion between Arthur and the odious little gatekeeper was at an end, and that she need have no further anxiety with respect to an imprudent attachment or a degrading marriage on Pen's part. And that young fellow's mind was also relieved (after he had recovered the shock to his vanity) by thinking that Miss Fanny was not going to die of love for him, and that no unpleasant consequences were to be apprehended from the luckless and brief connexion.

So the whole party were free to carry into effect their projected Continental trip, and Arthur Pendennis, rentier, voyageant avec Madame Pendennis and Mademoiselle Bell, and George Warrington, particulier, age de 32 ans, taille 6 pieds (Anglais), figure ordinaire, cheveux noirs, barbe idem, etc., procured passports from the consul of H.M. the King of the Belgians at Dover, and passed over from that port to Ostend, whence the party took their way leisurely, visiting Bruges and Ghent on their way to Brussels and the Rhine. It is not our purpose to describe this oft-travelled tour, or Laura's delight at the tranquil and ancient cities which she saw for the first time, or Helen's wonder and interest at the Beguine convents which they visited, or the almost terror with which she saw the black-veiled nuns with outstretched arms kneeling before the illuminated altars, and beheld the strange pomps and ceremonials of the Catholic worship. Barefooted friars in the streets; crowned images of Saints and Virgins in the churches before which people were bowing down and worshipping, in direct defiance, as she held, of the written law; priests in gorgeous robes, or lurking in dark confessionals; theatres opened, and people dancing on Sundays — all these new sights and manners shocked and bewildered the simple country lady; and when the young men after their evening drive or walk returned to the widow and her adopted daughter, they found their books of devotion on the table, and at their entrance Laura would commonly cease reading some of the psalms or the sacred pages which, of all others, Helen loved. The late events connected with her son had cruelly shaken her; Laura watched with intense, though hidden anxiety, every movement of her dearest friend; and poor Pen was most constant and affectionate in waiting upon his mother, whose wounded bosom yearned with love towards him, though there was a secret between them, and an anguish or rage almost on the mother's part, to think that she was dispossessed somehow of her son's heart, or that there were recesses in it which she must not or dared not enter. She sickened as she thought of the sacred days of boyhood when it had not been so — when her Arthur's heart had no secrets, and she was his all in all: when he poured his hopes and pleasures, his childish griefs, vanities, triumphs into her willing and tender embrace; when her home was his nest still; and before fate, selfishness, nature, had driven him forth on wayward wings — to range his own flight — to sing his own song — and to seek his own home and his own mate. Watching this devouring care and racking disappointment in her friend, Laura once said to Helen, "If Pen had loved me as you wished, I should have gained him, but I should have lost you, mamma, I know I should; and I like you to love me best. Men do not know what it is to love as we do, I think,"— and Helen, sighing, agreed to this portion of the young lady's speech, though she protested against the former part. For my part I suppose Miss Laura was right in both statements, and with regard to the latter assertion especially, that it is an old and received truism — love is an hour with us: it is all night and all day with a woman. Damon has taxes, sermon, parade, tailors' bills, parliamentary duties, and the deuce knows what to think of; Delia has to think about Damon — Damon is the oak (or the post) and stands up, and Delia is the ivy or the honeysuckle whose arms twine about him. Is it not so, Delia? Is it not your nature to creep about his feet and kiss them, to twine round his trunk and hang there; and Damon's to stand like a British man with his hands in his breeches pocket, while the pretty fond parasite clings round him?

Old Pendennis had only accompanied our friends to the water's edge, and left them on board the boat, giving the chief charge of the little expedition to Warrington. He himself was bound on a brief visit to the house of a great man, a friend of his, after which sojourn he proposed to join his sister-inlaw at the German watering-place, whither the party was bound. The Major himself thought that his long attentions to his sick family had earned for him a little relaxation — and though the best of the partridges were thinned off, the pheasants were still to be shot at Stillbrook, where the noble owner still was; old Pendennis betook himself to that hospitable mansion and disported there with great comfort to himself. A royal

Duke, some foreigners of note, some illustrious statesmen, and some pleasant people visited it: it did the old fellow's heart good to see his name in the Morning Post amongst the list of the distinguished company which the Marquis of Steyne was entertaining at his country-house at Stillbrook. He was a very useful and pleasant personage in a country-house. He entertained the young men with queer little anecdotes and grivoises stories on their shooting-parties or in their smoking-room, where they laughed at him and with him. He was obsequious with the ladies of a morning, in the rooms dedicated to them. He walked the new arrivals about the park and gardens, and showed them the carte du pays, and where there was the best view of the mansion, and where the most favourable point to look at the lake: he showed, where the timber was to be felled, and where the old road went before the new bridge was built, and the hill cut down; and where the place in the wood was where old Lord Lynx discovered Sir Phelim O'Neal on his knees before her ladyship, etc. etc.; he called the lodge-keepers and gardeners by their names; he knew the number of domestics that sat down in the housekeeper's room, and how many dined in the servants'-hall; he had a word for everybody, and about everybody, and a little against everybody. He was invaluable in a country-house, in a word: and richly merited and enjoyed his vacation after his labours. And perhaps whilst he was thus deservedly enjoying himself with his country friends, the Major was not ill pleased at transferring to Warrington the command of the family expedition to the Continent, and thus perforce keeping him in the service of the ladies — a servitude which George was only too willing to undergo, for his friend's sake, and for that of a society which he found daily more delightful. Warrington was a good German scholar, and was willing to give Miss Laura lessons in the language, who was very glad to improve herself, though Pen, for his part, was too weak or lazy now to resume his German studies. Warrington acted as courier and interpreter; Warrington saw the baggage in and out of ships, inns and carriages, managed the money matters, and put the little troop into marching order. Warrington found out where the English church was, and, if Mrs. Pendennis and Miss Laura were inclined to go thither, walked with great decorum along with them. Warrington walked by Mrs. Pendennis's donkey, when that lady went out on her evening excursions; or took carriages for her; or got 'Galignani' for her; or devised comfortable seats under the lime-trees for her, when the guests paraded after dinner, and the Kursaal band at the bath, where our tired friends stopped, performed their pleasant music under the trees. Many a fine whiskered Prussian or French dandy, come to the bath for the 'Trente-et-quarante,' cast glances of longing towards the pretty fresh-coloured English girl who accompanied the pale widow, and would have longed to take a turn with her at the galop or the waltz. But Laura did not appear in the ballroom, except once or twice, when Pen vouchsafed to walk with her; and as for Warrington, that rough diamond had not had the polish of a dancing-master, and he did not know how to waltz — though he would have liked to learn, if he could have had such a partner as Laura. — Such a partner! psha, what had a stiff bachelor to do with partners and waltzing? what was he about, dancing attendance here? drinking in sweet pleasure at a risk he knows not of what after-sadness, and regret, and lonely longing? But yet he stayed on. You would have said he was the widow's son, to watch his constant care and watchfulness of her; or that he was an adventurer, and wanted to marry her fortune, or, at any rate, that he wanted some very great treasure or benefit from her — and very likely he did — for ours, as the reader has possibly already discovered, is a Selfish Story, and almost every person, according to his nature, more or less generous than George, and according to the way of the world as it seems to us, is occupied about Number One. So Warrington selfishly devoted himself to Helen, who selfishly devoted herself to Pen, who selfishly devoted himself to himself at this present period, having no other personage or object to occupy him, except, indeed, his mother's health, which gave him a serious and real disquiet; but though they, sate together, they did not talk much, and the cloud was always between them.

Every day Laura looked for Warrington, and received him with more frank and eager welcome. He found himself talking to her as he didn't know himself that he could talk. He found himself performing acts of gallantry which astounded him after the performance: he found himself looking blankly in the glass at the crow's feet round his eyes, and at some streaks of white in his hair, and some intrusive silver bristles in his grim, blue beard. He found himself looking at the young bucks at the bath — at the bland, tight-waisted Germans — at the capering Frenchmen, with their lacquered mustachios and trim varnished boots — at the English dandies, Pen amongst them, with their calm domineering air, and insolent languor: and envied each one of these some excellence or quality of youth, or good looks, which he possessed, and of which Warrington felt the need. And every night, as the night came, he quitted the little circle with greater reluctance; and, retiring to his own lodging in their neighbourhood, felt himself the more lonely and unhappy. The widow could not help seeing his attachment. She understood, now, why Major Pendennis (always a tacit enemy of her darling project) had been so eager that Warrington should be of their party. Laura frankly owned her great, her enthusiastic, regard for him:

and Arthur would make no movement. Arthur did not choose to see what was going on; or did not care to prevent, or actually encouraged, it. She remembered his often having said that he could not understand how a man proposed to a woman twice. She was in torture — at secret feud with her son, of all objects in the world the dearest to her — in doubt, which she dared not express to herself, about Laura — averse to Warrington, the good and generous. No wonder that the healing waters of Rosenbad did not do her good, or that Doctor von Glauber, the bath physician, when he came to visit her, found that the poor lady made no progress to recovery. Meanwhile Pen got well rapidly; slept with immense perseverance twelve hours out of the twenty-four; ate huge meals; and, at the end of a couple of months, had almost got back the bodily strength and weight which he had possessed before his illness.

After they had passed some fifteen days at their place of rest and refreshment, a letter came from Major Pendennis announcing his speedy arrival at Rosenbad, and, soon after the letter, the Major himself made his appearance accompanied by Morgan his faithful valet, without whom the old gentleman could not move. When the Major travelled he wore a jaunty and juvenile travelling costume; to see his back still you would have taken him for one of the young fellows whose slim waist and youthful appearance Warrington was beginning to envy. It was not until the worthy man began to move, that the observer remarked that Time had weakened his ancient knees, and had unkindly interfered to impede the action of the natty little varnished boots in which the gay old traveller still pinched his toes. There were magnates both of our own country and of foreign nations present that autumn at Rosenbad. The elder Pendennis read over the strangers' list with great gratification on the night of his arrival, was pleased to find several of his acquaintances among the great folks, and would have the honour of presenting his nephew to a German Grand Duchess, a Russian Princess, and an English Marquis, before many days were over: nor was Pen by any means averse to making the acquaintance of these great personages, having a liking for polite life, and all the splendours and amenities belonging to it. That very evening the resolute old gentleman, leaning on his nephew's arm, made his appearance in the halls of the Kursaal, and lost or won a napoleon or two at the table of 'Trente-et-quarante.' He did not play to lose, he said, or to win, but he did as other folks did, and betted his napoleon and took his luck as it came. He pointed out the Russians and Spaniards gambling for heaps of gold, and denounced their eagerness as something sordid and barbarous; an English gentleman should play where the fashion is play, but should not elate or depress himself at the sport; and he told how he had seen his friend the Marquis of Steyne, when Lord Gaunt, lose eighteen thousand at a sitting, and break the bank three nights running at Paris, without ever showing the least emotion at his defeat or victory. "And that's what I call being an English gentleman, Pen, my dear boy," the old gentleman said, warming as he prattled about his recollections — "what I call the great manner only remains with us and with a few families in France." And as Russian Princesses passed him, whose reputation had long ceased to be doubtful, and damaged English ladies, who are constantly seen in company of their faithful attendant for the time being in these gay haunts of dissipation, the old Major, with eager garrulity and mischievous relish, told his nephew wonderful particulars regarding the lives of these heroines; and diverted the young man with a thousand scandals. Egad, he felt himself quite young again, he remarked to Pen, as, rouged and grinning, her enormous chasseur behind her bearing her shawl, the Princess Obstropski smiled and recognised and accosted him. He remembered her in '14 when she was an actress of the Paris Boulevard, and the Emperor Alexander's aide-de-camp Obstropski (a man of great talents, who knew a good deal about the Emperor Paul's death, and was a devil to play) married her. He most courteously and respectfully asked leave to call upon the Princess, and to present to her his nephew, Mr. Arthur Pendennis; and he pointed out to the latter a half-dozen of other personages whose names were as famous, and whose histories were as satisfying. What would poor Helen have thought, could she have heard those tales, or known to what kind of people her brother-in-law was presenting her son? Only once, leaning on Arthur's arm, she had passed through the room where the green tables were prepared for play, and the croaking croupiers were calling out their fatal words of Rouge gagne and Couleur perd. She had shrunk terrified out of the pandemonium, imploring Pen, extorting from him a promise, on his word of honour, that he would never play at those tables; and the scene which so frightened the simple widow, only amused the worldly old veteran, and made him young again! He could breathe the air cheerfully which stifled her. Her right was not his right: his food was her poison. Human creatures are constituted thus differently, and with this variety the marvellous world is peopled. To the credit of Mr. Pen, let it be said, that he kept honestly the promise made to his mother, and stoutly told his uncle of his intention to abide by it.

When the Major arrived, his presence somehow cast a damp upon at least three of the persons of our little party — upon Laura who had anything but respect for him; upon Warrington, whose manner towards him showed an involuntary

haughtiness and contempt; and upon the timid and alarmed widow, who dreaded lest he should interfere with her darling, though almost desperate, projects for her boy. And, indeed, the Major, unknown to himself, was the bearer of tidings which were to bring about a catastrophe in the affairs of all our friends.

Pen with his two ladies had apartments in the town of Rosenbad; honest Warrington had lodgings hard by; the Major, on arrival at Rosenbad, had, as befitted his dignity, taken his quarters at one of the great hotels, at the Roman Emperor or the Four Seasons, where two or three hundred gamblers, pleasure-seekers, or invalids, sate down and over-ate themselves daily at the enormous table-d'hôte. To this hotel Pen went on the morning after the Major's arrival, dutifully to pay his respects to his uncle, and found the latter's sitting-room duly prepared and arranged by Mr. Morgan, with the Major's hats brushed, and his coats laid out: his despatch-boxes and umbrella-cases, his guidebooks, passports, maps, and other elaborate necessities of the English traveller, all as trim and ready as they could be in their master's own room in Jermyn Street. Everything was ready, from the medicine-bottle fresh filled from the pharmacien's, down to the old fellow's prayer-book, without which he never travelled, for he made a point of appearing at the English church at every place which he honoured with a stay "Everybody did it," he said; "every English gentleman did it," and this pious man would as soon have thought of not calling upon the English ambassador in a Continental town, as of not showing himself at the national place of worship.

The old gentleman had been to take one of the baths for which Rosenbad is famous, and which everybody takes, and his after-bath toilet was not yet completed when Pen arrived. The elder called out to Arthur in a cheery voice from the inner apartment, in which he and Morgan were engaged, and the valet presently came in, bearing a little packet to Pen's address — Mr. Arthur's letters and papers, Morgan said, which he had brought from Mr. Arthur's chambers in London, and which consisted chiefly of numbers of the Pall Mall Gazette, which our friend Mr. Finucane thought his collaborateur would like to see. The papers were tied together: the letters in an envelope, addressed to Pen, in the last-named gentleman's handwriting.

Amongst the letters there was a little note addressed, as a former letter we have heard of had been, to "Arther Pendennis, Esquire," which Arthur opened with a start and a blush, and read with a very keen pang of interest, and sorrow, and regard. She had come to Arthur's house, Fanny Bolton said — and found that he was gone — gone away to Germany without ever leaving a word for her — or answer to her last letter, in which she prayed but for one word of kindness — or the books which he had promised her in happier times, before he was ill, and which she should like to keep in remembrance of him. She said she would not reproach those who had found her at his bedside when he was in the fever, and knew nobody, and who had turned the poor girl away without a word. She thought she should have died, she said, of that, but Doctor Goodenough had kindly tended her, and kept her life, when, perhaps, the keeping of it was of no good, and she forgave everybody and as for Arthur, she would pray for him for ever. And when he was so ill, and they cut off his hair, she had made so free as to keep one little lock for herself, and that she owned. And might she still keep it, or would his mamma order that that should be gave up too? She was willing to obey him in all things, and couldn't but remember that once he was so kind, oh! so good and kind! to his poor Fanny.

When Major Pendennis, fresh and smirking from his toilet, came out of his bedroom to his sitting-room, he found Arthur, with this note before him, and an expression of savage anger on his face, which surprised the elder gentleman. "What news from London, my boy?" he rather faintly asked; "are the duns at you that you look so glum?"

"Do you know anything about this letter, sir?" Arthur asked.

"What letter, my good sir?" said the other dryly, at once perceiving what had happened.

"You know what I mean — about, about Miss — about Fanny Bolton — the poor dear little girl," Arthur broke out. "When she was in my room? Was she there when I was delirious — I fancied she was — was she? Who sent her out of my chambers? who intercepted her letters to me? Who dared to do it? Did you do it, uncle?"

"It's not my practice to tamper with gentlemen's letters, or to answer damned impertinent questions," Major Pendennis cried out, in a great tremor of emotion and indignation. "There was a girl in your rooms when I came up at great personal inconvenience, daymy — and to meet with a return of this kind for my affection to you, is not pleasant, by Gad, sir — not at all pleasant."

"That's not the question, sir," Arthur said hotly — "and I beg your pardon, uncle. You were, you always have been, most kind to me: but I say again, did you say anything harsh to this poor girl? Did you send her away from me?"

"I never spoke a word to the girl," the uncle said, "and I never sent her away from you, and know no more about her, and wish to know no more about her, than about the man in the moon."

"Then it's my mother that did it," Arthur broke out. "Did my mother send that poor child away?"

"I repeat I know nothing about it, sir," the elder said testily. "Let's change the subject, if you please."

"I'll never forgive the person who did it," said Arthur, bouncing up and seizing his hat.

The Major cried out, "Stop, Arthur, for God's sake, stop;" but before he had uttered his sentence Arthur had rushed out of the room, and at the next minute the Major saw him striding rapidly down the street that led towards his home.

"Get breakfast!" said the old fellow to Morgan, and he wagged his head and sighed as he looked out of the window. "Poor Helen — poor soul! There'll be a row. I knew there would: and begad all the fat's in the fire."

When Pen reached home he only found Warrington in the ladies' drawing-room, waiting their arrival in order to conduct them to the room where the little English colony at Rosenbad held their Sunday church. Helen and Laura had not appeared as yet; the former was ailing, and her daughter was with her. Pen's wrath was so great that he could not defer expressing it. He flung Fanny's letter across the table to his friend. "Look there, Warrington," he said; "she tended me in my illness, she rescued me out of the jaws of death, and this is the way they have treated the dear little creature. They have kept her letters from me; they have treated me like a child, and her like a dog, poor thing! My mother has done this."

"If she has, you must remember it is your mother," Warrington interposed.

"It only makes the crime the greater, because it is she who has done it," Pen answered. "She ought to have been the poor girl's defender, not her enemy: she ought to go down on her knees and ask pardon of her. I ought! I will! I am shocked at the cruelty which has been shown her. What? She gave me her all, and this is her return! She sacrifices everything for me, and they spurn her."

"Hush!" said Warrington, "they can hear you from the next room."

"Hear? let them hear!" Pen cried out, only so much the louder. "Those may overhear my talk who intercept my letters. I say this poor girl has been shamefully used, and I will do my best to right her; I will."

The door of the neighbouring room opened, and Laura came forth with a pale and stern face. She looked at Pen with glances from which beamed pride, defiance, aversion. "Arthur, your mother is very ill," she said; "it is a pity that you should speak so loud as to disturb her."

"It is a pity that I should have been obliged to speak at all," Pen answered. "And I have more to say before I have done."

"I should think what you have to say will hardly be fit for me to hear," Laura said, haughtily.

"You are welcome to hear it or not, as you like," said Mr. Pen. "I shall go in now and speak to my mother."

Laura came rapidly forward, so that she should not be overheard by her friend within. "Not now, sir," she said to Pen. "You may kill her if you do. Your conduct has gone far enough to make her wretched."

"What conduct?" cried out Pen, in a fury. "Who dares impugn it? Who dares meddle with me? Is it you who are the instigator of this persecution?"

"I said before it was a subject of which it did not become me to hear or to speak," Laura said. "But as for mamma, if she had acted otherwise than she did with regard to — to the person about whom you seem to take such an interest, it would have been I that must have quitted your house, and not that — that person."

"By heavens! this is too much," Pen cried out, with a violent execration.

"Perhaps that is what you wished," Laura said, tossing her head up. "No more of this, if you please; I am not accustomed to hear such subjects spoken of in such language," and with a stately curtsey the young lady passed to her room, looking her adversary full in the face as she retreated and closed the door upon him.

Pen was bewildered with wonder, perplexity, fury, at this monstrous and unreasonable persecution. He burst out into a loud and bitter laugh as Laura quitted him, and with sneers and revilings, as a man who jeers under an operation, ridiculed at once his own pain and his persecutor's anger. The laugh, which was one of bitter humour, and no unmanly or unkindly expression of suffering under most cruel and unmerited torture, was heard in the next apartment, as some of his unlucky previous expressions had been, and, like them, entirely misinterpreted by the hearers. It struck like a dagger into the wounded and tender heart of Helen; it pierced Laura, and inflamed the high-spirited girl with scorn and anger. "And it

was to this hardened libertine," she thought — "to this boaster of low intrigues, that I had given my heart away." "He breaks the most sacred laws," thought Helen. "He prefers the creature of his passion to his own mother; and when he is upbraided, he laughs, and glories in his crime. 'She gave me her all,' I heard him say it," argued the poor widow, "and he boasts of it, and laughs, and breaks his mother's heart." The emotion, the shame, the grief, the mortification almost killed her. She felt she should die of his unkindness.

Warrington thought of Laura's speech — "Perhaps that is what you wished." "She loves Pen still," he said. "It was jealousy made her speak." — "Come away, Pen. Come away, and let us go to church and get calm. You must explain this matter to your mother. She does not appear to know the truth: nor do you quite, my good fellow. Come away, and let us talk about it." And again he muttered to himself, "'Perhaps that is what you wished.' Yes, she loves him. Why shouldn't she love him? Whom else would I have her love? What can she be to me but the dearest and the fairest and the best of women?"

So, leaving the women similarly engaged within, the two gentlemen walked away, each occupied with his own thought, and silent for a considerable space. "I must set this matter right," thought honest George "as she loves him still — I must set his mind right about the other woman." And with this charitable thought, the good fellow began to tell more at large what Bows had said to him regarding Miss Bolton's behaviour and fickleness, and he described how the girl was no better than a little light-minded flirt; and, perhaps, he exaggerated the good-humour and contentedness which he had himself, as he thought, witnessed in her behaviour in the scene with Mr. Huxter.

Now, all Bows's statements had been coloured by an insane jealousy and rage on that old man's part; and instead of allaying Pen's renascent desire to see his little conquest again, Warrington's accounts inflamed and angered Pendennis, and made him more anxious than before to set himself right, as he persisted in phrasing it, with Fanny. They arrived at the church door presently; but scarce one word of the service, and not a syllable of Mr. Shamble's sermon, did either of them comprehend, probably — so much was each engaged with his own private speculations. The Major came up to them after the service, with his well-brushed hat and wig, and his jauntiest, most cheerful air. He complimented them upon being seen at church; again he said that every *comme-il faut* person made a point of attending the English service abroad; and he walked back with the young men, prattling to them in garrulous good-humour, and making bows to his acquaintances as they passed; and thinking innocently that Pen and George were both highly delighted by his anecdotes, which they suffered to run on in a scornful and silent acquiescence.

At the time of Mr. Shamble's sermon (an erratic Anglican divine, hired for the season at places of English resort, and addicted to debts, drinking, and even to roulette, it was said), Pen, chafing under the persecution which his womankind inflicted upon him, had been meditating a great act of revolt and of justice, as he had worked himself up to believe; and Warrington on his part had been thinking that a crisis in his affairs had likewise come, and that it was necessary for him to break away from a connexion which every day made more and more wretched and dear to him. Yes, the time was come. He took those fatal words, "Perhaps that is what you wished," as a text for a gloomy homily, which he preached to himself, in the dark pew of his own heart, whilst Mr. Shamble was feebly giving utterance to his sermon.



CHAPTER LVIII

“FAIROAKS TO LET”

Our poor widow (with the assistance of her faithful Martha of Fair Oaks, who laughed and wondered at the German ways, and superintend the affairs of the simple household) had made a little feast in honour of Major Pendennis's arrival, of which, however, only the Major and his two younger friends partook, for Helen sent to say that she was too unwell to dine at their table, and Laura bore her company. The Major talked for the party, and did not perceive, or choose to perceive, what a gloom and silence pervaded the other two sharers of the modest dinner. It was evening before Helen and Laura came into the sitting-room to join the company there. She came in leaning on Laura, with her back to the waning light, so that Arthur could not see how pallid and woe-stricken her face was, and as she went up to Pen, whom she had not seen during the day, and placed her fond arms on his shoulders and kissed him tenderly, Laura left her, and moved away to another part of the room. Pen remarked that his mother's voice and her whole frame trembled, her hand was clammy cold as she put it up to his forehead, piteously embracing him. The spectacle of her misery only added, somehow, to the wrath and testiness of the young man. He scarcely returned the kiss which the suffering lady gave him: and the countenance with which he met the appeal of her look was hard and cruel. “She persecutes me,” he thought within himself, “and she comes to me with the air of a martyr!” “You look very ill, my child,” she said. “I don't like to see you look in that way.” And she tottered to a sofa, still holding one of his passive hands in her thin cold clinging fingers.

“I have had much to annoy me, mother,” Pen said, with a throbbing breast: and as he spoke Helen's heart began to beat so, that she sat almost dead and speechless with terror.

Warrington, Laura, and Major Pendennis, all remained breathless, aware that the storm was about to break.

“I have had letters from London,” Arthur continued, “and one that has given me more pain than I ever had in my life. It tells me that former letters of mine have been intercepted and purloined away from me; — that — that a young creature who has shown the greatest love and care for me, has been most cruelly used by — by you, mother.”

“For God's sake stop,” cried out Warrington. “She's ill — don't you see she is ill?”

“Let him go on,” said the widow, faintly.

“Let him go on and kill her,” said Laura, rushing up to her mother's side. “Speak on, sir, and see her die.”

“It is you who are cruel,” cried Pen, more exasperated and more savage, because his own heart, naturally soft and weak, revolted indignantly at the injustice of the very suffering which was laid at his door. “It is you that are cruel, who attribute all this pain to me: it is you who are cruel with your wicked reproaches, your wicked doubts of me, your wicked persecutions of those who love me — yes, those who love me, and who brave everything for me, and whom you despise and trample upon because they are of lower degree than you. Shall I tell you what I will do — what I am resolved to do, now that I know what your conduct has been? — I will go back to this poor girl whom you turned out of my doors, and ask her to come back and share my home with me. I'll defy the pride which persecutes her, and the pitiless suspicion which insults her and me.”

“Do you mean, Pen, that you —” here the widow, with eager eyes and outstretched hands, was breaking out, but Laura stopped her: “Silence, hush, dear mother,” she cried, and the widow hushed. Savagely as Pen spoke, she was only too eager to hear what more he had to say. “Go on, Arthur, go on, Arthur,” was all she said, almost swooning away as she spoke.

“By Gad, I say he shan't go on, or I won't hear him, by Gad,” the Major said, trembling too in his wrath. “If you choose, sir, after all we've done for you, after all I've done for you myself, to insult your mother and disgrace your name, by allying yourself with a low-born kitchen-girl, go and do it, by Gad — but let us, ma'am, have no more to do with him. I wash my hands of you, sir — I wash my hands of you. I'm an old fellow — I ain't long for this world. I come of as ancient and honourable a family as any in England, by Gad, and I did hope, before I went off the hooks, by Gad, that the fellow that I'd liked, and brought up, and nursed through life, by Jove, would do something to show me that our name — yes, the name of Pendennis, by Gad, was left undishonoured behind us, but if he won't, dammy, I say, amen. By G — both my father and my brother Jack were the proudest men in England, and I never would have thought that there would come this disgrace to my

name — never — and — and I'm ashamed that it's Arthur Pendennis." The old fellow's voice here broke off into a sob: it was the second time that Arthur had brought tears from those wrinkled lids.

The sound of his breaking voice stayed Pen's anger instantly, and he stopped pacing the room, as he had been doing until that moment. Laura was by Helen's sofa; and Warrington had remained hitherto an almost silent, but not uninterested spectator of the family storm. As the parties were talking, it had grown almost dark; and after the lull which succeeded the passionate outbreak of the Major, George's deep voice, as it here broke trembling into the twilight room, was heard with no small emotion by all.

"Will you let me tell you something about myself, my kind friends?" he said — "you have been so good to me, ma'am, you have been so kind to me, Laura — I hope I may call you so sometimes — my dear Pen and I have been such friends that I have long wanted to tell you my story such as it is, and would have told it to you earlier but that it is a sad one and contains another's secret. However, it may do good for Arthur to know it — it is that every one here should. It will divert you from thinking about a subject, which, out of a fatal misconception, has caused a great deal of pain to all of you. May I please tell you, Mrs. Pendennis?"

"Pray speak," was all Helen said; and indeed she was not much heeding; her mind was full of another idea with which Pen's words had supplied her, and she was in a terror of hope that what he had hinted might be as she wished.

George filled himself a bumper of wine and emptied it, and began to speak. "You all of you know how you see me," he said, "a man without a desire to make an advance in the world: careless about reputation; and living in a garret and from hand to mouth, though I have friends and a name, and I daresay capabilities of my own, that would serve me if I had a mind. But mind I have none. I shall die in that garret most likely, and alone. I nailed myself to that doom in early life. Shall I tell you what it was that interested me about Arthur years ago, and made me inclined towards him when first I saw him? The men from our college at Oxbridge brought up accounts of that early affair with the Chatteris actress, about whom Pen has talked to me since; and who, but for the Major's generalship, might have been your daughter-inlaw, ma'am. I can't see Pen in the dark, but he blushes, I'm sure; and I dare say Miss Bell does; and my friend Major Pendennis, I dare say, laughs as he ought to do — for he won. What would have been Arthur's lot now had he been tied at nineteen to an illiterate woman older than himself, with no qualities in common between them to make one a companion for the other, no equality, no confidence, and no love speedily? What could he have been but most miserable? And when he spoke just now and threatened a similar union, be sure it was but a threat occasioned by anger, which you must give me leave to say, ma'am, was very natural on his part, for after a generous and manly conduct — let me say who know the circumstances well — most generous and manly and self-denying (which is rare with him) — he has met from some friends of his with a most unkind suspicion, and has had to complain of the unfair treatment of another innocent person, towards whom he and you all are under much obligation."

The widow was going to get up here, and Warrington, seeing her attempt to rise, said, "Do I tire you, ma'am?"

"Oh no — go on — go on," said Helen, delighted, and he continued.

"I liked him, you see, because of that early history of his, which had come to my ears in college gossip, and because I like a man, if you will pardon me for saying so, Miss Laura, who shows that he can have a great unreasonable attachment for a woman. That was why we became friends — and are all friends here — for always, aren't we?" he added, in a lower voice, leaning over to her, "and Pen has been a great comfort and companion to a lonely and unfortunate man."

"I am not complaining of my lot, you see; for no man's is what he would have it; and up in my garret, where you left the flowers, and with my old books and my pipe for a wife, I am pretty contented, and only occasionally envy other men, whose careers in life are more brilliant, or who can solace their ill fortune by what Fate and my own fault has deprived me of — the affection of a woman or a child." Here there came a sigh from somewhere near Warrington in the dark, and a hand was held out in his direction, which, however, was instantly, withdrawn, for the prudery of our females is such, that before all expression of feeling, or natural kindness and regard, a woman is 'taught to think of herself and the proprieties, and to be ready to blush at the very slightest notice;' and checking, as, of course, it ought, this spontaneous motion, modesty drew up again, kindly friendship shrank back ashamed of itself, and Warrington resumed his history. "My fate is such as I made it, and not lucky for me or for others involved in it."

"I, too, had an adventure before I went to college; and there was no one to save me as Major Pendennis saved Pen. Pardon me, Miss Laura, if I tell this story before you. It is as well that you all of you should hear my confession. Before I

went to college, as a boy of eighteen, I was at a private tutor's, and there, like Arthur, I became attached, or fancied I was attached, to a woman of a much lower degree and a greater age than my own. You shrink from me ——”

“No, I don't,” Laura said, and here the hand went out resolutely, and laid itself in Warrington's. She had divined his story from some previous hints let fall by him, and his first words at its commencement.

“She was a yeoman's daughter in the neighbourhood,” Warrington said, with rather a faltering voice, “and I fancied — what all young men fancy. Her parents knew who my father was, and encouraged me, with all sorts of coarse artifices and scoundrel flatteries, which I see now, about their house. To do her justice, I own she never cared for me, but was forced into what happened by the threats and compulsion of her family. Would to God that I had not been deceived: but in these matters we are deceived because we wish to be so, and I thought I loved that poor woman.

“What could come of such a marriage? I found, before long, that I was married to a boor. She could not comprehend one subject that interested me. Her dulness palled upon me till I grew to loathe it. And after some time of a wretched, furtive union — I must tell you all — I found letters somewhere (and such letters they were!) which showed me that her heart, such as it was, had never been mine, but had always belonged to a person of her own degree.

“At my father's death, I paid what debts I had contracted at college, and settled every shilling which remained to me in an annuity upon — upon those who bore my name, on condition that they should hide themselves away, and not assume it. They have kept that condition, as they would break it, for more money. If I had earned fame or reputation, that woman would have come to claim it: if I had made a name for myself those who no right to it would have borne it; and I entered life at twenty, God help me — hopeless and ruined beyond remission. I was the boyish victim of vulgar cheats, and, perhaps, it is only of late I have found out how hard — ah, how hard — it is to forgive them. I told you the moral before, Pen; and now I have told you the fable. Beware how you marry out of your degree. I was made for a better lot than this, I think: but God has awarded me this one — and so, you see, it is for me to look on, and see others successful and others happy, with a heart that shall be as little bitter as possible.”

“By Gad, sir,” cried the Major, in high good-humour, “I intended you to marry Miss Laura here.”

“And, by Gad, Master Shallow, I owe you a thousand pound,” Warrington said.

“How d'ye mean a thousand? it was only a pony, sir,” replied the Major simply, at which the other laughed.

As for Helen, she was so delighted, that she started up, and said, “God bless you — God for ever bless you, Mr. Warrington;” and kissed both his hands, and ran up to Pen, and fell into his arms.

“Yes, dearest mother,” he said as he held her to him, and with a noble tenderness and emotion, embraced and forgave her. “I am innocent, and my dear, dear mother has done me a wrong.”

“Oh yes, my child, I have wronged you, thank God, I have wronged you!” Helen whispered. “Come away, Arthur — not here — I want to ask my child to forgive me — and — and my God, to forgive me; and to bless you, and love you, my son.”

He led her, tottering, into her room, and closed the door, as the three touched spectators of the reconciliation looked on in pleased silence. Ever after, ever after, the tender accents of that voice faltering sweetly at his ear — the look of the sacred eyes beaming with an affection unutterable — the quiver of the fond lips smiling mournfully — were remembered by the young man. And at his best moments, and at his hours of trial and grief, and at his times of success or well-doing, the mother's face looked down upon him, and blessed him with its gaze of pity and purity, as he saw it in that night when she yet lingered with him; and when she seemed, ere she quite left him, an angel, transfigured and glorified with love — for which love, as for the greatest of the bounties and wonders of God's provision for us, let us kneel and thank Our Father.

The moon had risen by this time; Arthur recollected well afterwards how it lighted up his mother's sweet pale face. Their talk, or his rather, for she scarcely could speak, was more tender and confidential than it had been for years before. He was the frank and generous boy of her early days and love. He told her the story, the mistake regarding which had caused her so much pain — his struggles to fly from temptation, and his thankfulness that he had been able to overcome it. He never would do the girl wrong, never; or wound his own honour or his mother's pure heart. The threat that he would return was uttered in a moment of exasperation, of which he repented. He never would see her again. But his mother said yes he should; and it was she who had been proud and culpable — and she would like to give Fanny Bolton something — and she begged her dear boy's pardon for opening the letter — and she would write to the young girl, if — if she had time. Poor thing! was it not natural that she should love her Arthur? And again she kissed him, and she blessed him.

As they were talking the clock struck nine, and Helen reminded him how, when he was a little boy, she used to go up to

his bedroom at that hour, and hear him say Our Father. And once more, oh, once more, the young man fell down at his mother's sacred knees, and sobbed out the prayer which the Divine Tenderness uttered for us, and which has been echoed by twenty ages since by millions of sinful and humbled men. And as he spoke the last words of the supplication, the mother's head fell down on her boy's, and her arms closed round him, and together they repeated the words "for ever and ever" and "Amen."

A little time after, it might have been a quarter of an hour, Laura heard Arthur's voice call from within, "Laura! Laura!" She rushed into the room instantly and found the young man still on his knees, and holding his mother's hand. Helen's head had sunk back and was quite pale in the room. Pen looked round, scared with a ghastly terror. "Help, Laura, help!" he said, "she's fainted — she's —"

Laura screamed, and fell by the side of Helen. The shriek brought Warrington and Major Pendennis and the servants to the room. The sainted woman was dead. The last emotion of her soul here was joy to be henceforth unchequered and eternal. The tender heart beat no more; it was to have no more pangs, no more doubts, no more griefs and trials. Its last throb was love; and Helen's last breath was a benediction.

The melancholy party bent their way speedily homewards, and Helen was laid by her husband's side at Clavering, in the old church where she had prayed so often. For a while Laura went to stay with Dr. Portman, who read the service over his dear departed sister, amidst his own sobs and those of the little congregation which assembled round Helen's tomb. There were not many who cared for her, or who spoke of her when gone. Scarcely more than of a nun in a cloister did people know of that pious and gentle lady. A few words among the cottagers whom her bounty was accustomed to relieve, a little talk from house to house at Clavering, where this lady told how their neighbour died of a complaint in the heart; whilst that speculated upon the amount of a property which the widow had left; and a third wondered whether Arthur would let Fair Oaks or live in it, and expected that he would not be long getting through his property — this was all, and except with one or two who cherished her, the kind soul was forgotten by the next market-day. Would you desire that grief for you should last for a few more weeks? and does after-life seem less solitary, provided that our names, when we "go down into silence," are echoing on this side of the grave yet for a little while, and human voices are still talking about us? She was gone, the pure soul, whom only two or three loved and knew. The great blank she left was in Laura's heart, to whom her love had been everything, and who had now but to worship her memory. "I am glad that she gave me her blessing before she went away," Warrington said to Pen; and as for Arthur, with a humble acknowledgment and wonder at so much affection, he hardly dared to ask of Heaven to make him worthy of it, though he felt that a saint there was interceding for him.

All the lady's affairs were found in perfect order, and her little property ready for transmission to her son, in trust for whom she held it. Papers in her desk showed that she had long been aware of the complaint, one of the heart, under which she laboured, and knew that it would suddenly remove her: and a prayer was found in her handwriting, asking that her end might be, as it was, in the arms of her son.

Laura and Arthur talked over her sayings, all of which the former most fondly remembered, to the young man's shame somewhat, who thought how much greater her love had been for Helen than his own. He referred himself entirely to Laura to know what Helen would have wished should be done; what poor persons she would have liked to relieve; what legacies or remembrances she would have wished to transmit. They packed up the vase which Helen in her gratitude had destined to Dr. Goodenough, and duly sent it to the kind Doctor; a silver coffee-pot, which she used, was sent off to Portman: a diamond ring, with her hair, was given with affectionate greeting to Warrington.

It must have been a hard day for poor Laura when she went over to Fair Oaks first and to the little room which she had occupied, and which was hers no more, and to the widow's own blank chamber in which those two had passed so many beloved hours. There, of course, were the clothes in the wardrobe, the cushion on which she prayed, the chair at the toilette: the glass that was no more to reflect her dear sad face. After she had been here a while Pen knocked and led her downstairs to the parlour again, and made her drink a little wine, and said, "God bless you," as she touched the glass. "Nothing shall ever be changed in your room," he said — "it is always your room — it is always my sister's room. Shall it not be so, Laura?" and Laura said, "Yes!"

Among the widow's papers was found a packet, marked by the widow, "Letters from Laura's father," and which Arthur gave to her. They were the letters which had passed between the cousins in the early days before the marriage of either of them. The ink was faded in which they were written: the tears dried out that both perhaps had shed over them: the grief

healed now whose bitterness they chronicled: the friends doubtless united whose parting on earth had caused to both pangs so cruel. And Laura learned fully now for the first time what the tie was which had bound her so tenderly to Helen: how faithfully her more than mother had cherished her father's memory, how truly she had loved him, how meekly resigned him.

One legacy of his mother's Pen remembered, of which Laura could have no cognisance. It was that wish of Helen's to make some present to Fanny Bolton; and Pen wrote to her, putting his letter under an envelope to Mr. Bows, and requesting that gentleman to read it before he delivered it to Fanny. "Dear Fanny," Pen said, "I have to acknowledge two letters from you, one of which was delayed in my illness" (Pen found the first letter in his mother's desk after her decease and the reading it gave him a strange pang), "and to thank you, my kind nurse and friend, who watched me so tenderly during my fever. And I have to tell you that the last words of my dear mother who is no more, were words of goodwill and gratitude to you for nursing me: and she said she would have written to you, had she had time — that she would like to ask your pardon if she had harshly treated you — and that she would beg you to show your forgiveness by accepting some token of friendship and regard from her." Pen concluded by saying that his friend, George Warrington, Esq., of Lamb Court, Temple, was trustee of a little sum of money, of which the interest would be paid to her until she became of age, or changed her name, which would always be affectionately remembered by her grateful friend, A. Pendennis. The sum was in truth but small, although enough to make a little heiress of Fanny Bolton, whose parents were appeased, and whose father said Mr. P. had acted quite as the gentleman — though Bows growled out that that to plaster a wounded heart with a banknote was an easy kind of sympathy; and poor Fanny felt only too clearly that Pen's letter was one of farewell.

"Sending hundred-pound notes to porters' daughters is all dev'lish well," old Major Pendennis said to his nephew (whom, as thee proprietor of Fair Oaks and the head of the family, he now treated with marked deference and civility), "and as there was a little ready money at the bank, and your poor mother wished it, there's perhaps no harm done. But, my good lad, I'd have you to remember that you've not above five hundred a year, though, thanks to me the world gives you credit for being a doosid deal better off; and, on my knees, I beg you, my boy, don't break into your capital: Stick to it, sir; don't speculate with it, sir; keep your land, and don't borrow on it. Tatham tells me that the Chatteris branch of the railway may — will almost certainly pass through Chatteris, and of it can be brought on this side of the Brawl, sir, and through your fields, they'll be worth a dev'lish deal of money, and your five hundred a year will jump up to eight or nine. Whatever it is, keep it, I implore you keep it. And I say, Pen, I think you should give up living in those dirty chambers in the Temple and let a decent lodging. And I should have a man, sir, to wait upon me; and a horse or two in town in the season. All this will pretty well swallow up your income, and I know you must live close. But remember you have a certain place in society, and you can't afford to cut a poor figure in the world. What are you going to do in the winter? You don't intend to stay down here, or, I suppose, to go on writing for that — what-d'ye-call-'em — that newspaper?"

"Warrington and I are going abroad again, sir, for a little, and then we shall see what is to be done," Arthur replied.

"And you'll let Fair Oaks, of course? Good school in the neighbourhood; cheap country: dev'lish nice place for East India Colonels, or families wanting to retire. I'll speak about it at the club; there are lots of fellows at the club want a place of that sort."

"I hope Laura will live in it for the winter, at least, and will make it her home," Arthur replied: at which the Major pish'd and psha'd, and said that there ought to be convents, begad, for English ladies, and wished that Miss Bell had not been there to interfere with the arrangements of the family, and that she would mope herself to death alone in that place.

Indeed, it would have been a very dismal abode for poor Laura, who was not too happy either in Dr. Portman's household, and in the town where too many things reminded her of the dear parent whom she had lost. But old Lady Rockminster, who adored her young friend Laura, as soon as she read in the paper of her loss, and of her presence in the country, rushed over from Baymouth, where the old lady was staying, and insisted that Laura should remain six months, twelve months, all her life with her; and to her ladyship's house, Martha from Fair Oaks, as *femme de chambre*, accompanied her young mistress.

Pen and Warrington saw her depart. It was difficult to say which of the young men seemed to regard her the most tenderly. "Your cousin is pert and rather vulgar, my dear, but he seems to have a good heart," little Lady Rockminster said, who said her say about everybody — "but I like Bluebeard best. Tell me, is he *touche au coeur*?"

"Mr. Warrington has been long — engaged," Laura said, dropping her eyes.

“Nonsense, child! And good heavens, my dear! that’s a pretty diamond cross. What do you mean by wearing it in the morning?”

“Arthur — my brother, gave it me just now. It was — it was ——”

She could not finish the sentence. The carriage passed over the bridge, and by the dear, dear gate of Fair Oaks — home no more.



CHAPTER LIX

OLD FRIENDS

It chanced at that great English festival, at which all London takes a holiday upon Epsom Downs, that a great number of the personages to whom we have been introduced in the course of this history, were assembled to see the Derby. In a comfortable open carriage, which had been brought to the ground by a pair of horses, might be seen Mrs. Bungay, of Paternoster Row, attired like Solomon in all his glory, and having by her side modest Mrs. Shandon, for whom, since the commencement of their acquaintance, the worthy publisher's lady had maintained a steady friendship. Bungay, having recreated himself with a copious luncheon, was madly shying at the sticks hard by, till the perspiration ran off his bald pate. Shandon was shambling about among the drinking tenants and gipsies: Finucane constant in attendance on the two ladies, to whom gentlemen of their acquaintance, and connected with the publishing house, came up to pay a visit.

Among others, Mr. Archer came up to make her his bow, and told Mrs. Bungay who was on the course. Yonder was the Prime Minister: his lordship had just told him to back Borax for the race; but Archer thought Munmeer the better horse. He pointed out countless dukes and grandees to the delighted Mrs. Bungay. "Look yonder in the Grand Stand," he said. "There sits the Chinese Ambassador with the Mandarins of his suite, Fou-choo-foo brought me over letters of introduction from the Governor-General of India, my most intimate friend, and I was for some time very kind to him, and he had his chopsticks laid for him at my table whenever he chose to come and dine. But he brought his own cook with him, and — would you believe it, Mrs. Bungay? — one day, when I was out, and the Ambassador was with Mrs. Archer in our garden eating gooseberries, of which the Chinese are passionately fond, the beast of a cook, seeing my wife's dear little Blenheim spaniel (that we had from the Duke of Marlborough himself, whose ancestor's life Mrs. Archer's great-great-grandfather saved at the battle of Malplaquet), seized upon the poor little devil, cut his throat, and skinned him, and served him up stuffed with forced-meat in the second course."

"Law!" said Mrs. Bungay.

"You may fancy my wife's agony when she knew what had happened! The cook came screaming upstairs, and told us that she had found poor Fido's skin in the area, just after we had all of us tasted of the dish! She never would speak to the Ambassador again — never; and, upon my word, he has never been to dine with us since. The Lord Mayor, who did me the honour to dine, liked the dish very much; and, eaten with green peas, it tastes rather like duck."

"You don't say so, now!" cried the astonished publisher's lady.

"Fact, upon my word. Look at that lady in blue, seated by the Ambassador: that is Lady Flamingo, and they say she is going to be married to him, and return to Peking with his Excellency. She is getting her feet squeezed down on purpose. But she'll only cripple herself, and will never be able to do it — never. My wife has the smallest foot in England, and wears shoes for a six-years-old child; but what is that to a Chinese lady's foot, Mrs. Bungay?"

"Who is that carriage as Mr. Pendennis is with, Mr. Archer?" Mrs. Bungay presently asked. "He and Mr. Warrington was here jist now. He's 'aughty in his manners, that Mr. Pendennis, and well he may be, for I'm told he keeps tip-top company. 'As he 'ad a large fortune left him, Mr. Archer? He's in black still, I see."

"Eighteen hundred a year in land, and twenty-two thousand five hundred in the Three-and-a-half per Cents; that's about it," said Mr. Archer.

"Law! why, you know everything, Mr. A.!" cried the lady of Paternoster Row.

"I happen to know, because I was called in about poor Mrs. Pendennis's will," Mr. Archer replied. "Pendennis's uncle, the Major, seldom does anything without me; and as he is likely to be extravagant we've tied up the property, so that he can't make ducks and drakes with it. — How do you do, my lord? — Do you know that gentleman, ladies? You have read his speeches in the House; it is Lord Rochester."

"Lord Fiddlestick," cried out Finucane, from the box. "Sure it's Tom Staples, of the Morning Advertiser, Archer."

"Is it?" Archer said, simply. "Well I'm very short-sighted, and upon my word I thought it was Rochester. That gentleman with the double opera-glass (another nod) is Lord John; and the tall man with him, don't you know him? is Sir James."

"You know 'em because you see 'em in the House," growled Finucane.

"I know them because they are kind enough to allow me to call them my most intimate friends," Archer continued. "Look at the Duke of Hampshire; what a pattern of a fine old English gentleman! He never misses 'the Derby.' 'Archer,' he said to me only yesterday, 'I have been at sixty-five Derbies! appeared on the field for the first time on a piebald pony when I was seven years old, with my father, the Prince of Wales, and Colonel Hanger; and only missing two races — one when I had the measles at Eton, and one in the Waterloo year, when I was with my friend Wellington in Flanders.'"

"And who is that yellow carriage, with the pink and yellow parasols, that Mr. Pendennis is talking to, and ever so many gentlemen?" asked Mrs. Bungay.

"That is Lady Clavering, of Clavering Park, next estate to my friend Pendennis. That is the young son and heir upon the box; he's awfully tipsy, the little scamp! and the young lady is Miss Amory, Lady Clavering's daughter by a first marriage, and uncommonly sweet upon my friend Pendennis; but I've reason to think he has his heart fixed elsewhere. You have heard of young Mr. Foker — the great brewer, Foker, you know — he was going to hang himself in consequence of a fatal passion for Miss Amory who refused him, but was cut down just in time by his valet, and is now abroad, under a keeper."

"How happy that young fellow is!" sighed Mrs. Bungay. "Who'd have thought when he came so quiet and demure to dine with us, three or four years ago, he would turn out such a grand character! Why, I saw his name at Court the other day, and presented by the Marquis of Steyne and all; and in every party of the nobility his name's down as sure as a gun."

"I introduced him a good deal when he first came up to town," Mr. Archer said, "and his uncle, Major Pendennis, did the rest. Hallo! There's Cobden here, of all men in the world! I must go and speak to him. Good-bye, Mrs. Bungay. Good morning, Mrs. Shandon."

An hour previous to this time, and at a different part of the course, there might have been seen an old stage-coach, on the battered roof of which a crowd of shabby raffs were stamping and hallooing, as the great event of the day — the Derby race — rushed over the greensward, and by the shouting millions of people assembled to view that magnificent scene. This was Wheeler's (the Harlequin's Head) drag, which had brought down a company of choice spirits from Bow Street, with a slap-up luncheon in the boot. As the whirling race flashed by, each of the choice spirits bellowed out the name of the horse or the colours which he thought or he hoped might be foremost. "The Cornet!" "It's Muffineer!" "It's blue sleeves!" "Yellow cap! yellow cap! yellow cap!" and so forth, yelled the gentlemen sportsmen during that delicious and thrilling minute before the contest was decided; and as the fluttering signal blew out, showing the number of the famous horse Podasokus as winner of the race, one of the gentlemen on the Harlequin's Head drag sprang up off the roof, as if he was a pigeon and about to fly away to London or York with the news.

But his elation did not lift him many inches from his standing-place, to which he came down again on the instant, causing the boards of the crazy old coach-roof to crack with the weight of his joy. "Hurray, hurray!" he bawled out, "Podasokus is the horse! Supper for ten, Wheeler, my boy. Ask you all round of course, and damn the expense."

And the gentlemen on the carriage, the shabby swaggerers, the dubious bucks, said, "Thank you — congratulate you, Colonel; sup with you with pleasure:" and whispered to one another, "The Colonel stands to win fifteen hundred, and he got the odds from a good man, too."

And each of the shabby bucks and dusky dandies began to eye his neighbour with suspicion, lest that neighbour, taking his advantage, should get the Colonel into a lonely place and borrow money of him. And the winner on Podasokus could not be alone during the whole of that afternoon, so closely did his friends watch him and each other.

At another part of the course you might have seen a vehicle certainly more modest, if not more shabby than that battered coach which had brought down the choice spirits from the Harlequin's Head; this was cab No. 2002, which had conveyed a gentleman and two ladies from the cabstand in the Strand: whereof one of the ladies, as she sate on the box of the cab enjoying with her mamma and their companion a repast of lobster salad and bitter ale, looked so fresh and pretty that many of the splendid young dandies who were strolling about the course, and enjoying themselves at the noble diversion of Sticks, and talking to the beautifully dressed ladies in the beautiful carriages, on the hill, forsook these fascinations to have a glance at the smiling and rosy-cheeked lass on the cab. The blushes of youth and good-humour mantled on the girl's cheeks, and played over that fair countenance like the pretty shining cloudlets on the serene sky overhead; the elder lady's cheek was red too; but that was a permanent mottled rose, deepening only as it received free draughts of pale ale and brandy-and-water, until her face emulated the rich shell of the lobster which she devoured.

The gentleman who escorted these two ladies was most active in attendance upon them: here on the course, as he had been during the previous journey. During the whole of that animated and delightful drive from London, his jokes had never ceased. He spoke up undauntedly to the most awful drags full of the biggest and most solemn guardsmen; as to the humblest donkey-chaise in which Bob the dustman was driving Molly to the race. He had fired astonishing volleys of what is called "chaff" into endless windows as he passed; into lines of grinning girls' schools; into little regiments of shouting urchins hurrying behind the railings of their Classical and Commercial Academies; into casements whence smiling maid-servants, and nurses tossing babies, or demure old maiden ladies with dissenting countenances, were looking. And the pretty girl in the straw bonnet with pink ribbon, and her mamma the devourer of lobsters, had both agreed that when he was in "spirits" there was nothing like that Mr. Sam. He had crammed the cab with trophies won from the bankrupt proprietors of the Sticks hard by, and with countless pincushions, wooden apples, backy-boxes, Jack-in-the-boxes, and little soldiers. He had brought up a gipsy with a tawny child in her arms to tell the fortunes of the ladies: and the only cloud which momentarily obscured the sunshine of that happy party, was when the teller of fate informed the young lady that had had reason to beware of a fair man, who was false to her: that she had had a bad illness, and that she would find that a man would prove true.

The girl looked very much abashed at this news: her mother and the young man interchanged signs of wonder and intelligence. Perhaps the conjurer had used the same words to a hundred different carriages on that day.

Making his way solitary amongst the crowd and the carriages, and noting, according to his wont, the various circumstances and characters which the animated scene presented, a young friend of ours came suddenly upon cab 2002, and the little group of persons assembled on the outside of the vehicle. As he caught sight of the young lady on the box, she started and turned pale: her mother became redder than ever: the heretofore gay and triumphant Mr. Sam immediately assumed a fierce and suspicious look, and his eyes turned savagely from Fanny Bolton (whom the reader, no doubt, has recognised in the young lady of the cab) to Arthur Pendennis, advancing to meet her.

Arthur, too, looked dark and suspicious on perceiving Mr. Samuel Huxter in company with his old acquaintances: his suspicion was that of alarmed morality, and, I dare say, highly creditable to Mr. Arthur: like the suspicion of Mrs. Lynx, when she sees Mr. Brown and Mrs. Jones talking together, or when she remarks Mrs. Lamb twice or thrice in a handsome opera-box. There may be no harm in the conversation of Mr. B. and Mr. J.: and Mrs. Lamb's opera-box (though she notoriously can't afford one) may be honestly come by: but yet a moralist like Mrs. Lynx has a right to the little precautionary fright: and Arthur was no doubt justified in adopting that severe demeanour of his.

Fanny's heart began to patter violently: Huxter's fists, plunged into the pockets of his paletot, clenched themselves involuntarily and armed themselves, as it were, in ambush: Mrs. Bolton began to talk with all her might, and with a wonderful volubility: and Lor! she was so 'apply to see Mr. Pendennis, and how well he was a-lookin', and we'd been talking' about Mr. P. only jest before; hadn't we, Fanny? and if this was the famous Epsom races that they talked so much about, she didn't care, for her part, if she never saw them again. And how was Major Pendennis, and that kind Mr. Warrington, who brought Mr. P.'s great kindness to Fanny? and she never would forget it, never: and Mr. Warrington was so tall, he almost broke his 'ead up against their lodge door. You recollect Mr. Warrington a-knocking' of his head — don't you, Fanny?

Whilst Mrs. Bolton was so discoursing, I wonder how many thousands of thoughts passed through Fanny's mind, and what dear times, sad struggles, lonely griefs, and subsequent shamefaced consolations were recalled to her? What pangs had the poor little thing, as she thought how much she had loved him, and that she loved him no more? There he stood, about whom she was going to die ten months since, dandified, supercilious, with a black crape to his white hat, and jet buttons in his shirt-front and a pink in his coat, that some one else had probably given him: with the tightest lavender-coloured gloves sewn with black and the smallest of canes. And Mr. Huxter wore no gloves, and great Blucher boots, and smelt very much of tobacco certainly; and looked, oh, it must be owned, he looked as if a bucket of water would do him a great deal of good! All these thoughts, and a myriad of others, rushed through Fanny's mind as her mamma was delivering herself of her speech, and as the girl, from under her eyes, surveyed Pendennis — surveyed him entirely from head to foot, the circle on his white forehead that his hat left when he lifted it (his beautiful, beautiful hair had grown again), the trinkets at his watch-chain, the ring on his hand under his glove, the neat shining boot, so, so unlike Sam's high-low! — and after her hand had given a little twittering pressure to the lavender-coloured kid grasp which was held out to it, and after her mother had delivered herself of her speech, all Fanny could find to say was, "This is Mr. Samuel Huxter whom you knew

formerly, I believe, sir; Mr. Samuel, you know you knew Mr. Pendennis formerly — and — and, will you take a little refreshment?”

These little words, tremulous and uncoloured as they were, yet were understood by Pendennis in such a manner as to take a great load of suspicion from off his mind — of remorse, perhaps, from his heart. The frown on the countenance of the Prince of Fair Oaks disappeared, and a good-natured smile and a knowing twinkle of the eyes illuminated his highness's countenance. “I am very thirsty,” he said, “and I will be glad to drink your health, Fanny; and I hope Mr. Huxter will pardon me for having been very rude to him the last time we met, and when I was so ill and out of spirits, that indeed I scarcely knew what I said.” And herewith the lavender-coloured Dexter kid-glove was handed out, in token of amity, to Huxter.

The dirty fist in the young surgeon's pocket was obliged to undoable itself, and come out of its ambush disarmed. The poor fellow himself felt, as he laid it in Pen's hand, how hot his own was, and how black — it left black marks on Pen's gloves; he saw them — he would have liked to have clenched it again and dashed it into the other's good-humoured face; and have seen, there upon that round, with Fanny, with all England looking on, which was the best man — he Sam Huxter of Bartholomew's, or that grinning dandy.

Pen with ineffable good-humour took a glass — he didn't mind what it was — he was content to drink after the ladies; and he filled it with frothing lukewarm beer, which he pronounced to be delicious, and which he drank cordially to the health of the party.

As he was drinking and talking on in an engaging manner, a young lady in a shot dove-coloured dress, with a white parasol lined with pink, and the prettiest dove-coloured boots that ever stepped, passed by Pen, leaning on the arm of a stalwart gentleman with a military moustache.

The young lady clenched her little fist, and gave a mischievous side-look as she passed Pen. He of the mustachios burst out into a jolly laugh. He had taken off his hat to the ladies of cab No. 2002. You should have seen Fanny Bolton's eyes watching after the dove-coloured young lady. Immediately Huxter perceived the direction which they took, they ceased looking after the dove-coloured nymph, and they turned and looked into Sam Huxter's orbs with the most artless good-humoured expression.

“What a beautiful creature!” Fanny said. “What a lovely dress! Did you remark, Mr. Sam, such little, little hands?”

“It was Captiving Strong,” said Mrs. Bolton: “and who was the young woman, I wonder?”

“A neighbour of mine in the country — Miss ‘Amory,’” Arthur said — “Lady Clavering's daughter. You've seen Sir Francis often in Shepherd's Inn, Mrs. Bolton.”

As he spoke, Fanny built up a perfect romance in three volumes love — faithlessness — splendid marriage at St. George's, Hanover Square — broken-hearted maid — and Sam Huxter was not the hero of that story — poor Sam, who by this time had got out an exceedingly rank Cuba cigar, and was smoking it under Fanny's little nose.

After that confounded prig Pendennis joined and left the party, the sun was less bright to Sam Huxter, the sky less blue — the Sticks had no attraction for him — the bitter beer hot and undrinkable — the world was changed. He had a quantity of peas and a tin pea-shooter in the pocket of the cab for amusement on the homeward route. He didn't take them out, and forgot their existence until some other wag, on their return from the races, fired a volley into Sam's sad face; upon which salute, after a few oaths indicative of surprise, he burst into a savage and sardonic laugh.

But Fanny was charming all the way home. She coaxed, and snuggled, and smiled. She laughed pretty laughs; she admired everything; she took out the darling little Jack-in-the-boxes, and was so obliged to Sam. And when they got home, and Mr. Huxter, still with darkness on his countenance, was taking a frigid leave of her — she burst into tears, and said he was a naughty unkind thing.

Upon which, with a burst of emotion almost as emphatic as hers, the young surgeon held the girl in his arms — swore that she was an angel, and that he was a jealous brute; owned that he was unworthy of her, and that he had no right to hate Pendennis; and asked her, implored her, to say once more that she —

That she what? — The end of the question and Fanny's answer were pronounced by lips that were so near each other, that no bystander could hear the words. Mrs. Bolton only said, “Come, come, Mr. H. — no nonsense, if you please; and I think you've acted like a wicked wretch, and been most uncommon cruel to Fanny, that I do.”

When Arthur left No. 2002, he went to pay his respects to the carriage to which, and to the side of her mamma, the

dove-coloured author of Mes Larmes had by this time returned. Indefatigable old Major Pendennis was in waiting upon Lady Clavering, and had occupied the back seat in her carriage; the box being in possession of young Hopeful, under the care of Captain Strong.

A number of dandies, and men of a certain fashion — of military bucks, of young rakes of the public offices, of those who may be styled men's men rather than ladies' — had come about the carriage during its station on the hill — and had exchanged a word or two with Lady Clavering, and a little talk (a little "chaff," some of the most elegant of the men styled their conversation) with Miss Amory. They had offered her sportive bets, and exchanged with her all sorts of free-talk and knowing innuendoes. They pointed out to her who was on the course: and the "who" was not always the person a young lady should know.

When Pen came up to Lady Clavering's carriage, he had to push his way through a crowd of these young bucks who were paying their court to Miss Amory, in order to arrive as near that young lady, who beckoned him by many pretty signals to her side.

"Je lay vue," she said; "Elle a de bien beaux yeux; vous etes un monster!"

"Why monster?" said Pen, with a laugh; "Hone suit qui mal y peens. My young friend, yonder, is as well protected as any young lady in Christendom. She has her mamma on one side, her pretend on the other. Could any harm happen to a girl between those two?"

"One does not know what may or may not arrive," said Miss Blanche, in French, "when a girl has the mind, and when she is pursued by a wicked monster like you. Figure to yourself, Major, that I come to find Monsieur, your nephew, near to a cab, by two ladies, and a man, oh, such a man! and who ate lobsters, and who laughed, who laughed!"

"It did not strike me that the man laughed," Pen said, "And as for lobsters, I thought he would have liked to eat me after the lobsters. He shook hands with me, and gripped me so, that he bruised my glove black-and-blue. He is a young surgeon. He comes from Clavering. Don't you remember the gilt pestle and mortar in High Street?"

"If he attends you when you are sick," continued Miss Amory, "he will kill you. He will serve you right; for you are a monster."

The perpetual recurrence to the word "monster" jarred upon Pen. "She speaks about these matters a great deal too lightly," he thought. "If I had been a monster, as she calls it, she would have received me just the same. This is not the way in which an English lady should speak or think. Laura would not speak in that way, thank God;" and as he thought so, his own countenance fell.

"Of what are you thinking? Are you going to boulder me at present?" Blanche asked. "Major, scold your mechant nephew. He does not amuse me at all. He is as bete as Captain Crackenbury."

"What are you saying about me, Miss Amory?" said the guardsman, with a grin. "If it's anything good, say it in English, for I don't understand French when it's spoke so devilish quick."

"It ain't anything good, Crack," said Crackenbury's fellow, Captain Clinker. "Let's come away, and don't spoil sport. They say Pendennis is sweet upon her."

"I'm told he's a devilish clever fellow," sighed Crackenbury. "Lady Violet Lebas says he's a devilish clever fellow. He wrote a work, or a poem, or something; and he writes those devilish clever things in the — in the papers, you know. Dammy, I wish I was a clever fellow, Clinker."

"That's past wishing for, Crack, my boy," the other said. "I can't write a good book, but I think I can make a pretty good one on the Derby. What a flat Clavering is! And the Begum! I like that old Begum. She's worth ten of her daughter. How pleased the old girl was at winning the lottery!"

"Clavering's safe to pay up, ain't he?" asked Captain Crackenbury.

"I hope so," said his friend; and they disappeared, to enjoy themselves among the Sticks.

Before the end of the day's amusements, many more gentlemen of Lady Clavering's acquaintance came up to her carriage, and chatted with the party which it contained. The worthy lady was in high spirits and good-humour, laughing and talking according to her wont, and offering refreshments to all her friends, until her ample baskets and bottles were emptied, and her servants and postillions were in such a royal state of excitement as servants and postillions commonly are upon the Derby day.

The Major remarked that some of the visitors to the carriage appeared to look with rather queer and meaning glances towards its owner. "How easily she takes it!" one man whispered to another. "The Begum's made of money," the friend replied. "How easily she takes what?" thought old Pendennis. "Has anybody lost any money?" Lady Clavering said she was happy in the morning because Sir Francis had promised her not to bet.

Mr. Welbore, the country neighbour of the Claverings, was passing the carriage, when he was called back by the Begum, who rallied him for wishing to cut her. "Why didn't he come before? Why didn't he come to lunch?" Her ladyship was in great delight, she told him — she told everybody, that she had won five pounds in a lottery. As she conveyed this piece of intelligence to him, Mr. Welbore looked so particularly knowing, and withal melancholy, that a dismal apprehension seized upon Major Pendennis. "He would go and look after the horses and those rascals of postillions, who were so long in coming round." When he came back to the carriage, his usually benign and smirking countenance was obscured by some sorrow. "What is the matter with you now?" the good-natured Begum asked. The Major pretended a headache from the fatigue and sunshine of the day. The carriage wheeled off the course and took its way Londonwards, not the least brilliant equipage in that vast and picturesque procession. The tipsy drivers dashed gallantly over the turf, amidst the admiration of foot-passengers, the ironical cheers of the little donkey-carriages and spring vans, and the loud objurgations of horse-and-chaise men, with whom the reckless post-boys came in contact. The jolly Begum looked the picture of good-humour as she reclined on her splendid cushions; the lovely Sylphide smiled with languid elegance. Many an honest holiday-maker with his family wadded into a tax-cart, many a cheap dandy working his way home on his weary hack, admired that brilliant turn-out, and thought, no doubt, how happy those "swells" must be. Strong sat on the box still, with a lordly voice calling to the post-boys and the crowd. Master Frank had been put inside of the carriage and was asleep there by the side of the Major, dozing away the effects of the constant luncheon and champagne of which he had freely partaken.

The Major was revolving in his mind meanwhile the news the receipt of which had made him so grave. "If Sir Francis Clavering goes on in this way," Pendennis the elder thought, "this little tipsy rascal will be as bankrupt as his father and grandfather before him. The Begum's fortune can't stand such drains upon it: no fortune can stand them: she has paid his debts half a dozen times already. A few years more of the turf, and a few coups like this, will ruin her."

"Don't you think we could get up races at Clavering, mamma?" Miss Amory asked. "Yes, we must have them there again. There were races there in the old times, the good old times. It's a national amusement, you know: and we could have a Clavering ball: and we might have dances for the tenantry, and rustic sports in the park — Oh, it would be charming."

"Capital fun," said mamma. "Wouldn't it, Major?"

"The turf is a very expensive amusement, my dear lady," Major Pendennis answered, with such a rueful face, that the Begum rallied him, and asked laughingly whether he had lost money on the race?

After a slumber of about an hour and a half, the heir of the house began to exhibit symptoms of wakefulness, stretching his youthful arms over the Major's face, and kicking his sister's knees as she sate opposite to him. When the amiable youth was quite restored to consciousness, he began a sprightly conversation.

"I say, Ma," he said, "I've gone and done it this time, I have."

"What have you gone and done, Franky dear?" asked Mamma.

"How much is seventeen half-crowns? Two pound and half-a crown, ain't it? I drew Borax in our lottery, but I bought Podasokus and Man-milliner of Leggat minor for two open tarts and a bottle of ginger-beer."

"You little wicked gambling creature, how dare you begin so soon?" cried Miss Amory.

"Hold your tongue, if you please. Who ever asked your leave, miss?" the brother said. "And I say, Ma —"

"Well, Franky dear?"

"You'll tip me all the same, you know, when I go back —" and here he broke out into a laugh. "I say, Ma, shall I tell you something?"

The Begum expressed her desire to hear this something, and her son and heir continued:

"When me and Strong was down at the grand stand after the race, and I was talking to Leggat minor, who was there with his governor, I saw Pa look as savage as a bear. And I say, Ma, Leggat minor told me that he heard his governor say that Pa had lost seven thousand backing the favourite. I'll never back the favourite when I'm of age. No, no — hang me if I do: leave me alone, Strong, will you?"

“Captain Strong! Captain Strong! is this true?” cried out the unfortunate Begum. “Has Sir Francis been betting again? He promised me he wouldn’t. He gave me his word of honour he wouldn’t.”

Strong, from his place on the box, had overheard the end of young Clavering’s communication, and was trying in vain to stop his unlucky tongue.

“I’m afraid it’s true, ma’am,” he said, turning round, “I deplore the loss as much as you can. He promised me as he promised you; but the play is too strong for him! he can’t refrain from it.”

Lady Clavering at this sad news burst into a fit of tears. She deplored her wretched fate as the most miserable of women, she declared she would separate, and pay no more debts for the ungrateful man. She narrated with tearful volubility a score of stories only too authentic, which showed how her husband had deceived, and how constantly she had befriended him: and in this melancholy condition, whilst young Hopeful was thinking about the two guineas which he himself had won; and the Major revolving, in his darkened mind, whether certain plans which he had been forming had better not be abandoned; the splendid carriage drove up at length to the Begum’s house in Grosvenor Place; the idlers and boys lingering about the place to witness, according to public wont, the close of the Derby Day, cheering the carriage as it drew up, and envying the happy folks who descended from it.

“And it’s for the son of this man that I am made a beggar!” Blanche said, quivering with anger, as she walked upstairs leaning on the Major’s arm — “for this cheat — for this blackleg — for this liar — for this robber of women.”

“Calm yourself, my dear Miss Blanche,” the old gentleman said; “I pray calm yourself. You have been hardly treated, most unjustly. But remember that you have always a friend in me, and trust to an old fellow who will try and serve you.”

And the young lady, and the heir of the hopeful house of Clavering, having retired to their beds, the remaining three of the Epsom party remained for some time in deep consultation.



CHAPTER LX

EXPLANATIONS

Almost a year, as the reader will perceive, has passed since an event described a few pages back. Arthur's black coat is about to be exchanged for a blue one. His person has undergone other more pleasing and remarkable changes. His wig has been laid aside, and his hair, though somewhat thinner, has returned to public view. And he has had the honour of appearing at Court in the uniform of a Cornet of the Clavering troop of the — shire Yeomanry Cavalry, being presented to the Sovereign by the Marquis of Steyne.

This was a measure strongly and pathetically urged by Arthur's uncle. The Major would not hear of a year passing before this ceremony of gentlemanhood was gone through. The old gentleman thought that his nephew should belong to some rather more select Club than the Megatherium; and has announced everywhere in the world his disappointment that the young man's property has turned out not by any means as well as he could have hoped, and is under fifteen hundred a year.

That is the amount at which Pendennis's property is set down in the world — where his publishers begin to respect him much more than formerly, and where even mammas are by no means uncivil to him. For if the pretty daughters are, naturally, to marry people of very different expectations — at any rate, he will be eligible for the plain ones: and if the brilliant and fascinating Myra is to hook an Earl, poor little Beatrice, who has one shoulder higher than the other, must hang on to some boor through life, and why should not Mr. Pendennis be her support? In the very first winter after the accession to his mother's fortune, Mrs. Hawxby in a country-house caused her Beatrice to learn billiards from Mr. Pendennis and would be driven by nobody but him in the pony carriage, because he was literary and her Beatrice was literary too, and declared that the young man, under the instigation of his horrid old uncle, had behaved most infamously in trifling with Beatrice's feelings. The truth is the old gentleman, who knew Mrs. Hawxby's character, and how desperately that lady would practise upon unwary young men, had come to the country-house in question and carried Arthur out of the danger of her immediate claws, though not out of the reach of her tongue. The elder Pendennis would have had his nephew pass a part of the Christmas at Clavering, whither the family had returned; but Arthur had not the heart for that. Clavering was too near poor old Fairoaks; and that was too full of sad recollections for the young man.

We have lost sight of the Claverings, too, until their reappearance upon the Epsom race-ground, and must give a brief account of them in the interval. During the past year, the world has not treated any member of the Clavering family very kindly; Lady Clavering, one of the best-natured women that ever enjoyed a good dinner, or made a slip in grammar, has had her appetite and good-nature sadly tried by constant family grievances, and disputes such as make the efforts of the best French cook unpalatable, and the most delicately-stuffed sofa-cushion hard to lie on. "I'd rather have a turnip, Strong, for dessert, than that pineapple, and all them Muscatel grapes, from Clavering," says poor Lady Clavering, looking at her dinner-table, and confiding her grief to her faithful friend, "if I could but have a little quiet to eat it with. Oh, how much happier I was when I was a widow and before all this money fell in to me!"

The Clavering family had indeed made a false start in life, and had got neither conduct, nor position, nor thanks for the hospitalities which they administered, nor a return of kindness from the people whom they entertained. The success of their first London season was doubtful; and their failure afterwards notorious. "Human patience was not great enough to put up with Sir Francis Clavering," people said. "He was too hopelessly low, dull, and disreputable. You could not say what, but there was a taint about the house and its entourages. Who was the Begum, with her money, and without her h's, and where did she come from? What an extraordinary little piece of conceit the daughter was, with her Gallicised graces and daring affectations, not fit for well-bred English girls to associate with! What strange people were those they assembled round about them! Sir Francis Clavering was a gambler, living notoriously in the society of blacklegs and profligates. Hely Clinker, who was in his regiment, said that he not only cheated at cards, but showed the white feather. What could Lady Rockminster have meant by taking her up? After the first season, indeed, Lady Rockminster, who had taken up Lady Clavering, put her down; the great ladies would not take their daughters to her parties; the young men who attended them behaved with the most odious freedom and scornful familiarity; and poor Lady Clavering herself avowed that she was obliged to take what she called 'the canal' into her parlour, because the tip-tops wouldn't come."

She had not the slightest ill-will towards “the canal,” the poor dear lady, or any pride about herself, or idea, that she was better than her neighbour; but she had taken implicitly the orders which on her entry into the world her social godmother had given her: she had been willing to know whom they knew, and ask whom they asked. The “canal,” in fact, was much pleasanter than what is called “society;” but, as we said before, that to leave a mistress is easy, while, on the contrary, to be left by her is cruel: so you may give up society without any great pang, or anything but a sensation of relief at the parting; but severe are the mortifications and pains you have if society gives up you.

One young man of fashion we have mentioned, who at least it might have been expected would have been found faithful amongst the faithless, and Harry Foker, Esq., was indeed that young man. But he had not managed matters with prudence, and the unhappy passion at first confided to Pen became notorious and ridiculous to the town, was carried to the ears of his weak and fond mother; and finally brought under the cognisance of the bald-headed and inflexible Foker senior.

When Mr. Foker learned this disagreeable news, there took place between him and his son a violent and painful scene, which ended in the poor little gentleman’s banishment from England for a year, with a positive order to return at the expiration of that time and complete his marriage with his cousin, or to retire into private life and three hundred a year altogether, and never see parent or brewery more. Mr. Henry Foker went away then, carrying with him that grief and care which passes free at the strictest Custom-houses, and which proverbially accompanies the exile; and with this crape over his eyes, even the Parisian Boulevard looked melancholy to him, and the sky of Italy black.

To Sir Francis Clavering, that year was a most unfortunate one. The events described in the last chapter came to complete the ruin of the year. It was that year of grace in which, as our sporting readers may remember, Lord Harrowhill’s horse (he was a classical young nobleman, and named his stud out of the Iliad)—when Podasokus won the Derby, to the dismay of the knowing ones, who pronounced the winning horse’s name in various extraordinary ways, and who backed Borax, who was nowhere in the race. Sir Francis Clavering, who was intimate with some of the most rascally characters of the turf, and, of course, had “valuable information,” had laid heavy odds against the winning horse, and backed the favourite freely, and the result of his dealings was, as his son correctly stated to poor Lady Clavering, a loss of seven thousand pounds.

Indeed, it was a cruel blow upon the lady, who had discharged her husband’s debts many times over; who had received as many times his oaths and promises of amendment; who had paid his money-lenders and horse-dealers; who had furnished his town and country houses, and who was called upon now instantly to meet this enormous sum, the penalty of her cowardly husband’s extravagance.

It has been described in former pages how the elder Pendennis had become the adviser of the Clavering family, and, in his quality of intimate friend of the house, had gone over every room of it, and even seen that ugly closet which we all of us have, and in which, according to the proverb, the family skeleton is locked up. About the Baronet’s pecuniary matters, if the Major did not know, it was because Clavering himself did not know them, and hid them from himself and others in such a hopeless entanglement of lies that it was impossible for adviser or attorney or principal to get an accurate knowledge of his affairs. But, concerning Lady Clavering, the Major was much better informed; and when the unlucky mishap of the Derby arose, he took upon himself to become completely and thoroughly acquainted with all her means, whatsoever they were; and was now accurately informed of the vast and repeated sacrifices which the widow Amory had made in behalf of her present husband.

He did not conceal — and he had won no small favour from Miss Blanche by avowing it — his opinion, that Lady Clavering’s daughter had been hardly treated at the expense of her son, by her second marriage: and in his conversations with Lady Clavering had fairly hinted that he thought Miss Blanche ought to have a better provision. We have said that he had already given the widow to understand that he knew all the particulars of her early and unfortunate history, having been in India at the time when — when the painful circumstances occurred which had ended in her parting from her first husband. He could tell her where to find the Calcutta newspaper which contained the account of Amory’s trial, and he showed, and the Begum was not a little grateful to him for his forbearance, how, being aware all along of this mishap which had befallen her, he had kept all knowledge of it to himself, and been constantly the friend of her family.

“Interested motives, my dear Lady Clavering,” he said, “of course I may have had. We all have interested motives, and mine, I don’t conceal from you, was to make a marriage between my nephew and your daughter.” To which Lady Clavering, perhaps with some surprise that the Major should choose her family for a union with his own, said she was quite willing to

consent.

But frankly he said, "My dear lady, my boy has but five hundred a year, and a wife with ten thousand pounds to her fortune would scarcely better him. We could do better for him than that, permit me to say, and he is a shrewd, cautious young fellow who has sown his wild oats now — who has very good parts and plenty of ambition — and whose object in marrying is to better himself. If you and Sir Francis chose — and Sir Francis, take my word for it, will refuse you nothing — you could put Arthur in a way to advance very considerably in the world, and show the stuff which he has in him. Of what use is that seat in Parliament to Clavering, who scarcely ever shows his face in the House, or speaks a word there? I'm told by gentlemen who heard my boy at Oxbridge, that he was famous as an orator, begad! — and once put his foot into the stirrup and mount him, I've no doubt he won't be the last of the field, ma'am. I've tested the chap, and know him pretty well, I think. He is much too lazy, and careless, and flighty a fellow, to make a jog-trot journey, and arrive, as your lawyers do, at the end of their lives! but give him a start and good friends, and an opportunity, and take my word for it, he'll make himself a name that his sons shall be proud of. I don't see any way for a fellow like him to parvenir, but by making a prudent marriage — not with a beggarly heiress — to sit down for life upon a miserable fifteen hundred a year — but with somebody whom he can help, and who can help him forward in the world, and whom he can give a good name and a station in the country, begad, in return for the advantages which she brings him. It would be better for you to have a distinguished son-in-law, than to keep your husband on in Parliament, who's of no good to himself or to anybody else there, and that's, I say, why I've been interested about you, and offer you what I think a good bargain for both."

"You know I look upon Arthur as one of the family almost now," said the good-natured Begum; "he comes and goes when he likes; and the more I think of his dear mother, the more I see there's few people so good — none so good to me. And I'm sure I cried when I heard of her death, and would have gone into mourning for her myself, only black don't become me. And I know who his mother wanted him to marry — Laura, I mean — whom old Lady Rockminster has taken such a fancy to, and, no wonder. She's a better girl than my girl. I know both. And my Betsy — Blanche, I mean — ain't been a comfort to me, Major. It's Laura Pen ought to marry."

"Marry on five hundred a year! My dear good soul, you are mad!" Major Pendennis said. "Think over what I have said to you. Do nothing in your affairs with that unhappy husband of yours without consulting me; and remember that old Pendennis is always your friend."

For some time previous, Pen's uncle had held similar language to Miss Amory. He had pointed out to her the convenience of the match which he had at heart, and was bound to say, that mutual convenience was of all things the very best in the world to marry upon — the only thing. "Look at your love-marriages, my dear young creature. The love-match people are the most notorious of all for quarrelling afterwards; and a girl who runs away with Jack to Gretna Green, constantly runs away with Tom to Switzerland afterwards. The great point in marriage is for people to agree to be useful to one another. The lady brings the means, and the gentleman avails himself of them. My boy's wife brings the horse, and begad Pen goes in and wins the plate. That's what I call a sensible union. A couple like that have something to talk to each other about when they come together. If you had Cupid himself to talk to — if Blanche and Pen were Cupid and Psyche, begad — they'd begin to yawn after a few evenings, if they had nothing but sentiment to speak on."

As for Miss Amory, she was contented enough with Pen as long as there was nobody better. And how many other young ladies are like her? — and how many love-marriages carry on well to the last? — and how sentimental firms do not finish in bankruptcy? — and how many heroic passions don't dwindle down into despicable indifference, or end in shameful defeat?

These views of life and philosophy the Major was constantly, according to his custom, inculcating to Pen, whose mind was such that he could see the right on both sides of many questions, and, comprehending the sentimental life which was quite out of the reach of the honest Major's intelligence, could understand the practical life too, and accommodate himself, or think he could accommodate himself, to it. So it came to pass that during the spring succeeding his mother's death he became a good deal under the influence of his uncle's advice, and domesticated in Lady Clavering's house; and in a measure was accepted by Miss Amory without being a suitor, and was received without being engaged. The young people were extremely familiar, without being particularly sentimental, and met and parted with each other in perfect good-humour. "And I," thought Pendennis, "am the fellow who eight years ago had a Grand passion, and last year was raging in a fever about Briseis!"

Yes, it was the same Pendennis, and time had brought to him, as to the rest of us, its ordinary consequences,

consolations, developments. We alter very little. When we talk of this man or that woman being no longer the same person whom we remember in youth, and remark (of course to deplore) changes in our friends, we don't, perhaps, calculate that circumstance only brings out the latent defect or quality, and does not create it. The selfish languor and indifference of today's possession is the consequence of the selfish ardour of yesterday's pursuit: the scorn and weariness which cries *vanitas vanitatum* is but the lassitude of the sick appetite palled with pleasure: the insolence of the successful parvenu is only the necessary continuance of the career of the needy struggler: our mental changes are like our grey hairs or our wrinkles — but the fulfilment of the plan of mortal growth and decay: that which is snow-white now was glossy black once; that which is sluggish obesity today was boisterous rosy health a few years back; that calm weariness, benevolent, resigned, and disappointed, was ambition, fierce and violent, but a few years since, and has only settled into submissive repose after many a battle and defeat. Lucky he who can bear his failure so generously, and give up his broken sword to Fate the Conqueror with a manly and humble heart! Are you not awestricken, you, friendly reader, who, taking the page up for a moment's light reading, lay it down, perchance, for a graver reflection — to think how you, who have consummated your success or your disaster, may be holding marked station, or a hopeless and nameless place, in the crowd — who have passed through how many struggles of defeat, success, crime, remorse, to yourself only known! — who may have loved and grown cold, wept and laughed again, how often! — to think how you are the same, You, whom in childhood you remember, before the voyage of life began? It has been prosperous, and you are riding into port, the people huzzaing and the guns saluting — and the lucky captain bows from the ship's side, and there is a care under the star on his breast which nobody knows of: or you are wrecked, and lashed, hopeless, to a solitary spar out at sea:— the sinking man and the successful one are thinking each about home, very likely, and remembering the time when they were children; alone on the hopeless spar, drowning out of sight; alone in the midst of the crowd applauding you.



CHAPTER LXI

CONVERSATIONS

Our good-natured Begum was at first so much enraged at this last instance of her husband's duplicity and folly, that she refused to give Sir Francis Clavering any aid in order to meet his debts of honour, and declared that she would separate from him, and leave him to the consequences of his incorrigible weakness and waste. After that fatal day's transactions at the Derby, the unlucky gambler was in such a condition of mind that he was disposed to avoid everybody; alike his turf-associates with whom he had made the debts which he trembled lest he should not have the means of paying, and his wife, his long-suffering banker, on whom he reasonably doubted whether he should be allowed any longer to draw. When Lady Clavering asked the next morning whether Sir Francis was in the house, she received answer that he had not returned that night, but had sent a messenger to his valet, ordering him to forward clothes and letters by the bearer. Strong knew that he should have a visit or a message from him in the course of that or the subsequent day, and accordingly got a note beseeching him to call upon his distracted friend F. C. at Short Hotel, Blackfriars, and ask for Mr. Francis there. For the Baronet was a gentleman of that peculiarity of mind that he would rather tell a lie than not, and always began a contest with fortune by running away and hiding himself. The Boots of Mr. Short's establishment, who carried Clavering's message to Grosvenor Place, and brought back his carpet-bag, was instantly aware who was the owner of the bag, and he imparted his information to the footman who was laying the breakfast-table, who carried down the news to the servants'-hall, who took it to Mrs. Bonner, my lady's housekeeper and confidential maid, who carried it to my lady. And thus every single person in the Grosvenor Place establishment knew that Sir Francis was in hiding, under the name of Francis, at an inn in the Blackfriars Road. And Sir Francis's coachman told the news to other gentlemen's coachmen, who carried it to their masters, and to the neighbouring Tattersall's, where very gloomy anticipations were formed that Sir Francis Clavering was about to make a tour in the Levant.

In the course of that day the number of letters addressed to Sir Francis Clavering, Bart., which found their way to his hall-table, was quite remarkable. The French cook sent in his account to my lady; the tradesmen who supplied her ladyship's table, and Messrs. Finer and Gimcrack, the mercers and ornamental dealers, and Madame Crinoline, the eminent milliner, also forwarded their little bills to her ladyship, in company with Miss Amory's private, and by no means inconsiderable, account at each establishment.

In the afternoon of the day after the Derby, when Strong (after a colloquy with his principal at Short's Hotel, whom he found crying and drinking Curacoa) called to transact business according to his custom at Grosvenor Place, he found all these suspicious documents ranged in the Baronet's study; and began to open them and examine them with a rueful countenance.

Mrs. Bonner, my lady's maid and housekeeper, came down upon him whilst engaged in this occupation. Mrs. Bonner, a part of the family and as necessary to her mistress as the Chevalier was to Sir Francis, was of course on Lady Clavering's side in the dispute between her and her husband, and as by duty bound even more angry than her ladyship herself.

"She won't pay, if she takes my advice," Mrs. Bonner said. "You'll please to go back to Sir Francis, Captain — and he lurking about in a low public-house and don't dare to face his wife like a man! — and say that we won't pay his debts no longer. We made a man of him, we took him out of gaol (and other folks too perhaps), we've paid his debts over and over again — we set him up in Parliament and gave him a house in town and country, and where he don't dare show his face, the shabby sneak! We've given him the horse he rides and the dinner he eats and the very clothes he has on his back; and we will give him no more. Our fortune, such as is left of it, is left to ourselves, and we won't waste any more of it on this ungrateful man. We'll give him enough to live upon and leave him, that's what we'll do: and that's what you may tell him from Susan Bonner."

Susan Bonner's mistress hearing of Strong's arrival sent for him at this juncture, and the Chevalier went up to her ladyship not without hopes that he should find her more tractable than her factotum Mrs. Bonner. Many a time before had he pleaded his client's cause with Lady Clavering and caused her good-nature to relent. He tried again once more. He painted in dismal colours the situation in which he had found Sir Francis: and would not answer for any consequences which might ensue if he could not find means of meeting his engagements.

"Kill hisself," laughed Mrs. Bonner, "kill hisself, will he? Dying's the best thing he could do." Strong vowed that he had found him with the razors on the table; but at this, in her turn, Lady Clavering laughed bitterly. "He'll do himself no harm, as long as there's a shilling left of which he can rob a poor woman. His life's quite safe, Captain: you may depend upon that. Ah! it was a bad day that ever I set eyes on him."

"He's worse than the first man," cried out my lady's aide-de-camp. "He was a man, he was — a wild devil, but he had the courage of a man — whereas this fellow — what's the use of my lady paying his bills, and selling her diamonds, and forgiving him? He'll be as bad again next year. The very next chance he has he'll be a-cheating of her, and robbing of her; and her money will go to keep a pack of rogues and swindlers — I don't mean you, Captain — you've been a good friend to us enough, bating we wish we'd never set eyes on you."

The Chevalier saw from the words which Mrs. Bonner had let slip regarding the diamonds, that the kind Begum was disposed to relent once more at least, and that there were hopes still for his principal.

"Upon my word, ma'am," he said, with a real feeling of sympathy for Lady Clavering's troubles, and admiration for her untiring good-nature, and with a show of enthusiasm which advanced not a little his graceless patron's cause — "anything you say against Clavering, or Mrs. Bonner here cries out against me, is no better than we deserve, both of us, and it was an unlucky day for you when you saw either. He has behaved cruelly to you and if you were not the most generous and forgiving woman in the world, I know there would be no chance for him. But you can't let the father of your son be a disgraced man, and send little Frank into the world with such a stain upon him. Tie him down; bind him by any promises you like: I vouch for him that he will subscribe them."

"And break 'em," said Mrs. Bonner.

"And keep 'em this time," cried out Strong. "He must keep them. If you could have seen how he wept, ma'am! 'Oh, Strong,' he said to me, 'it's not for myself I feel now: it's for my boy — it's for the best woman in England, whom I have treated basely — I know I have.' He didn't intend to bet upon this race, ma'am — indeed he didn't. He was cheated into it: all the ring was taken in. He thought he might make the bet quite safely, without the least risk. And it will be a lesson to him for all his life long. To see a man cry — oh, it's dreadful."

"He don't think much of making my dear missus cry," said Mrs. Bonner — "poor dear soul! — look if he does, Captain."

"If you've the soul of a man, Clavering," Strong said to his principal, when he recounted this scene to him, "you'll keep your promise this time: and, so help me Heaven! if you break word with her, I'll turn against you, and tell all."

"What all?" cried Mr. Francis, to whom his ambassador brought the news back at Short's Hotel, where Strong found the Baronet crying and drinking curacoa.

"Psha! Do you suppose I am a fool?" burst out Strong. "Do you suppose I could have lived so long in the world, Frank Clavering, without having my eyes about me? You know I have but to speak and you are a beggar tomorrow. And I am not the only man who knows your secret."

"Who else does?" gasped Clavering.

"Old Pendennis does, or I am very much mistaken. He recognised the man the first night he saw him, when he came drunk into your house."

"He knows it, does he?" shrieked out Clavering. "Damn him — kill him."

"You'd like to kill us all, wouldn't you, old boy?" said Strong, with a sneer, puffing his cigar.

The Baronet dashed his weak hand against his forehead; perhaps the other had interpreted his wish rightly. "Oh, Strong!" he cried, "if I dared, I'd put an end to myself, for I'm the d ——— est miserable dog in all England. It's that that makes me so wild and reckless. It's that which makes me take to drink" (and he drank, with a trembling hand, a bumper of his fortifier — the curacoa), "and to live about with these thieves. I know they're thieves, every one of 'em, d — d thieves. And — and how can I help it? — and I didn't know it, you know — and, by Gad, I'm innocent — and until I saw the d — d scoundrel first, I knew no more about it than the dead — and I'll fly, and I'll go abroad out of the reach of the confounded hells, and I'll bury myself in a forest, by Gad! and hang myself up to a tree — and, oh — I'm the most miserable beggar in all England!" And so with more tears, shrieks, and curses, the impotent wretch vented his grief and deplored his unhappy fate; and, in the midst of groans and despair and blasphemy, vowed his miserable repentance.

The honoured proverb which declares that to be an ill wind which blows good to nobody, was verified in the case of Sir Francis Clavering, and another of the occupants of Mr. Strong's chambers in Shepherd's Inn. The man was "good," by a lucky hap, with whom Colonel Altamont made his bet; and on the settling day of the Derby — as Captain Clinker, who was appointed to settle Sir Francis Clavering's book for him (for Lady Clavering by the advice of Major Pendennis, would not allow the Baronet to liquidate his own money transactions), paid over the notes to the Baronet's many creditors — Colonel Altamont had the satisfaction of receiving the odds of thirty to one in fifties, which he had taken against the winning horse of the day.

Numbers of the Colonel's friends were present on the occasion to congratulate him on his luck — all Altamont's own set, and the gents who met in the private parlour of the convivial Wheeler, my host of the Harlequin's Head, came to witness their comrade's good fortune, and would have liked, with a generous sympathy for success, to share in it. "Now was the time," Tom Driver had suggested to the Colonel, "to have up the specie ship that was sunk in the Gulf of Mexico, with the three hundred and eighty thousand dollars on board, besides bars and doubloons." "The Tredyddlums were very low — to be bought for an old song — never was such an opportunity for buying shares," Mr. Keightley insinuated; and Jack Holt pressed forward his tobacco-smuggling scheme, the audacity of which pleased the Colonel more than any other of the speculations proposed to him. Then of the Harlequin's Head boys: there was Jack Rackstraw, who knew of a pair of horses which the Colonel must buy; Tom Fleet, whose satirical paper, *The Swell*, wanted but two hundred pounds of capital to be worth a thousand a year to any man — "with such a power and influence, Colonel, you rogue, and the entree of the green-rooms in London," Tom urged; whilst little Moss Abiams entreated the Colonel not to listen to these absurd fellows with their humbugging speculations, but to invest his money in some good bills which Moss could get for him, and which would return him fifty per cent as safe as the Bank of England.

Each and all of these worthies came round the Colonel with their various blandishments; but he had courage enough to resist them, and to button up his notes in the pocket of his coat, and go home to Strong, and "sport" the outer door of the chambers. Honest Strong had given his fellow-lodger good advice about all his acquaintances; and though, when pressed, he did not mind frankly taking twenty pounds himself out of the Colonel's winnings, Strong was a great deal too upright to let others cheat him.

He was not a bad fellow when in good fortune, this Altamont. He ordered a smart livery for Grady, and made poor old Costigan shed tears of quickly dried gratitude by giving him a five-pound note after a snug dinner at the Back Kitchen, and he bought a green shawl for Mrs. Bolton, and a yellow one for Fanny: the most brilliant "sacrifices" of a Regent Street haberdasher's window. And a short time after this, upon her birthday, which happened in the month of June, Miss Amory received from "a friend" a parcel containing an enormous brass inlaid writing-desk, in which there was a set of amethysts, the most hideous eyes ever looked upon — a musical snuff-box, and two Keepsakes of the year before last, and accompanied with a couple of gown pieces of the most astounding colours, the receipt of which goods made the Sylphide laugh and wonder immoderately. Now it is a fact that Colonel Altamont had made a purchase of cigars and French silks from some duffers in Fleet Street about this period; and he was found by Strong in the open Auction Room in Cheapside, having invested some money in two desks, several pairs of richly-plated candlesticks, a dinner epergne, and a bagatelle-board. The dinner epergne remained at chambers, and figured at the banquets there, which the Colonel gave pretty freely. It seemed beautiful in his eyes, until Jack Holt said it looked as if it had been taken "in a bill." And Jack Holt certainly knew.

The dinners were pretty frequent at chambers, and Sir Francis Clavering condescended to partake of them constantly. His own house was shut up: the successor of Mirobolant, who had sent in his bills so prematurely, was dismissed by the indignant Lady Clavering: the luxuriance of the establishment was greatly pruned and reduced. One of the large footmen was cashiered, upon which the other gave warning, not liking to serve without his mate, or in a family where on'y one footman was kep'. General and severe economical reforms were practised by the Begum in her whole household, in consequence of the extravagance of which her graceless husband had been guilty. The Major, as her ladyship's friend; Strong, on the part of poor Clavering; her ladyship's lawyer, and the honest Begum herself, executed these reforms with promptitude and severity. After paying the Baronet's debts, the settlement of which occasioned considerable public scandal, and caused the Baronet to sink even lower in the world's estimation than he had been before, Lady Clavering quitted London for Tunbridge Wells in high dudgeon, refusing to see her reprobate husband, whom nobody pitied. Clavering remained in London patiently, by no means anxious to meet his wife's just indignation, and sneaked in and out

of the House of Commons, whence he and Captain Raff and Mr. Marker would go to have a game at billiards and a cigar or showed in the sporting public-houses; or might be seen lurking about Lincoln's Inn and his lawyers', where the principals kept him for hours waiting, and the clerks winked at each other, as he sate in their office. No wonder that he relished the dinners at Shepherd's Inn, and was perfectly resigned there: resigned? he was so happy nowhere else; he was wretched amongst his equals, who scorned him — but here he was the chief guest at the table, where they continually addressed him with "Yes, Sir Francis" and "No, Sir Francis," where he told his wretched jokes, and where he quavered his dreary little French song, after Strong had sung his Jovial chorus, and honest Costigan had piped his Irish ditties. Such a jolly menage as Strong's, with Grady's Irish-stew, and the Chevalier's brew of punch after dinner, would have been welcome to many a better man than Clavering, the solitude of whose great house at home frightened him, where he was attended only by the old woman who kept the house, and his valet who sneered at him.

"Yes, dammit," said he to his friends in Shepherd's Inn, "that fellow of mine, I must turn him away, only I owe him two years' wages, curse him, and can't ask my lady. He brings me my tea cold of a morning, with a dem'd leaden teaspoon, and he says my lady's sent all the plate to the banker's because it ain't safe. — Now ain't it hard that she won't trust me with a single teaspoon; ain't it ungentlemanlike, Altamont? You know my lady's of low birth — that is — I beg your pardon — hem — that is, it's most cruel of her not to show more confidence in me. And the very servants begin to laugh — the damn scoundrels! I break every bone in their great hulking bodies, curse 'em, I will. — They don't answer my bell: and — and my man was at Vauxhall last night with one of my dress-shirts and my velvet waistcoat on, I know it was mine — the confounded impudent blackguard — and he went on dancing before my eyes confound him! I'm sure he'll live to be hanged — he deserves to be hanged — all those infernal rascals of valets."

He was very kind to Altamont now: he listened to the Colonel's loud stories when Altamont described how — when he was working his way home once from New Zealand, where he had been on a whaling expedition — he and his comrades had been obliged to slink on board at night, to escape from their wives, by Jove — and how the poor devils put out in their canoes when they saw the ship under sail, and paddled madly after her: how he had been lost in the bush once for three months in New South Wales, when he was there once on a trading speculation: how he had seen Boney at Saint Helena, and been presented to him with the rest of the officers of the Indiaman of which he was a mate — to all these tales (and over his cups Altamont told many of them; and, it must be owned, lied and bragged a great deal) Sir Francis now listened with great attention; making a point of drinking wine with Altamont at dinner and of treating him with every distinction.

"Leave him alone, I know what he's a-coming to," Altamont said, laughing to Strong, who remonstrated with him, "and leave me alone; I know what I'm a-telling, very well. I was officer on board an Indiaman, so I was; I traded to New South Wales, so I did, in a ship of my own, and lost her. I became officer to the Nawaub, so I did; only me and my royal master have had a difference, Strong — that's it. Who's the better or the worse for what I tell? or knows anything about me? The other chap is dead — shot in the bush, and his body reckonised at Sydney. If I thought anybody would split, do you think I wouldn't wring his neck? I've done as good before now, Strong — I told you how I did for the overseer before I took leave — but in fair fight, I mean — in fair fight; or, rayther, he had the best of it. He had his gun and bay'net, and I had only an axe. Fifty of 'em saw it — ay, and cheered me when I did it — and I'd do it again — him, wouldn't I? I ain't afraid of anybody; and I'd have the life of the man who split upon me. That's my maxim, and pass me the liquor. — You wouldn't turn on a man. I know you. You're an honest feller, and will stand by a feller, and have looked death in the face like a man. But as for that lily-livered sneak — that poor lyin' swindlin' cringin' cur of a Clavering — who stands in my shoes — stands in my shoes, hang him! I'll make him pull my boots off and clean 'em, I will. Ha, ha!" Here he burst out into a wild laugh, at which Strong got up and put away the brandy-bottle. The other still laughed good-humouredly. "You're right, old boy," he said; "you always keep your head cool, you do — and when I begin to talk too much — I say, when I begin to pitch, I authorise you, and order you, and command you, to put away the rum-bottle."

"Take my counsel, Altamont," Strong said, gravely, "and mind how you deal with that man. Don't make it too much his interest to get rid of you; or who knows what he may do?"

The event for which, with cynical enjoyment, Altamont had been on the look-out, came very speedily. One day, Strong being absent upon an errand for his principal, Sir Francis made his appearance in the chambers, and found the envoy of the Nawaub alone. He abused the world in general for being heartless and unkind to him: he abused his wife for being ungenerous to him; he abused Strong for being ungrateful — hundreds of pounds had he given Ned Strong — been his friend for life and kept him out of gaol, by Jove — and now Ned was taking her ladyship's side against him and abetting her

in her infernal unkind treatment of him. "They've entered into a conspiracy to keep me penniless, Altamont," the Baronet said: "they don't give me as much pocket money as Frank has at school,"

"Why don't you go down to Richmond and borrow of him, Clavering?" Altamont broke out with a savage laugh. "He wouldn't see his poor old beggar of a father without pocket-money, would he?"

"I tell you, I've been obliged to humiliate myself cruelly" Clavering said. "Look here, sir — look here, at these pawn-tickets! Fancy a Member of Parliament and an old English Baronet, by Gad! obliged to put a drawing-room clock and a buhl inkstand up the spout; and a gold duck's-head paper-holder, that I dare say cost my wife five pound, for which they'd only give me fifteen-and-six! Oh, it's a humiliating thing, sir, poverty to a man of my habits; and it's made me shed tears, sir — tears; and that d — d valet of mine — curse him, I wish he was hanged! — he had the confounded impudence to threaten to tell my lady: as the things in my own house weren't my own, to sell or to keep, or fling out of window if I chose — by Gad! the confounded scoundrel.

"Cry a little; don't mind cryin' before me — it'll relieve you Clavering," the other said. "Why, I say, old feller, what a happy feller I once thought you, and what a miserable son of a gun you really are!"

"It's a shame that they treat me so, ain't it?" Clavering went on — for, though ordinarily silent and apathetic, about his own griefs the Baronet could whine for an hour at a time. "And — and, by Gad, sir, I haven't got the money to pay the very cab that's waiting for me at the door; and the portress, that Mrs. Bolton, lent me three shillin's, and I don't like to ask her for any more: and I asked that d — d old Costigan, the confounded old penniless Irish miscreant, and he hadn't got a shillin', the beggar; and Campion's out of town, or else he'd do a little bill for me, I know he would."

"I thought you swore on your honour to your wife that you wouldn't put your name to paper," said Mr. Altamont, puffing at his cigar.

"Why does she leave me without pocket-money, then? Damme, I must have money," cried out the Baronet. "Oh, Am — oh, Altamont, I'm the most miserable beggar alive."

"You'd like a chap to lend you a twenty-pound note, wouldn't you now?" the other asked.

"If you would, I'd be grateful to you for ever — for ever, my dearest friend," cried Clavering.

"How much would you give? Will you give a fifty-pound bill, at six months, for half down and half in plate?" asked Altamont.

"Yes, I would, so help me — — and pay it on the day," screamed Clavering. "I'll make it payable at my banker's: I'll do anything you like."

"Well, I was only chaffing you. I'll give you twenty pound."

"You said a pony," interposed Clavering; "my dear fellow, you said a pony, and I'll be eternally obliged to you; and I'll not take it as a gift — only as a loan, and pay you back in six months. I take my oath, I will."

"Well — well — there's the money, Sir Francis Clavering. I ain't a bad fellow. When I've money in my pocket, dammy, I spend it like a man. Here's five-and-twenty for you. Don't be losing it at the hells now. Don't be making a fool of yourself. Go down to Clavering Park, and it'll keep you ever so long. You needn't 'ave butchers' meat: there's pigs, I dare say, on the premises: and you can shoot rabbits for dinner, you know, every day till the game comes in. Besides, the neighbours will ask you about to dinner, you know, sometimes: for you are a Baronet, though you have outrun the constable. And you've got this comfort, that I'm off your shoulders for a good bit to come — p'raps this two years — if I don't play; and I don't intend to touch the confounded black and red: and by that time my lady, as you call her — Jimmy, I used to say — will have come round again; and you'll be ready for me, you know, and come down handsomely to yours truly."

At this juncture of their conversation Strong returned, nor did the Baronet care much about prolonging the talk, having got the money: and he made his way from Shepherd's Inn, and went home and bullied his servant in a manner so unusually brisk and insolent that the man concluded his master must have pawned some more of the house furniture, or, at any rate, have come into possession of some ready money.

"And yet I've looked over the house, Morgan, and I don't thin he has took any more of the things," Sir Francis's valet said to Major Pendennis's man, as they met at their Club soon after. "My lady locked up a'most all the bejewels afore she went away, and he couldn't take away the picters and looking-glasses in a cab and he wouldn't spout the fenders and fire-irons — he

ain't so bad as that. But he's got money somehow. He's so dam'd imperent when he have. A few nights ago I sor him at Vauxhall, where I was a-polkin with Lady Hemly Babewood's gals — a very pleasant room that is, and an uncommon good lot in it, hall except the 'ousekeeper, and she's methodisticle — I was a-polkin — you're too old a cove to polk, Mr. Morgan — and 'ere's your 'ealth — and I 'appened to 'ave on some of Clavering's abberdashery, and he sor it too: and he didn't dare so much as speak a word."

"How about the house in St. John's Wood?" Mr. Morgan asked.

"Execution in it. — Sold up heverythin: ponies, and pianna, and brougham, and all. Mrs. Montague were hoff to Boulogne — non est inwentus, Mr. Morgan. It's my belief she put the execution in herself: and was tired of him."

"Play much?" asked Morgan.

"Not since the smash. When your Governor, and the lawyers, and my lady and him had that tremendous scene: he went down on his knees, my lady told Mrs. Bonner, as told me — and swear as he never more would touch a card or a dice, or put his name to a bit of paper; and my lady was a-goin' to give him the notes down to pay his liabilities after the race: only your Governor said (which he wrote it on a piece of paper, and passed it across the table to the lawyer and my lady) that some one else had better book up for him, for he'd have kep' some of the money. He's a sly old cove, your Gov'nor."

The expression of "old cove," thus flippantly applied by the younger gentleman to himself and his master, displeased Mr. Morgan exceedingly. On the first occasion, when Mr. Lightfoot used the obnoxious expression, his comrade's anger was only indicated by a silent frown; but on the second offence, Morgan, who was smoking his cigar elegantly, and holding it on the tip of his penknife, withdrew the cigar from his lips, and took his young friend to task.

"Don't call Major Pendennis an old cove, if you'll 'ave the goodness, Lightfoot, and don't call me an old cove, nether. Such words ain't used in society; and we have lived in the fust society, both at 'ome and foring. We've been intimate with the fust statesmen of Europe. When we go abroad we dine with Prince Metternitch and Louy Philip reg'lar. We go here to the best houses, the tip-tops, I tell you. We ride with Lord John and the noble Whycount at the edd of Foring Affairs. We dine with the Hearl of Burgrave, and are consulted by the Marquis of Steyne in everythink. We ought to know a thing or two, Mr. Lightfoot. You're a young man, I'm an old cove, as you say. We've both seen the world, and we both know that it ain't money, nor bein' a Baronet, nor 'avin' a town and country 'ouse, nor a paltry five or six thousand a year."

"It's ten, Mr. Morgan," cried Mr. Lightfoot, with great animation.

"It may have been, sir," Morgan said, with calm severity; "it may have been, Mr. Lightfoot, but it ain't six now, nor five, sir. It's been doosedly dipped and cut into, sir, by the confounded extravagance of your master, with his helbow shakin', and his bill discountin', and his cottage in the Regency Park, and his many wickednesses. He's a bad un, Mr. Lightfoot — a bad lot, sir, and that you know. And it ain't money, sir — not such money as that, at any rate, come from a Calcuttar attorney, and I dussay wrung out of the pore starving blacks — that will give a pusson position in society, as you know very well. We've no money, but we go everywhere; there's not a housekeeper's room, sir, in this town of any consiquince, where James Morgan ain't welcome. And it was me who got you into this Club, Lightfoot, as you very well know, though I am an old cove, and they would have blackballed you without me as sure as your name is Frederic."

"I know they would, Mr. Morgan," said the other, with much humility.

"Well, then, don't call me an old cove, sir. It ain't gentlemanlike, Frederic Lightfoot, which I knew you when you was a cab-boy, and when your father was in trouble, and got you the place you have now when the Frenchman went away. And if you think, sir, that because you're making up to Mrs. Bonner, who may have saved her two thousand pound — and I dare say she has in five-and-twenty years as she have lived confidential maid to Lady Clavering — yet, sir, you must remember who put you into that service; and who knows what you were before, sir, and it don't become you, Frederic Lightfoot, to call me an old cove."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Morgan — I can't do more than make an apology — will you have a glass, sir, and let me drink your 'ealth?"

"You know I don't take sperrits. Lightfoot," replied Morgan, appeased. "And so you and Mrs. Bonner is going to put up together, are you?"

"She's old, but two thousand pound's a good bit, you see, Mr Morgan. And we'll get the 'Clavering Arms' for a very little; and that'll be no bad thing when the railroad runs through Clavering. And when we are there, I hope you'll come and see us, Mr. Morgan."

"It's a stoopid place, and no society," said Mr. Morgan. "I know it well. In Mrs Pendennis's time we used to go down, reg'lar, and the hair refreshed me after the London racket."

"The railroad will improve Mr. Arthur's property," remarked Lightfoot. "What's about the figure of it, should you say, sir?"

"Under fifteen hundred, sir," answered Morgan; at which the other, who knew the extent of poor Arthur's acres, thrust his tongue in his cheek, but remained wisely silent.

"Is his man any good, Mr. Morgan?" Lightfoot resumed.

"Pidgeon ain't used to society as yet; but he's young and has good talents, and has read a good deal, and I dessay he will do very well," replied Morgan. "He wouldn't quite do for this kind of thing, Lightfoot, for he ain't seen the world yet."

When the pint of sherry for which Mr. Lightfoot called, upon Mr. Morgan's announcement that he eclined to drink spirits, had been discussed by the two gentlemen, who held the wine up to the light, and smacked their lips, and winked their eyes at it, and rallied the landlord as to the vintage, in the most approved manner of connoisseurs, Morgan's ruffled equanimity was quite restored, and he was prepared to treat his young friend with perfect good-humour.

"What d'you think about Miss Amory, Lightfoot — tell us in confidence, now — Do you think we should do well — you understand — if we make Miss A. into Mrs. A. P., comprehendy vous?"

"She and her Ma's always quarrellin'," said Mr. Lightfoot. "Bonner is more than a match for the old lady, and treats Sir Francis like that — like this year spill, which I fling into the grate. But she daren't say a word to Miss Amory. No more dare none of us. When a visitor comes in, she smiles and languishes, you'd think that butter wouldn't melt in her mouth: and the minute he is gone, very likely, she flares up like a little demon, and says things fit to send you wild. If Mr. Arthur comes, it's 'Do let's sing that there delightful Song!' or, 'Come and write me them pooty verses in this halbum!' and very likely she's been a-rilin' her mother, or sticking pins into her maid, a minute before. She do stick pins into her and pinch her. Mary Hann showed me one of her arms quite black and blue; and I recklect Mrs. Bonner, who's as jealous of me as a old cat, boxed her ears for showing me. And then you should see Miss at luncheon, when there's nobody but the family! She makes b'leave she never heats, and my! you should only jest see her. She has Mary Hann to bring her up plum-cakes and creams into her bedroom; and the cook's the only man in the house she's civil to. Bonner says, how, the second season in London, Mr. Soppington was a-goin' to propose for her, and actially came one day, and sor her fling a book into the fire, and scold her mother so, that he went down softly by the back droring-room door, which he came in by; and next thing we heard of him was, he was married to Miss Rider. Oh, she's a devil, that little Blanche, and that's my candig apinium, Mr. Morgan."

"Apinion, not apinium, Lightfoot, my good fellow," Mr. Morgan said, with parental kindness, and then asked of his own bosom with a sigh, why the deuce does my Governor want Master Arthur to marry such a girl as this? and the tete-a-tete of the two gentlemen was broken up by the entry of other gentlemen, members of the Club — when fashionable town-talk, politics, cribbage, and other amusements ensued, and the conversation became general.

The Gentleman's Club was held in the parlour of the Wheel of Fortune public-house, in a snug little by-lane, leading out of one of the great streets of Mayfair, and frequented by some of the most select gentlemen about town. Their masters' affairs, debts, intrigues, adventures; their ladies' good and bad qualities and quarrels with their husbands; all the family secrets were here discussed with perfect freedom and confidence, and here, when about to enter into a new situation, a gentleman was enabled to get every requisite information regarding the family of which he proposed to become a member. Liveries it may be imagined were excluded from this select precinct; and the powdered heads of the largest metropolitan footmen might bow down in vain entreating admission into the Gentleman's Club. These outcast giants in plush took their beer in an outer apartment of the Wheel of Fortune, and could no more get an entry into the Clubroom than a Pall Mall tradesman or a Lincoln's Inn attorney could get admission into Bays's or Spratt's. And it is because the conversation which we have permitted to overhear here, in some measure explains the characters and bearings of our story, that we have ventured to introduce the reader into a society so exclusive.



CHAPTER LXII

THE WAY OF THE WORLD

A short time after the piece of good fortune which befell Colonel Altamont at Epsom, that gentleman put into execution his projected foreign tour, and the chronicler of the polite world who goes down to London Bridge for the purpose of taking leave of the people of fashion who quit this country, announced that among the company on board the Soho to Antwerp last Saturday, were "Sir Robert, Lady, and the Misses Hodge; Mr. Serjeant Kewsy, and Mrs. and Miss Kewsy; Colonel Altamont, Major Cuddy, etc." The Colonel travelled in state, and as became a gentleman: he appeared in a rich travelling costume; he drank brandy-and-water freely during the passage, and was not sick, as some of the other passengers were; and he was attended by his body-servant; the faithful Irish legionary who had been for some time in waiting upon himself and Captain Strong in their chambers of Shepherd's Inn.

The Chevalier partook of a copious dinner at Blackwall with his departing friend the Colonel, and one or two others, who drank many healths to Altamont at that liberal gentleman's expense. "Strong, old boy," the Chevalier's worthy chum said, "if you want a little money, now's your time. I'm your man. You're a good feller, and have been a good feller to me, and a twenty-pound note, more or less, will make no odds to me," But Strong said, No, he didn't want any money; he was flush, quite flush — "that is, not flush enough to pay you back your last loan, Altamont, but quite able to carry on for some time to come," and so, with a not uncordial greeting between them, the two parted. Had the possession of money really made Altamont more honest and amiable than he had hitherto been, or only caused him to seem more amiable in Strong's eyes? Perhaps he really was better, and money improved him. Perhaps it was the beauty of wealth Strong saw and respected. But he argued within himself, "This poor devil, this unlucky outcast of a returned convict, is ten times as good a fellow as my friend Sir Francis Clavering, Bart. He has pluck and honesty in his way. He will stick to a friend, and face an enemy. The other never had courage to do either. And what is it that has put the poor devil under a cloud? He was only a little wild, and signed his father-in-law's name. Many a man has done worse, and come to no wrong, and holds his head up. Clavering does. No, he don't hold his head up: he never did in his best days." And Strong, perhaps, repented him of the falsehood which he had told to the free-handed Colonel, that he was not in want of money; but it was a falsehood on the side of honesty, and the Chevalier could not bring down his stomach to borrow a second time from his outlawed friend. Besides, he could get on. Clavering had promised him some: not that Clavering's promises were much to be believed, but the Chevalier was of a hopeful turn, and trusted in many chances of catching his patron, and waylaying some of those stray remittances and supplies, in the procuring of which for his principal lay Mr. Strong's chief business.

He had grumbled about Altamont's companionship in the Shepherd's Inn chambers; but he found those lodgings more glum now without his partner than with him. The solitary life was not agreeable to his social soul; and he had got into extravagant and luxurious habits, too, having a servant at his command to run his errands, to arrange his toilets, and to cook his meal. It was rather a grand and touching sight now to see the portly and handsome gentleman painting his own boots, and broiling his own mutton chop. It has been before stated that the Chevalier had a wife, a Spanish lady of Vittoria, who had gone back to her friends, after a few months' union with the Captain, whose head she broke with a dish. He began to think whether he should not go back and see his Juanita. The Chevalier was growing melancholy after the departure of his friend the Colonel; or, to use his own picturesque expression, was "down on his luck." These moments of depression and intervals of ill fortune occur constantly in the lives of heroes; Marius at Minturme, Charles Edward in the Highlands, Napoleon before Elba. What great man has not been called upon to face evil fortune?

From Clavering no supplies were to be had for some time, the five-and-twenty pounds or the "pony," which the exemplary Baronet had received from Mr. Altamont, had fled out of Clavering's keeping as swiftly as many previous ponies. He had been down the river with a choice party of sporting gents, who dodged the police and landed in Essex, where they put up Billy Bluck to fight Dick the cabman whom the Baronet backed, and who had it all his own way for thirteen rounds, when, by an unlucky blow in the windpipe, Billy killed him. "It's always my luck, Strong," Sir Francis said; "the betting was three to one on the cabman, and I thought myself as sure of thirty pound, as if I had it in my pocket. And dammy, I owe my man Lightfoot fourteen pound now which he's lent and paid for me: and he duns me — the confounded impudent blackguard: and I wish to Heaven I knew any way of getting a bill done, or of screwing a little out of my lady! I'll

give you half, Ned, upon my soul and honour, I'll give you half if you can get anybody to do us a little fifty."

But Ned said sternly that he had given his word of honour, as a gentleman, that he would be no party to any future bill transactions in which her husband might engage (who had given his word of honour too), and the Chevalier said that he, at least, would keep his word, and would black his own boots all his life rather than break his promise. And what is more, he vowed he would advise Lady Clavering that Sir Francis was about to break his faith towards her upon the very first hint which he could get that such was Clavering's intention.

Upon this information Sir Francis Clavering, according to his custom, cried and cursed very volubly. He spoke of death as his only resource. He besought and implored his dear Strong, his best friend, his dear old Ned, not to throw him over: and when he quitted his dearest Ned, as he went down the stairs of Shepherd's Inn, swore and blasphemed at Ned as the most infernal villain, and traitor, and blackguard, and coward under the sun, and wished Ned was in his grave, and in a worse place, only he would like the confounded ruffian to live, until Frank Clavering had had his revenge out of him.

In Strong's chambers the Baronet met a gentleman whose visits were now, as it has been shown, very frequent in Shepherd's Inn, Mr. Samuel Huxter, of Clavering. That young fellow, who had poached the walnuts in Clavering Park in his youth, and had seen the Baronet drive through the street at home with four horses, and prance up to church with powdered footmen, had an immense respect for his Member, and a prodigious delight in making his acquaintance. He introduced himself with much blushing and trepidation, as a Clavering man — son of Mr. Huxter, of the market-place — father attended Sir Francis's keeper, Coxwood, when his gun burst and took off three fingers — proud to make Sir Francis's acquaintance. All of which introduction Sir Francis received affably. And honest Huxter talked about Sir Francis to the chaps at Bartholomew's: and told Fanny, in the lodge, that, after all, there was nothing like a thoroughbred un, a regular good old English gentleman, one of the olden time! To which Fanny replied, that she thought Sir Francis was an ojou creature — she didn't know why — but she couldn't abear him — she was sure he was wicked, and low, and mean — she knew he was; and when Sam to this replied that Sir Francis was very affable, and had borrowed half a sov' of him quite kindly, Fanny burst into a laugh, pulled Sam's long hair (which was not yet of irreproachable cleanliness), patted his chin, and called him a stoopid, stoopid, old foolish stoopid, and said that Sir Francis was always borrhering money of everybody, and that Mar had actially refused him twice, and had had to wait three months to get seven shillings which he had borrowed of 'er.

"Don't say 'er but her, borrer but borrow, actially but actually, Fanny," Mr. Huxter replied — not to a fault in her argument, but to grammatical errors in her statement.

"Well then, her, and borrow, and hactually — there then, you stoopid," said the other; and the scholar made such a pretty face that the grammar master was quickly appeased, and would have willingly given her a hundred more lessons on the spot at the price which he took for that one.

Of course Mrs. Bolton was by, and I suppose that Fanny and Dr. Sam were on exceedingly familiar and confidential terms by this time, and that time had brought to the former certain consolations, and soothed certain regrets, which are deucedly bitter when they occur, but which are, no more than tooth-pulling, or any other pang, eternal.

As you sit, surrounded by respect and affection; happy, honoured, and flattered in your old age; your foibles gently indulged; your least words kindly cherished; your garrulous old stories received for the hundredth time with dutiful forbearance, and never-failing hypocritical smiles; the women of your house constant in their flatteries; the young men hushed and attentive when you begin to speak; the servants awestricken; the tenants cap in hand, and ready to act in the place of your worship's horses when your honour takes a drive — it has often struck you, O thoughtful Dives! that this respect, and these glories, are for the main part transferred, with your fee-simple, to your successor — that the servants will bow, and the tenants shout, for your son as for you; that the butler will fetch him the wine (improved by a little keeping) that's now in your cellar; and that, when your night is come, and the light of your life is gone down, as sure as the morning rises after you and without you, the sun of prosperity and flattery shines on your heir. Men come and bask in the halo of consols and acres that beams round about him: the reverence is transferred with the estate; of which, with all its advantages, pleasures, respect, and good-will, he in turn becomes the life-tenant. How long do you wish or expect that your people will regret you? How much time does a man devote to grief before he begins to enjoy? A great man must keep his heir at his feast like a living memento mori. If he holds very much by life, the presence of the other must be a constant sting and warning. "Make ready to go," says the successor to your honour; "I am waiting: and I could hold it as well as you."

What has this reference to the possible reader, to do with any of the characters of this history? Do we wish to apologise for Pen because he has got a white hat, and because his mourning for his mother is fainter? All the lapse of years, all the career of fortune, all the events of life, however strongly they may move or eagerly excite him, never can remove that sainted image from his heart, or banish that blessed love from its sanctuary. If he yields to wrong, the dear eyes will look sadly upon him when he dares to meet them; if he does well, endures pain, or conquers temptation, the ever present love will greet him, he knows, with approval and pity; if he falls, plead for him; if he suffers, cheer him; — be with him and accompany him always until death is past; and sorrow and sin are no more. Is this mere dreaming, or, on the part of an idle story-teller, useless moralising? May not the man of the world take his moment, too, to be grave and thoughtful? Ask of your own hearts and memories, brother and sister, if we do not live in the dead; and (to speak reverently) prove God by love?

Of these matters Pen and Warrington often spoke in many a solemn and friendly converse in after days; and Pendennis's mother was worshipped in his memory, and canonised there, as such a saint ought to be. Lucky he in life who knows a few such women! A kind provision of Heaven it was, that sent us such; and gave us to admire that touching and wonderful spectacle of innocence, and love, and beauty.

But as it is certain that if, in the course of these sentimental conversations, any outer stranger, Major Pendennis for instance, had walked into Pen's chambers, Arthur and Warrington would have stopped their talk, and chosen another subject, and discoursed about the Opera, or the last debate in Parliament, or Miss Jones's marriage with Captain Smith, or what not — so, let us imagine that the public steps in at this juncture, and stops the confidential talk between author and reader, and begs us to resume our remarks about this world, with which both are certainly better acquainted than with that other one into which we have just been peeping.

On coming into his property, Arthur Pendennis at first comported himself with a modesty and equanimity which obtained his friend Warrington's praises, though Arthur's uncle was a little inclined to quarrel with his nephew's meanness of spirit, for not assuming greater state and pretensions now that he had entered on the enjoyment of his kingdom. He would have had Arthur installed in handsome quarters, and riding on showy park hacks, or in well-built cabriolets, every day. "I am too absent," Arthur said, with a laugh, "to drive a cab in London; the omnibus would cut me in two, or I should send my horse's head into the ladies' carriage-windows; and you wouldn't have me driven about by my servant like an apothecary, uncle?" No, Major Pendennis would on no account have his nephew appear like an apothecary; the august representative of the house of Pendennis must not so demean himself. And when Arthur, pursuing his banter, said, "And yet, I dare say, sir, my father was proud enough when he first set up his gig," the old Major hemmed and ha'd, and his wrinkled face reddened with a blush as he answered, "You know what Buonaparte said, sir, 'Il faut laver son linge sale en famille.' There is no need, sir, for you to brag that your father was a — a medical man. He came of a most ancient but fallen house, and was obliged to reconstruct the family fortunes as many a man of good family has done before him. You are like the fellow in Sterne, sir — the Marquis who came to demand his sword again. Your father got back yours for you. You are a man of landed estate, by Gad, sir, and a gentleman — never forget you are a gentleman."

Then Arthur slyly turned on his uncle the argument which he had heard the old gentleman often use regarding himself. "In the society which I have the honour of frequenting through your introduction, who cares to ask about my paltry means or my humble gentility, uncle?" he asked. "It would be absurd of me to attempt to compete with the great folks; and all that they can ask from us is, that we should have a decent address and good manners."

"But for all that, sir, I should belong to a better Club or two," the uncle answered: "I should give an occasional dinner, and select my society well; and I should come out of that horrible garret in the Temple, sir." And so Arthur compromised by descending to the second floor in Lamb Court: Warrington still occupying his old quarters, and the two friends being determined not to part one from the other. Cultivate kindly, reader, those friendships of your youth: it is only in that generous time that they are formed. How different the intimacies of after days are, and how much weaker the grasp of your own hand after it has been shaken about in twenty years' commerce with the world, and has squeezed and dropped a thousand equally careless palms! As you can seldom fashion your tongue to speak a new language after twenty, the heart refuses to receive friendship pretty soon: it gets too hard to yield to the impression.

So Pen had many acquaintances, and being of a jovial and easy turn, got more daily: but no friend like Warrington; and the two men continued to live almost as much in common as the Knights of the Temple, riding upon one horse (for Pen's was at Warrington's service), and having their chambers and their servitor in common.

Mr. Warrington had made the acquaintance of Pen's friends of Grosvenor Place during their last unlucky season in London, and had expressed himself no better satisfied with Sir Francis and Lady Clavering and her ladyship's daughter than was the public in general. "The world is right," George said, "about those people. The young men laugh and talk freely before those ladies, and about them. The girl sees people whom she has no right to know, and talks to men with whom no girl should have an intimacy. Did you see those two reprobates leaning over Lady Clavering's carriage in the Park the other day, and leering under Miss Blanche's bonnet? No good mother would let her daughter know those men, or admit them within her doors."

"The Begum is the most innocent and good-natured soul alive," interposed Pen. "She never heard any harm of Captain Blackball, or read that trial in which Charley Lovelace figures. Do you suppose that honest ladies read and remember the *Chronique Scandaleuse* as well as you, you old grumbler?"

"Would you like Laura Bell to know those fellows?" Warrington asked, his face turning rather red. "Would you let any woman you loved be contaminated by their company? I have no doubt that the poor Begum is ignorant of their histories. It seems to me she is ignorant of a great number of better things. It seems to me that your honest Begum is not a lady, Pen. It is not her fault, doubtless, that she has not had the education, or learned the refinements of a lady."

"She is as moral as Lady Portsea, who has all the world at her balls, and as refined as Mrs. Bull, who breaks the King's English. and has half a dozen dukes at her table," Pen answered, rather sulkily. "Why should you and I be more squeamish than the rest of the world? Why are we to visit the sins of her father on this harmless kind creature? She never did anything but kindness to you or any mortal soul. As far as she knows she does her best. She does not set up to be more than she is. She gives you the best dinners she can buy, and the best company she can get. She pays the debts of that scamp of a husband of hers. She spoils her boy like the most virtuous mother in England. Her opinion about literary matters, to be sure, is not much; and I daresay she never read a line of Wordsworth, or heard of Tennyson in her life."

"No more has Mrs. Flanagan the laundress," growled out Pen's Mentor; "no more has Betty the housemaid; and I have no word of blame against them. But a high-souled man doesn't make friends of these. A gentleman doesn't choose these for his companions, or bitterly rues it afterwards if he do. Are you, who are setting up to be a man of the world and a philosopher, to tell me that the aim of life is to guttle three courses and dine off silver? Do you dare to own to yourself that your ambition in life is good claret, and that you'll dine with any, provided you get a stalled ox to feed on? You call me a Cynic — why, what a monstrous Cynicism it is, which you and the rest of you men of the world admit! I'd rather live upon raw turnips and sleep in a hollow tree, or turn backwoodsman or savage, than degrade myself to this civilisation, and own that a French cook was the thing in life best worth living for."

"Because you like a raw beefsteak and a pipe afterwards," broke out Pen, "you give yourself airs of superiority over people whose tastes are more dainty, and are not ashamed of the world they live in. Who goes about professing particular admiration, or esteem, or friendship, or gratitude even, for the people one meets every day? If A. asks me to his house, and gives me his best, I take his good things for what they are worth and no more. I do not profess to pay him back in friendship, but in the conventional money of society. When we part, we part without any grief. When we meet, we are tolerably glad to see one another. If I were only to live with my friends, your black muzzle, old George, is the only face I should see."

"You are your uncle's pupil," said Warrington, rather sadly; and you speak like a worldling."

"And why not?" asked Pendennis; "why not acknowledge the world I stand upon, and submit to the conditions of the society which we live in and live by? I am older than you, George, in spite of your grizzled whiskers, and have seen much more of the world than you have in your garret here, shut up with your books and your reveries and your ideas of one-and-twenty. I say, I take the world as it is, and being of it, will not be ashamed of it. If the time is out of joint, have I any calling or strength to set it right?"

"Indeed, I don't think you have much of either," growled Pen's interlocutor.

"If I doubt whether I am better than my neighbour," Arthur continued, "if I concede that I am no better — I also doubt whether he is better than I. I see men who begin with ideas of universal reform, and who, before their beards are grown, propound their loud plans for the regeneration of mankind, give up their schemes after a few years of bootless talking and vainglorious attempts to lead their fellows; and after they have found that men will no longer bear them, as indeed they never were in the least worthy to be heard, sink quietly into the ranks-and-file — acknowledging their aims impracticable,

or thankful that they were never put into practice. The fiercest reformers grow calm, and are faire to put up with things as they are: the loudest Radical orators become dumb, quiescent placemen: the most fervent Liberals when out of power, become humdrum Conservatives or downright tyrants or despots in office. Look at the Thiers, look at Guizot, in opposition and in place! Look at the Whigs appealing to the country, and the Whigs in power! Would you say that the conduct of these men is an act of treason, as the Radicals bawl — who would give way in their turn, were their turn ever to come? No, only that they submit to circumstances which are stronger than they — march as the world marches towards reform, but at the world's pace (and the movements of the vast body of mankind must needs be slow), forgo this scheme as impracticable, on account of opposition — that as immature, because against the sense of the majority — are forced to calculate drawbacks and difficulties, as well as to think of reforms and advances — and compelled finally to submit, and to wait, and to compromise.”

“The Right Honourable Arthur Pendennis could not speak better, or be more satisfied with himself, if he was First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer,” Warrington said.

“Self-satisfied? Why self-satisfied?” continued Pen. “It seems to me that my scepticism is more respectful and more modest than the revolutionary ardour of other folks. Many a patriot of eighteen, many a Spouting-Club orator, would turn the Bishops out of the House of Lords tomorrow, and throw the Lords out after the Bishops, and throw the Throne into the Thames after the Peers and the Bench. Is that man more modest than I, who takes these institutions as I find them, and waits for time and truth to develop, or fortify, or (if you like) destroy them? A college tutor, or a nobleman's toady, who appears one fine day as my right reverend lord, in a silk apron and a shovel-hat, and assumes benedictory airs over me, is still the same man we remember at Oxbridge, when he was truckling to the tufts, and bullying the poor undergraduates in the lecture-room. An hereditary legislator, who passes his time with jockeys and black-legs and ballet-girls, and who is called to rule over me and his other betters because his grandfather made a lucky speculation in the funds, or found a coal or tin mine on his property, or because his stupid ancestor happened to be in command of ten thousand men as brave as himself, who overcame twelve thousand Frenchmen, or fifty thousand Indians — such a man, I say, inspires me with no more respect than the bitterest democrat can feel towards him. But, such as he is, he is a part of the old society to which we belong and I submit to his lordship with acquiescence; and he takes his place above the best of us at all dinner-parties, and there bides his time. I don't want to chop his head off with a guillotine, or to fling mud at him in the streets. When they call such a man a disgrace to his order; and such another, who is good and gentle, refined and generous, who employs his great means in promoting every kindness and charity, and art and grace of life, in the kindest and most gracious manner, an ornament to his rank — the question as to the use and propriety of the order is not in the least affected one way or other. There it is, extant among us, a part of our habits, the creed of many of us, the growth of centuries, the symbol of a most complicated tradition — there stand my lord the bishop and my lord the hereditary legislator — what the French call transactions both of them — representing in their present shape mail-clad barons and double-sworded chiefs (from whom their lordships the hereditaries, for the most part, don't descend), and priests, professing to hold an absolute truth and a divinely inherited power, the which truth absolute our ancestors burned at the stake, and denied there; the which divine transmissible power still exists in print — to be believed, or not, pretty much at choice; and of these, I say, I acquiesce that they exist, and no more. If you say that these schemes, devised before printing was known, or steam was born; when thought was an infant, scared and whipped; and truth under its guardians was gagged, and swathed, and blindfolded, and not allowed to lift its voice, or to look out or to walk under the sun; before men were permitted to meet, or to trade, or to speak with each other — if any one says (as some faithful souls do) that these schemes are for ever, and having been changed and modified constantly are to be subject to no further development or decay, I laugh, and let the man speak. But I would have toleration for these, as I would ask it for my own opinions; and if they are to die, I would rather they had a decent and natural than an abrupt and violent death.”

“You would have sacrificed to Jove,” Warrington said, “had you lived in the time of the Christian persecutions.”

“Perhaps I would,” said Pen, with some sadness. “Perhaps I am a coward — perhaps my faith is unsteady; but this is my own reserve. What I argue here is that I will not persecute. Make a faith or a dogma absolute, and persecution becomes a logical consequence; and Dominic burns a Jew, or Calvin an Arian, or Nero a Christian, or Elizabeth or Mary a Papist or Protestant; or their father both or either, according to his humour; and acting without any pangs of remorse — but, on the contrary, notions of duty fulfilled. Make dogma absolute, and to inflict or to suffer death becomes easy and necessary; and Mahomet's soldiers shouting, ‘Paradise! Paradise!’ and dying on the Christian spears, are not more or less praiseworthy

than the same men slaughtering a townful of Jews, or cutting off the heads of all prisoners who would not acknowledge that there was but one Prophet of God."

"A little while since, young one," Warrington said, who had been listening to his friend's confessions neither without sympathy nor scorn, for his mood led him to indulge in both, "you asked me why I remained out of the strife of the world, and looked on at the great labour of my neighbour without taking any part in the struggle? Why, what a mere dilettante you own yourself to be, in this confession of general scepticism, and what a listless spectator yourself! You are six-and-twenty years old; and as blase as a rake of sixty. You neither hope much nor care much, nor believe much. You doubt about other men as much as about yourself. Were it made of such pococuranti as you, the world would be intolerable; and I had rather live in a wilderness of monkeys, and listen to their chatter, than in a company of men who denied everything."

"Were the world composed of Saint Bernards or Saint Dominies, it would be equally odious," said Pen, "and at the end of a few scores of years would cease to exist altogether. Would you have every man with his head shaved, and every woman in a cloister — carrying out to the full the ascetic principle? Would you have conventicle hymns twanging from every lane in every city in the world? Would you have all the birds of the forest sing one note and fly with one feather? You call me a sceptic because I acknowledge what is; and in acknowledging that, be it linnet or lark, or priest or parson, be it, I mean, any single one of the infinite varieties of the creatures of God (whose very name I would be understood to pronounce with reverence, and never to approach but with distant awe), I say that the study and acknowledgment of that variety amongst men especially increases our respect and wonder for the Creator, Commander, and Ordainer of all these minds, so different and yet so united — meeting in a common adoration, and offering up, each according to his degree and means of approaching the Divine centre, his acknowledgment of praise and worship, each singing (to recur to the bird simile) his natural song."

"And so, Arthur, the hymn of a saint, or the ode of a poet, or the chant of a Newgate thief, are all pretty much the same in your philosophy," said George.

"Even that sneer could be answered were it to the point," Pendennis replied; "but it is not; and it could be replied to you, that even to the wretched outcry of the thief on the tree, the wisest and the best of all teachers we know of, the untiring Comforter and Consoler, promised a pitiful hearing and a certain hope. Hymns of saints! odes of poets! who are we to measure the chances and opportunities, the means of doing, or even judging, right and wrong, awarded to men; and to establish the rule for meting out their punishments and rewards? We are as insolent and unthinking in judging of men's morals as of their intellects. We admire this man as being a great philosopher, and set down the other as a dullard, not knowing either, or the amount of truth in either, or being certain of the truth anywhere. We sing *Te Deum* for this hero who has won a battle, and *De Profundis* for that other one who has broken out of prison, and has been caught afterwards by the policeman. Our measure of rewards and punishments is most partial and incomplete, absurdly inadequate, utterly worldly, and we wish to continue it into the next world. Into that next and awful world we strive to pursue men, and send after them our impotent party verdicts of condemnation or acquittal. We set up our paltry little rods to measure Heaven immeasurable, as if, in comparison to that, Newton's mind or Pascal's or Shakspeare's was any loftier than mine; as if the ray which travels from the sun would reach me sooner than the man who blacks my boots. Measured by that altitude, the tallest and the smallest among us are so alike diminutive and pitifully base, that I say we should take no count of the calculation, and it is a meanness to reckon the difference."

"Your figure fails there, Arthur," said the other, better pleased; "if even by common arithmetic we can multiply as we can reduce almost infinitely, the Great Reckoner must take count of all; and the small is not small, or the great great, to his infinity."

"I don't call those calculations in question," Arthur said; "I only say that yours are incomplete and premature; false in consequence, and, by every operation, multiplying into wider error. I do not condemn the men who murdered Socrates and damned Galileo. I say that they damned Galileo and murdered Socrates."

"And yet but a moment since you admitted the propriety of acquiescence in the present, and, I suppose, all other tyrannies?"

"No: but that if an opponent menaces me, of whom and without cost of blood and violence I can get rid, I would rather wait him out, and starve him out, than fight him out. Fabius fought Hannibal sceptically. Who was his Roman coadjutor, whom we read of in Plutarch when we were boys, who scoffed at the other's procrastination and doubted his courage, and

engaged the enemy and was beaten for his pains?"

In these speculations and confessions of Arthur, the reader may perhaps see allusions to questions which, no doubt, have occupied and discomposed himself, and which he has answered by very different solutions to those come to by our friend. We are not pledging ourselves for the correctness of his opinions, which readers will please to consider are delivered dramatically, the writer being no more answerable for them, than for the sentiments uttered by any other character of the story: our endeavour is merely to follow out, in its progress, the development of the mind of a worldly and selfish, but not ungenerous or unkind or truth-avoiding man. And it will be seen that the lamentable stage to which his logic at present has brought him, is one of general scepticism and sneering acquiescence in the world as it is; or if you like so to call it, a belief qualified with scorn in all things extant. The tastes and habits of such a man prevent him from being a boisterous demagogue, and his love of truth and dislike of cant keep him from advancing crude propositions, such as many loud reformers are constantly ready with; much more of uttering downright falsehoods in arguing questions or abusing opponents, which he would die or starve rather than use. It was not in our friend's nature to be able to utter certain lies; nor was he strong enough to protest against others, except with a polite sneer; his maxim being, that he owed obedience to all Acts of Parliament, as long as they were not repealed.

And to what does this easy and sceptical life lead a man? Friend Arthur was a Sadducee, and the Baptist might be in the Wilderness shouting to the poor, who were listening with all their might and faith to the preacher's awful accents and denunciations of wrath or woe or salvation; and our friend the Sadducee would turn his sleek mule with a shrug and a smile from the crowd, and go home to the shade of his terrace, and muse over preacher and audience, and turn to his roll of Plato, or his pleasant Greek songbook babbling of honey and Hybla, and nymphs and fountains and love. To what, we say, does this scepticism lead? It leads a man to a shameful loneliness and selfishness, so to speak — the more shameful, because it is so good-humoured and conscienceless and serene. Conscience! What is conscience? Why accept remorse? What is public or private faith? Mythuses alike enveloped in enormous tradition. If seeing and acknowledging the lies of the world, Arthur, as see them you can with only too fatal a clearness, you submit to them without any protest further than a laugh: if, plunged yourself in easy sensuality, you allow the whole wretched world to pass groaning by you unmoved: if the fight for the truth is taking place, and all men of honour are on the ground armed on the one side or the other, and you alone are to lie on your balcony and smoke your pipe out of the noise and the danger, you had better have died, or never have been at all, than such a sensual coward.

"The truth, friend!" Arthur said, imperturbably; "where is the truth? Show it me. That is the question between us. I see it on both sides. I see it on the Conservative side of the house, and amongst the Radicals, and even on the ministerial benches. I see it in this man, who worships by Act of Parliament, and is rewarded with a silk apron and five thousand a year; in that man, who, driven fatally by the remorseless logic of his creed, gives up everything, friends, fame, dearest ties, closest vanities, the respect of an army of churchmen, the recognised position of a leader, and passes over, truth-impelled, to the enemy, in whose ranks he will serve henceforth as a nameless private soldier:— I see the truth in that man, as I do in his brother, whose logic drives him to quite a different conclusion, and who, after having passed a life in vain endeavours to reconcile an irreconcilable book, flings it at last down in despair, and declares, with tearful eyes, and hands up to heaven, his revolt and recantation. If the truth is with all these, why should I take side with any one of them? Some are called upon to preach: let them preach. Of these preachers there are somewhat too many, methinks, who fancy they have the gift. But we cannot all be parsons in church, that is clear. Some must sit silent and listen, or go to sleep mayhap. Have we not all our duties? The head charity-boy blows the bellows; the master canes the other boys in the organ-loft; the clerk sings out Amen from the desk; and the beadle with the staff opens the door for his Reverence, who rustles in silk up to the cushion. I won't cane the boys, nay, or say Amen always, or act as the church's champion and warrior, in the shape of the beadle with the staff; but I will take off my hat in the place, and say my prayers there too, and shake hands with the clergyman as he steps on the grass outside. Don't I know that his being there is a compromise, and that he stands before me an Act of Parliament? That the church he occupies was built for other worship? That the Methodist chapel is next door; and that Bunyan the tinker is bawling out the tidings of damnation on the common hard by? Yes, I am a Sadducee; and I take things as I find them, and the world, and the Acts of Parliament of the world, as they are; and as I intend to take a wife, if I find one — not to be madly in love and prostrate at her feet like a fool — not to worship her as an angel, or to expect to find her as such — but to be good-natured to her, and courteous, expecting good-nature and pleasant society from her in turn. And so, George, if ever you hear of my marrying, depend on it, it won't be a romantic attachment on my

side: and if you hear of any good place under Government, I have no particular scruples that I know of, which would prevent me from accepting your offer.”

“O Pen, you scoundrel! I know what you mean,” here Warrington broke out. “This is the meaning of your scepticism, of your quietism, of your atheism, my poor fellow. You’re going to sell yourself, and Heaven help you! You are going to make a bargain which will degrade you and make you miserable for life, and there’s no use talking of it. If you are once bent on it, the devil won’t prevent you.”

“On the contrary, he’s on my side, isn’t he, George?” said Pen with a laugh. “What good cigars these are! Come down and have a little dinner at the Club; the chef’s in town, and he’ll cook a good one for me. No, you won’t? Don’t be sulky, old boy, I’m going down to — to the country tomorrow.”



CHAPTER LXIII

WHICH ACCOUNTS PERHAPS FOR CHAPTER LXI

The information regarding the affairs of the Clavering family, which Major Pendennis had acquired through Strong, and by his own personal interference as the friend of the house, was such as almost made the old gentleman pause in any plans which he might have once entertained for his nephew's benefit. To bestow upon Arthur a wife with two such fathers-in-law, as the two worthies whom the guileless and unfortunate Lady Clavering had drawn in her marriage ventures, was to benefit no man. And though the one, in a manner, neutralised the other, and the appearance of Amory or Altamont in public would be the signal for his instantaneous withdrawal and condign punishment — for the fugitive convict had cut down the officer in charge of him — and a rope would be inevitably his end; if he came again under British authorities; yet, no guardian would like to secure for his ward a wife, whose parent was to be got rid of in such a way; and the old gentleman's notion always had been that Altamont, with the gallows before his eyes, would assuredly avoid recognition; while, at the same time, by holding the threat of his discovery over Clavering, the latter, who would lose everything by Amory's appearance, would be a slave in the hands of the person who knew so fatal a secret.

But if the Begum paid Clavering's debts many times more, her wealth would be expended altogether upon this irreclaimable reprobate; and her heirs, whoever they might be, would succeed but to an emptied treasury; and Miss Amory, instead of bringing her husband a good income and a seat in Parliament, would bring to that individual her person only, and her pedigree with that lamentable note of *sus. per coll.* at the name of the last male of her line.

There was, however, to the old schemer revolving these things in his mind, another course yet open; the which will appear to the reader who may take the trouble to peruse a conversation, which presently ensued, between Major Pendennis and the honourable Baronet, the Member for Clavering.

When a man, under pecuniary difficulties, disappears from among his usual friends and equals — dives out of sight, as it were, from the flock of birds in which he is accustomed to sail, it is wonderful at what strange and distant nooks he comes up again for breath. I have known a Pall Mall lounge and Rotten Row buck, of no inconsiderable fashion, vanish from amongst his comrades of the Clubs and the Park, and be discovered, very happy and affable, at an eighteenpenny ordinary in Billingsgate: another gentleman, of great learning and wit, when outrunning the constable (were I to say he was a literary man, some critics would vow that I intended to insult the literary profession), once sent me his address at a little public-house called the "Fox under the Hill," down a most darksome and cavernous archway in the Strand. Such a man, under such misfortunes, may have a house, but he is never in his house; and has an address where letters may be left; but only simpletons go with the hopes of seeing him. — Only a few of the faithful know where he is to be found, and have the clue to his hiding-place. So, after the disputes with his wife, and the misfortunes consequent thereon, to find Sir Francis Clavering at home was impossible. "Ever since I hast him for my book, which is fourteen pound, he don't come home till three o'clock, and purtends to be asleep when I bring his water of a mornin', and dodges hout when I'm downstairs," Mr. Lightfoot remarked to his friend Morgan; and announced that he should go down to my Lady, and be butler there, and marry his old woman. In like manner, after his altercations with Strong, the Baronet did not come near him, and fled to other haunts, out of the reach of the Chevalier's reproaches; — out of the reach of conscience, if possible, which many of us try to dodge and leave behind us by changes of scene and other fugitive stratagems.

So, though the elder Pendennis, having his own ulterior object, was bent upon seeing Pen's country neighbour and representative in Parliament, it took the Major no inconsiderable trouble and time before he could get him into such a confidential state and conversation, as were necessary for the ends which the Major had in view. For since the Major had been called in as family friend, and had cognisance of Clavering's affairs, conjugal and pecuniary, the Baronet avoided him: as he always avoided all his lawyers and agents when there was an account to be rendered, or an affair of business to be discussed between them; and never kept any appointment but when its object was the raising of money. Thus, previous to catching this most shy and timorous bird, the Major made more than one futile attempt to hold him; — on one day it was a most innocent-looking invitation to dinner at Greenwich, to meet a few friends; the Baronet accepted, suspected something, and did not come; leaving the Major (who indeed proposed to represent in himself the body of friends) to eat his whitebait alone:— on another occasion the Major wrote and asked for ten minutes' talk, and the Baronet instantly

acknowledged the note, and made the appointment at four o'clock the next day at Bays's precisely (he carefully underlined the "precisely"); but though four o'clock came, as in the course of time and destiny it could not do otherwise, no Clavering made his appearance. Indeed, if he had borrowed twenty pounds of Pendennis, he could not have been more timid, or desirous of avoiding the Major; and the latter found that it was one thing to seek a man, and another to find him.

Before the close of that day in which Strong's patron had given the Chevalier the benefit of so many blessings before his face and curses behind his back, Sir Francis Clavering, who had pledged his word and his oath to his wife's advisers to draw or accept no more bills of exchange, and to be content with the allowance which his victimised wife still awarded him, had managed to sign his respectable name to a piece of stamped paper, which the Baronet's friend, Mr. Moss Abrams, had carried off, promising to have the bill "done" by a party with whose intimacy Mr. Abrams was favoured. And it chanced that Strong heard of this transaction at the place where the writings had been drawn — in the back-parlour, namely, of Mr. Santiago's cigar-shop, where the Chevalier was constantly in the habit of spending an hour in the evening.

"He is at his old work again," Mr. Santiago told his customer. "He and Moss Abrams were in my parlour. Moss sent out my boy for a stamp. It must have been a bill for fifty pound. I heard the Baronet tell Moss to date it two months back. He will pretend that it is an old bill, and that he forgot it when he came to a settlement with his wife the other day. I dare say they will give him some more money now he is clear." A man who has the habit of putting his unlucky name to "promises to pay" at six months, has the satisfaction of knowing, too, that his affairs are known and canvassed, and his signature handed round among the very worst knaves and rogues of London.

Mr. Santiago's shop was close by St. James's Street and Bury Street, where we have had the honour of visiting our friend Major Pendennis in his lodgings. The Major was walking daintily towards his apartment, as Strong, burning with wrath and redolent of Havanna, strode along the same pavement opposite to him.

"Confound these young men: how they poison everything with their smoke," thought the Major. "Here comes a fellow with mustachios and a cigar. Every fellow who smokes and wears mustachios is a low fellow. Oh! it's Mr. Strong. — I hope you are well, Mr. Strong?" and the old gentleman, making a dignified bow to the Chevalier, was about to pass into his house; directing towards the lock of the door, with trembling hand, the polished door-key.

We have said that, at the long and weary disputes and conferences regarding the payment of Sir Francis Clavering's last debts, Strong and Pendennis had both been present as friends and advisers of the Baronet's unlucky family. Strong stopped and held out his hand to his brother negotiator, and old Pendennis put out towards him a couple of ungracious fingers.

"What is your good news?" said Major Pendennis, patronising the other still further, and condescending to address to him an observation; for old Pendennis had kept such good company all his life, that he vaguely imagined he honoured common men by speaking to them. "Still in town, Mr. Strong? I hope I see you well."

"My news is bad news, sir," Strong answered; "it concerns our friends at Tunbridge Wells, and I should like to talk to you about it. Clavering is at his old tricks again, Major Pendennis."

"Indeed! Pray do me the favour to come into my lodging," cried the Major with awakened interest; and the pair entered and took possession of his drawing-room. Here seated, Strong unburdened himself of his indignation to the Major, and spoke at large of Clavering's recklessness and treachery. "No promises will bind him, sir," he said. "You remember when we met, sir, with my lady's lawyer, how he wouldn't be satisfied with giving his honour, but wanted to take his oath on his knees to his wife, and rang the bell for a Bible, and swore perdition on his soul if he ever would give another bill. He has been signing one this very day, sir: and will sign as many more as you please for ready money: and will deceive anybody, his wife or his child, or his old friend, who has backed him a hundred times. Why, there's a bill of his and mine will be due next week"

"I thought we had paid all."

"Not that one," Strong said, blushing. "He asked me not to mention it, and — and — I had half the money for that, Major; And they will be down on me. But I don't care for it; I'm used to it. It's Lady Clavering that riles me. It's a shame that that good-natured woman, who has paid him out of gaol a score of times, should be ruined by his heartlessness. A parcel of bill-stealers boxers, any rascals, get his money; and he don't scruple to throw an honest fellow over. Would you believe it, sir, he took money of Altamont — you know whom I mean."

"Indeed? of that singular man, who I think came tipsy once to Sir Francis's house?" Major Pendennis said, with

impenetrable countenance. "Who is Altamont, Mr. Strong?"

"I am sure I don't know, if you don't know," the Chevalier answered, with a look of surprise and suspicion.

"To tell you frankly," said the Major, "I have my suspicions — I suppose — mind, I only suppose — that in our friend Clavering's a life — who, between you and me, Captain Strong, we must own about as loose a fish as any in my acquaintance — there are, no doubt, some queer secrets and stories which he would not like to have known: none of us would. And very likely this fellow, who calls himself Altamont, knows some story against Clavering, and has some hold on him, and gets money out of him on the strength of his information. I know some of the best men of the best families in England who are paying through the nose in that way. But their private affairs are no business of mine, Mr. Strong; and it is not to be supposed that because I go and dine with a man, I pry into his secrets, or am answerable for all his past life. And so with our friend Clavering, I am most interested for his wife's sake, and her daughter's, who is a most charming creature: and when her ladyship asked me, I looked into her affairs, and tried to set them straight; and shall do so again, you understand, to the best of my humble power and ability, if I can make myself useful. And if I am called upon — you understand, if I am called upon — and — by the way, this Mr. Altamont, Mr. Strong? How is this Mr. Altamont? I believe you are acquainted with him. Is he in town?"

"I don't know that I am called upon to know where he is, Major Pendennis," said Strong, rising and taking up his hat in dudgeon, for the Major's patronising manner and impertinence of caution offended the honest gentleman not a little.

Pendennis's manner altered at once from a tone of hauteur to one of knowing good-humour. "Ah, Captain Strong, you are cautious too, I see; and quite right, my good sir, quite right. We don't know what ears walls may have, sir, or to whom we may be talking; and as a man of the world, and an old soldier — an old and distinguished soldier, I have been told, Captain Strong — you know very well that there is no use in throwing away your fire; you may have your ideas, and I may put two and two together and have mine. But there are things which don't concern him that many a man had better not know, eh, Captain? and which I, for one, won't know until I have reason for knowing them: and that I believe is your maxim too. With regard to our friend the Baronet, I think with you, it would be most advisable that he should be checked in his imprudent courses; and most strongly reprehend any man's departure from his word, or any conduct of his which can give any pain to his family, or cause them annoyance in any way. That is my full and frank opinion, and I am sure it is yours."

"Certainly," said Mr. Strong, drily.

"I am delighted to hear it; delighted that an old brother soldier should agree with me so fully. And I am exceedingly glad of the lucky meeting which has procured me the good fortune of your visit. Good evening. Thank you. Morgan, show the door to Captain Strong."

And Strong, preceded by Morgan, took his leave of Major Pendennis; the Chevalier not a little puzzled at the old fellow's prudence; and the valet, to say the truth, to the full as much perplexed at his master's reticence. For Mr. Morgan, in his capacity of accomplished valet, moved here and there in a house as silent as a shadow; and, as it so happened, during the latter part of his master's conversation with his visitor, had been standing very close to the door, and had overheard not a little of the talk between the two gentlemen, and a great deal more than he could understand.

"Who is that Altamont? know anything about him and Strong?" Mr. Morgan asked of Mr. Lightfoot, on the next convenient occasion when they met at the Club.

"Strong's his man of business, draws the Governor's bills, and indosses 'em, and does his odd jobs and that; and I suppose Altamont's in it too," Mr. Lightfoot replied. "That kite-flying, you know, Mr. M., always takes two or three on 'em to set the paper going. Altamont put the pot on at the Derby, and won a good bit of money. I wish the Governor could get some somewhere, and I could get my book paid up."

"Do you think my Lady would pay his debts again?" Morgan asked. "Find out that for me, Lightfoot, and I'll make it worth your while, my boy."

Major Pendennis had often said with a laugh, that his valet Morgan was a much richer man than himself: and, indeed, by long course of careful speculation, this wary and silent attendant had been amassing a considerable sum of money, during the year which he had passed in the Major's service, where he had made the acquaintance of many other valets of distinction, from whom he had learned the affairs of their principals. When Mr. Arthur came into his property, but not

until then, Morgan had surprised the young gentleman, by saying that he had a little sum of money, some fifty or a hundred pound, which he wanted to lay out to advantage; perhaps the gentlemen in the Temple, knowing about affairs and business and that, could help a poor fellow to a good investment? Morgan would be very much obliged to Mr. Arthur, most grateful and obliged indeed, if Arthur could tell him of one. When Arthur laughingly replied, that he knew nothing about money matters, and knew no earthly way of helping Morgan, the latter, with the utmost simplicity, was very grateful, very grateful indeed, to Mr. Arthur, and if Mr. Arthur should want a little money before his rents was paid, perhaps he would kindly remember that his uncle's old and faithful servant had some as he would like to put out: and be most proud if he could be useful anyways to any of the family.

The Prince of Fair Oaks, who was tolerably prudent and had no need of ready money, would as soon have thought of borrowing from his uncle's servant as of stealing the valet's pocket-handkerchief, and was on the point of making some haughty reply to Morgan's offer, but was checked by the humour of the transaction. Morgan a capitalist! Morgan offering to lend to him — The joke was excellent. On the other hand, the man might be quite innocent, and the proposal of money a simple offer of good-will. So Arthur withheld the sarcasm that was rising to his lips, and contented himself by declining Mr. Morgan's kind proposal. He mentioned the matter to his uncle, however, and congratulated the latter on having such a treasure in his service.

It was then that the Major said that he believed Morgan had been getting devilish rich for a devilish long time; in fact, he had bought the house in Bury Street, in which his master was a lodger and had actually made a considerable sum of money, from his acquaintance with the Clavering family and his knowledge obtained through his master that the Begum would pay all her husband's debts, by buying up as many of the Baronet's acceptances as he could raise money to purchase. Of these transactions the Major, however, knew no more than most gentlemen do of their servants, who live with us all our days and are strangers to us, so strong custom is, and so pitiless the distinction between class and class.

"So he offered to lend you money, did he?" the elder Pendennis remarked to his nephew. "He's a dev'lish sly fellow, and a dev'lish rich fellow; and there's many a nobleman would like to have such a valet in his service, and borrow from him too. And he ain't a bit changed, Monsieur Morgan. He does his work just as well as ever — he's always ready to my bell — steals about the room like a cat — he's so dev'lishly attached to me, Morgan!"

On the day of Strong's visit, the Major bethought him of Pen's story, and that Morgan might help him, and rallied the valet regarding his wealth with that free and insolent way which so high-placed a gentleman might be disposed to adopt towards so unfortunate a creature.

"I hear that you have got some money to invest, Morgan," said the Major.

"It's Mr. Arthur has been telling, hang him," thought the valet.

"I'm glad my place is such a good one."

"Thank you, sir — I've no reason to complain of my place, nor of my master," replied Morgan, demurely.

"You're a good fellow: and I believe you are attached to me; and I'm glad you get on well. And I hope you'll be prudent, and not be taking a public-house or that kind of thing."

A public-house, thought Morgan — me in a public-house! — the old fool! — Dammy, if I was ten years younger I'd set in Parlyment before I died, that I would. — "No, thank you kindly, sir. I don't think of the public line, sir. And I've got my little savings pretty well put out, sir."

"You do a little in the discounting way, eh, Morgan?"

"Yes, sir, a very little — I — I beg your pardon, sir — might I be so free as to ask a question —"

"Speak on, my good fellow," the elder said, graciously.

"About Sir Francis Clavering's paper, sir? Do you think he's any longer any good, sir? Will my Lady pay on 'em, any more, sir?"

"What, you've done something in that business already?"

"Yes, sir, a little," replied Morgan, dropping down his eyes. And I don't mind owning, sir, and I hope I may take the liberty of saying, sir, that a little more would make me very comfortable if it turned out as well as the last."

"Why, how much have you netted by him, in Gad's name?" asked the Major.

"I've done a good bit, sir, at it: that I own, sir. Having some information, and made acquaintance with the fam'ly

through your kindness, I put on the pot, sir."

"You did what?"

"I laid my money on, sir — I got all I could, and borrowed, and bought Sir Francis's bills; many of 'em had his name, and the gentleman's as is just gone out, Edward Strong, Esquire, sir: and of course I know of the blow-hup and shindy as is took place in Grosvenor Place, sir: and as I may as well make my money as another, I'd be very much obleeged to you if you'd tell me whether my Lady will come down any more."

Although Major Pendennis was as much surprised at this intelligence regarding his servant, as if he had heard that Morgan was a disguised Marquis, about to throw off his mask and assume his seat in the House of Peers; and although he was of course indignant at the audacity of the fellow who had dared to grow rich under his nose, and without his cognisance; yet he had a natural admiration for every man who represented money and success, and found himself respecting Morgan, and being rather afraid of that worthy, as the truth began to dawn upon him.

"Well, Morgan," said he, "I mustn't ask how rich you are; and the richer the better for your sake, I'm sure. And if I could give you any information that could serve you, I would speedily help you. But frankly, if Lady Clavering asks me whether she shall pay any more of Sir Francis's debts, I shall advise and I hope she won't, though I fear she will — and that is all I know. And so you are aware that Sir Francis is beginning again in his — eh — reckless and imprudent course?"

"At his old games, sir — can't prevent that gentleman. He will do it."

"Mr. Strong was saying that a Mr. Moss Abrams was the holder of one of Sir Francis Clavering's notes. Do you know anything of this Mr. Abrams; or the amount of the bill?"

"Don't know the bill, know Abrams quite well, sir."

"I wish you would find out about it for me. And I wish you would find out where I can see Sir Francis Clavering, Morgan."

And Morgan said, "Thank you, sir, yes, sir, I will, sir;" and retired from the room, as he had entered it, with his usual stealthy respect and quiet humility; leaving the Major to muse and wonder over what he had just heard.

The next morning the valet informed Major Pendennis that he had seen Mr. Abrams; what was the amount of the bill that gentleman was desirous to negotiate; and that the Baronet would be sure to be in the back-parlour of the Wheel of Fortune Tavern that day at one o'clock.

To this appointment Sir Francis Clavering was punctual, and as at one o'clock he sate in the parlour of the tavern in question, surrounded by spittoons, Windsor chairs, cheerful prints of boxers, trotting horses, and pedestrians, and the lingering of last night's tobacco fumes — as the descendant of an ancient line sate in this delectable place accommodated with an old copy of Bell's Life in London, much blotted with beer, the polite Major Pendennis walked into the apartment.

"So it's you, old boy?" asked the Baronet, thinking that Mr. Moss Abrams had arrived with the money.

"How do you do, Sir Francis Clavering? I wanted to see you, and followed you here," said the Major, at sight of whom the other's countenance fell.

Now that he had his opponent before him, the Major was determined to make a brisk and sudden attack upon him, and went into action at once. "I know," he continued, "who is the exceedingly disreputable person for whom you took me, Clavering; and the errand which brought you here."

"It ain't your business, is it?" asked the Baronet, with a sulky and deprecatory look. "Why are you following me about and taking the command, and meddling in my affairs, Major Pendennis? I've never done you any harm, have I? I've never had your money. And I don't choose to be dodged about in this way, and domineered over. I don't choose it, and I won't have it. If Lady Clavering has any proposal to make to me, let it be done in the regular way, and through the lawyers. I'd rather not have you."

"I am not come from Lady Clavering," the Major said, "but of my own accord, to try and remonstrate with you, Clavering, and see if you can be kept from ruin. It is but a month ago that you swore on your honour, and wanted to get a Bible to strengthen the oath, that you would accept no more bills, but content yourself with the allowance which Lady Clavering gives you. All your debts were paid with that proviso, and you have broken it; this Mr. Abrams has a bill of yours for sixty pounds."

"It's an old bill. I take my solemn oath it's an old bill," shrieked out the Baronet.

"You drew it yesterday, and you dated it three months back purposely. By Gad, Clavering, you sicken me with lies, I can't help telling you so. I've no patience with you, by Gad. You cheat everybody, yourself included. I've seen a deal of the world, but I never met your equal at humbugging. It's my belief you had rather lie than not."

"Have you come here, you old — old beast, to tempt me to — to pitch into you, and — and knock your old head off?" said the Baronet, with a poisonous look of hatred at the Major.

"What, sir?" shouted out the old Major, rising to his feet and clasping his cane, and looking so fiercely, that the Baronet's tone instantly changed towards him.

"No, no," said Clavering, piteously, "I beg your pardon. I didn't mean to be angry, or say anything unkind, only you're so damned harsh to me, Major Pendennis. What is it you want of me? Why have you been hunting me so? Do you want money out of me too? By Jove, you know I've not got a shilling," — and so Clavering, according to his custom, passed from a curse into a whimper.

Major Pendennis saw, from the other's tone, that Clavering knew his secret was in the Major's hands.

"I've no errand from anybody, or no design upon you," Pendennis said, "but an endeavour, if it's not too late, to save you and your family from utter ruin, through the infernal recklessness of your courses. I knew your secret —"

"I didn't know it when I married her; upon my oath I didn't know it till the d — d scoundrel came back and told me himself; and it's the misery about that which makes me so reckless, Pendennis; indeed it is," the Baronet cried, clasping his hands.

"I knew your secret from the very first day when I saw Amory come drunk into your dining-room in Grosvenor Place. I never forget faces. I remember that fellow in Sydney a convict, and he remembers me. I know his trial, the date of his marriage, and of his reported death in the bush. I could swear to him. And I know that you are no more married to Lady Clavering than I am. I've kept your secret well enough, for I've not told a single soul that I know it — not your wife, not yourself till now."

"Poor Lady C., it would cut her up dreadfully," whimpered Sir Francis; "and it wasn't my fault, Major; you know it wasn't."

"Rather than allow you to go on ruining her as you do; I will tell her, Clavering, and tell all the world too; that is what I swear I will do, unless I can come to some terms with you, and put some curb on your infernal folly. By play, debt, and extravagance of all kind, you've got through half your wife's fortune, and that of her legitimate heirs, mind — her legitimate heirs. Here it must stop. You can't live together. You're not fit to live in a great house like Clavering; and before three years' more were over would not leave a shilling to carry on. I've settled what must be done. You shall have six hundred a year; you shall go abroad and live on that. You must give up Parliament, and get on as well as you can. If you refuse, I give you my word I'll make the real state of things known tomorrow; I'll swear to Amory, who, when identified, will go back to the country from whence he came, and will rid the widow of you and himself together. And so that boy of yours loses at once all title to old Spell's property, and it goes to your wife's daughter. Ain't I making myself pretty clearly understood?"

"You wouldn't be so cruel to that poor boy, would you, Pendennis?" asked the father, pleading piteously; "hang it, think about him. He's a nice boy: though he's dev'lish wild, I own he's dev'lish wild."

"It's you who are cruel to him," said the old moralist. "Why, sir, you'll ruin him yourself inevitably in three years."

"Yes, but perhaps I won't have such dev'lish bad luck, you know; — the luck must turn: and I'll reform, by Gad, I'll reform. And if you were to split on me, it would cut up my wife so; you know it would, most infernally."

"To be parted from you," said the old Major, with a sneer; "you know she won't live with you again."

"But why can't Lady C. live abroad, or at Bath, or at Tunbridge, or at the doose, and I go on here?" Clavering continued. "I like being here better than abroad, and I like being in Parliament. It's dev'lish convenient being in Parliament. There's very few seats like mine left; and if I gave it to 'em, I should not wonder the ministry would give me an island to govern, or some dev'lish good thing; for you know I'm a gentleman of dev'lish good family, and have a handle to my name, and — and that sort of thing, Major Pendennis. Eh, don't you see? Don't you think they'd give me something dev'lish good if I was to play my cards well? And then, you know, I'd save money, and be kept out of the way of the confounded hells and rouge et noir — and — and so I'd rather not give up Parliament, please." For at one instant to hate and defy a man, at the next to weep before him, and at the next to be perfectly confidential and friendly with him, was not an unusual process with our versatile-minded Baronet.

“As for your seat in Parliament,” the Major said, with something of a blush on his cheek, and a certain tremor, which the other did not see, “you must part with that, Sir Francis Clavering, to — to me.”

“What! are you going into the House, Major Pendennis?”

“No — not I; but my nephew, Arthur, is a very clever fellow and would make a figure there: and when Clavering had two members, his father might very likely have been one; and — and should like Arthur to be there,” the Major said.

“Dammy, does he know it, too?” cried out Clavering.

“Nobody knows anything out of this room,” Pendennis answered; and if you do this favour for me, I hold my tongue. “If not, I’m a man of my word, and will do what I have said.”

“I say, Major,” said Sir Francis, with a peculiarly humble smile “You — You couldn’t get me my first quarter in advance, could you, like the best of fellows? You can do anything with Lady Clavering; and, upon my oath, I’ll take up that bill of Abrams’. The little dam scoundrel, I know he’ll do me in the business — he always does; and if you could do this for me, we’d see, Major.”

“And I think your best plan would be to go down in September to Clavering to shoot, and take my nephew with you, and introduce him. Yes, that will be the best time. And we will try and manage about the advance.” (Arthur may lend him that, thought old Pendennis. Confound him, a seat in Parliament is worth a hundred and fifty pounds.) “And, Clavering, you understand, of course, my nephew knows nothing about this business. You have a mind to retire: he is a Clavering man and a good representative. for the borough; you introduce him, and your people vote for him — you see.”

“When can you get me the hundred and fifty, Major? When shall I come and see you? Will you be at home this evening or tomorrow morning? Will you have anything here? They’ve got some devilish good bitters in the bar. I often have a glass of bitters, it sets one up so.”

The old Major would take no refreshment; but rose and took his leave of the Baronet, who walked with him to the door of the Wheel of Fortune, and then strolled into the bar, where he took a glass of gin and bitters with the landlady there: and a gentleman connected with the ring (who boarded at the Wheel of F.) coming in, he and Sir Francis Clavering and the landlord talked about the fights and the news of the sporting world in general; and at length Mr. Moss Abrams arrived with the proceeds of the Baronet’s bill, from which his own handsome commission was deducted, and out of the remainder Sir Francis “stood” a dinner at Greenwich to his distinguished friend, and passed the evening gaily at Vauxhall.

Meanwhile Major Pendennis, calling a cab in Piccadilly, drove to Lamb Court, Temple, where he speedily was closeted with his nephew in deep conversation.

After their talk they parted on very good terms, and it was in consequence of that unreported conversation, whereof the reader nevertheless can pretty well guess the bearing, that Arthur expressed himself as we have heard in the colloquy with Warrington, which is reported in the last chapter.

When a man is tempted to do a tempting thing, he can find a hundred ingenious reasons for gratifying his liking; and Arthur thought very much that he would like to be in Parliament, and that he would like to distinguish himself there, and that he need not care much what side he took, as there was falsehood and truth on every side. And on this and on other matters he thought he would compromise with his conscience, and that Sadduceeism was a very convenient and good-humoured profession of faith.



CHAPTER LXIV

PHYLLIS AND CORYDON

On a picturesque common in the neighbourhood of Tunbridge Wells, Lady Clavering had found a pretty villa, whither she retired after her conjugal disputes at the end of that unlucky London season. Miss Amory, of course, accompanied her mother, and Master Clavering came home for the holidays, with whom Blanche's chief occupation was to fight and quarrel. But this was only a home pastime, and the young schoolboy was not fond of home sports. He found cricket, and horses, and plenty of friends at Tunbridge. The good-natured Begum's house was filled with a constant society of young gentlemen of thirteen, who ate and drank much too copiously of tarts and champagne, who rode races on the lawn, and frightened the fond mother, who smoked and made themselves sick, and the dining-room unbearable to Miss Blanche. She did not like the society of young gentlemen of thirteen.

As for that fair young creature, any change as long as it was change was pleasant to her; and for a week or two she would have liked poverty and a cottage, and bread-and-cheese; and, for a night, perhaps, a dungeon and bread-and-water, and so the move to Tunbridge was by no means unwelcome to her. She wandered in the woods, and sketched trees and farmhouses; she read French novels habitually; she drove into Tunbridge Wells pretty often, and to any play, or ball, or conjurer, or musician who might happen to appear in the place; she slept a great deal; she quarrelled with Mamma and Frank during the morning; she found the little village school and attended it, and first fondled the girls and thwarted the mistress, then scolded the girls and laughed at the teacher; she was constant at church, of course. It was a pretty little church, of immense antiquity — a little Anglo-Norman bijou, built the day before yesterday, and decorated with all sorts of painted windows, carved saints' heads, gilt scripture texts, and open pews. Blanche began forthwith to work a most correct high-church altar-cover for the church. She passed for a saint with the clergyman for a while, whom she quite took in, and whom she coaxed, and wheedled, and fondled so artfully, that poor Mrs. Smirke, who at first was charmed with her, then bore with her, then would hardly speak to her, was almost mad with jealousy. Mrs. Smirke was the wife of our old friend Smirke, Pen's tutor and poor Helen's suitor. He had consoled himself for her refusal with a young lady from Clapham whom his mamma provided. When the latter died, our friend's views became every day more and more pronounced. He cut off his coat collar, and let his hair grow over his back. He rigorously gave up the curl which he used to sport on his forehead, and the tie of his neckcloth, of which he was rather proud. He went without any tie at all. He went without dinner on Fridays. He read the Roman Hours, and intimated that he was ready to receive confessions in the vestry. The most harmless creature in the world, he was denounced as a black and most dangerous Jesuit and Papist, by Muffin of the Dissenting chapel, and Mr. Simeon Knight at the old church. Mr. Smirke had built his chapel-of-ease with the money left him by his mother at Clapham. Lord! lord! what would she have said to hear a table called an altar! to see candlesticks on it! to get letters signed on the Feast of Saint So-and-so, or the Vigil of Saint What-do-you-call-'em! All these things did the boy of Clapham practise; his faithful wife following him. But when Blanche had a conference of near two hours in the vestry with Mr. Smirke, Belinda paced up and down on the grass, where there were only two little grave-stones as yet; she wished that she had a third there: only, only he would offer very likely to that creature, who had infatuated him in a fortnight. No, she would retire; she would go into a convent, and profess and leave him. Such bad thoughts had Smirke's wife and his neighbours regarding him; these, thinking him in direct correspondence with the Bishop of Rome; that, bemoaning errors to her even more odious and fatal; and yet our friend meant no earthly harm. The post-office never brought him any letters from the Pope; he thought Blanche, to be sure, at first, the most pious, gifted, right-thinking, fascinating person he had ever met; and her manner of singing the Chants delighted him — but after a while he began to grow rather tired of Miss Amory, her ways and graces grew stale somehow; then he was doubtful about Miss Amory; then she made a disturbance in his school, lost her temper, and rapped the children's fingers. Blanche inspired this admiration and satiety, somehow, in many men. She tried to please them, and flung out all her graces at once; came down to them with all her jewels on, all her smiles, and cajoleries, and coaxings, and ogles. Then she grew tired of them and of trying to please them, and never having cared about them, dropped them: and the men grew tired of her, and dropped her too. It was a happy night for Belinda when Blanche went away; and her husband, with rather a blush and a sigh, said "he had been deceived in her; he had thought her endowed with many precious gifts, he feared they were mere tinsel; he thought

she had been a right-thinking person, he feared she had merely made religion an amusement — she certainly had quite lost her temper to the schoolmistress, and beat Polly Rucker's knuckles cruelly." Belinda flew to his arms, there was no question about the grave or the veil any more. He tenderly embraced her on the forehead. "There is none like thee, my Belinda," he said, throwing his fine eyes up to the ceiling, "precious among women!" As for Blanche, from the instant she lost sight of him and Belinda, she never thought or cared about either any more.

But when Arthur went down to pass a few days at Tunbridge Wells with the Begum, this stage of indifference had not arrived on Miss Blanche's part or on that of the simple clergyman. Smirke believed her to be an angel and wonder of a woman. Such a perfection he had never seen, and sate listening to her music in the summer evenings, open-mouthed, rapt in wonder, tea-less, and bread-and-butter-less. Fascinating as he had heard the music of the opera to be — he had never but once attended an exhibition of that nature (which he mentioned with a blush and a sigh — it was on that day when he had accompanied Helen and her son to the play at Chatteris)— he could not conceive anything more delicious, more celestial, he had almost said, than Miss Amory's music. She was a most gifted being: she had a precious soul: she had the most remarkable talents — to all outward seeming, the most heavenly disposition, etc. etc. It was in this way that, being then at the height of his own fever and bewitchment for Blanche, Smirke discoursed to Arthur about her.

The meeting between the two old acquaintances had been very cordial. Arthur loved anybody who loved his mother; Smirke could speak on that theme with genuine feeling and emotion. They had a hundred things to tell each other of what had occurred in their lives. "Arthur would perceive," Smirke said, "that his — his views on Church matters had developed themselves since their acquaintance." Mrs. Smirke, a most exemplary person, seconded them with all her endeavours. He had built this little church on his mother's demise, who had left him provided with a sufficiency of worldly means. Though in the cloister himself, he had heard of Arthur's reputation. He spoke in the kindest and most saddened tone; he held his eyelids down, and bowed his fair head on one side. Arthur was immensely amused with him; with his airs; with his follies and simplicity; with his blank stock and long hair; with his real goodness, kindness, friendliness of feeling. And his praises of Blanche pleased and surprised our friend not a little, and made him regard her with eyes of particular favour.

The truth is, Blanche was very glad to see Arthur; as one is glad to see an agreeable man in the country, who brings down the last news and stories from the great city; who can talk better than most country-folks, at least can talk that darling London jargon, so dear and indispensable to London people, so little understood by persons out of the world. The first day Pen came down, he kept Blanche laughing for hours after dinner. She sang her songs with redoubled spirit. She did not scold her mother; she fondled and kissed her, to the honest Begum's surprise. When it came to be bedtime, she said, "Deja!" with the prettiest air of regret possible; and was really quite sorry to go to bed, and squeezed Arthur's hand quite fondly. He on his side gave her pretty palm a very cordial pressure. Our young gentleman was of that turn, that eyes very moderately bright dazzled him.

"She is very much improved," thought Pen, looking out into the night, "very much. I suppose the Begum won't mind my smoking with the window open. She's a jolly good old woman, and Blanche is immensely improved. I liked her manner with her mother tonight. I liked her laughing way with that stupid young cub of a boy, whom they oughtn't to allow to get tipsy. She sang those little verses very prettily; they were devilish pretty verses too, though I say it who shouldn't say it." And he hummed a tune which Blanche had put to some verses of his own. "Ah! what a fine night! How jolly a cigar is at night! How pretty that little Saxon church looks in the moonlight! I wonder what old Warrington's doing? Yes, she's a dayvlish nice little thing, as my uncle says."

"Oh, heavenly!" Here broke out a voice from a clematis-covered casement near — a girl's voice: it was the voice of the author of 'Mes Larmes.'

Pen burst into a laugh. "Don't tell about my smoking," he said, leaning out of his own window.

"Oh! go on! I adore it," cried the lady of 'Mes Larmes.' "Heavenly night! heavenly, heavenly moon! but I must shut my window, and not talk to you on account of les moeurs. How droll they are, les moeurs! Adieu." And Pen began to sing the Goodnight to Don Basilio.

The next day they were walking in the fields together, laughing and chattering — the gayest pair of friends. They talked about the days of their youth, and Blanche was prettily sentimental. They talked about Laura, dearest Laura — Blanche had loved her as a sister: was she happy with that odd Lady Rockminster? Wouldn't she come and stay with them at Tunbridge? Oh, what walks they would take together! What songs they would sing — the old, old songs! Laura's voice was

splendid. Did Arthur — she must call him Arthur — remember the songs they sang in the happy old days, now he was grown such a great man, and had such a succes? etc. etc.

And the day after, which was enlivened with a happy ramble through the woods to Penshurst, and a sight of that pleasant park and hall, came that conversation with the curate which we have narrated, and which made our young friend think more and more.

“Is she all this perfection?” he asked himself. “Has she become serious and religious? Does she tend schools, and visit the poor? Is she kind to her mother and brother? Yes, I am sure of that, I have seen her.” And walking with his old tutor over his little parish, and going to visit his school, it was with inexpressible delight that Pen found Blanche seated instructing the children, and fancied to himself how patient she must be, how good-natured, how ingenuous, how really simple in her tastes, and unspoiled by the world.

“And do you really like the country?” he asked her, as they walked together.

“I should like never to see that odious city again. O Arthur — that is, Mr. — well, Arthur, then — one’s good thoughts grow up in these sweet woods and calm solitudes, like those flowers which won’t bloom in London, you know. The gardener comes and changes our balconies once a week. I don’t think I shall bear to look London in the face again — its odious, smoky, brazen face! But, heigho!”

“Why that sigh, Blanche?”

“Never mind why.”

“Yes, I do mind why. Tell me, tell me everything.”

“I wish you hadn’t come down;” and a second edition of ‘Mes Soupairs’ came out.

“You don’t want me, Blanche?”

“I don’t want you to go away. I don’t think this house will be very happy without you, and that’s why I wish that you never had come.”

‘Mes Soupairs’ were here laid aside, and ‘Mes Larmes’ had begun.

Ah! What answer is given to those in the eyes of a young woman? What is the method employed for drying them? What took place? O ringdoves and roses, O dews and wildflowers, O waving greenwoods and balmy airs of summer! Here were two battered London rakes, taking themselves in for a moment, and fancying that they were in love with each other, like Phillis and Corydon!

When one thinks of country houses and country walks, one wonders that any man is left unmarried.



CHAPTER LXV

TEMPTATION

Easy and frank-spoken as Pendennis commonly was with Warrington, how came it that Arthur did not inform the friend and depository of all his secrets, of the little circumstances which had taken place at the villa near Tunbridge Wells? He talked about the discovery of his old tutor Smirke, freely enough, and of his wife, and of his Anglo-Norman church, and of his departure from Clapha to Rome; but, when asked about Blanche, his answers were evasive or general: he said she was a good-natured clever little thing, that rightly guided she make no such bad wife after all, but that he had for the moment no intention of marriage, that his days of romance were over, that he was contented with his present lot, and so forth.

In the meantime there came occasionally to Lamb Court, Temple, pretty little satin envelopes, superscribed in the neatest handwriting, and sealed with one of those admirable ciphers, which, if Warrington had been curious enough to watch his friend's letters, or indeed if the cipher had been decipherable, would have shown George that Mr. Arthur was in correspondence with a young lady whose initials were B. A. To these pretty little compositions Mr. Pen replied in his best and gallantest manner; with jokes, with news of the town, with points of wit, nay, with pretty little verses very likely, in reply to the versicles of the Muse of 'Mes Larmes.' Blanche we know rhymes with "branch," and "stanch," and "launch," and no doubt a gentleman of Pen's ingenuity would not forgo these advantages of position, and would ring the pretty little changes upon these pleasing notes. Indeed we believe that those love-verses of Mr. Pen's, which had such a pleasing success in the 'Roseleaves,' that charming Annual edited by Lady Violet Lebas, and illustrated by portraits of the female nobility by the famous artist Pinkney, were composed at this period of our hero's life; and were first addressed to Blanche per post, before they figured in print, cornets as it were to Pinkney's pictorial garland.

"Verses are all very well," the elder Pendennis said, who found Pen scratching down one of these artless effusions at the Club as he was waiting for his dinner; "and letter-writing if mamma allows it, and between such old country friends of course there may be a correspondence, and that sort of thing — but mind, Pen, and don't commit yourself, my boy. For who knows what the doose may happen? The best way is to make your letters safe. I never wrote a letter in all my life that would commit me, and demmy, sir, I have had some experience of women." And the worthy gentleman, growing more garrulous and confidential with his nephew as he grew older, told many affecting instances of the evil results consequent upon this want of caution to many persons in "Society;" — how from using too ardent expressions in some poetical notes to the widow Naylor, young Spoony had subjected himself to a visit of remonstrance from the widow's brother, Colonel Flint; and thus had been forced into a marriage with a woman old enough to be his mother: how when Louisa Salter had at length succeeded in securing young Sir John Bird, Hopwood, of the Blues, produced some letters which Miss S. had written to him, and caused a withdrawal on Bird's part, who afterwards was united to Miss Stickney, of Lyme Regis, etc. The Major, if he had not reading, had plenty of observation, and could back his wise saws with a multitude of modern instances, which he had acquired in a long and careful perusal of the great book of the world.

Pen laughed at the examples, and blushing a little at his uncle's remonstrances, said that he would bear them in mind and be cautious. He blushed, perhaps, because he had borne them in mind; because he was cautious: because in his letters to Miss Blanche he had from instinct, or honesty perhaps, refrained from any avowals which might compromise him. "Don't you remember the lesson I had, sir, in Lady Mirabel's — Miss Fotheringay's affair? I am not to be caught again, uncle," Arthur said with mock frankness and humility. Old Pendennis congratulated himself and his nephew heartily on the latter's prudence and progress, and was pleased at the position which Arthur was taking as a man of the world.

No doubt, if Warrington had been consulted, his opinion would have been different: and he would have told Pen that the boy's foolish letters were better than the man's adroit compliments and slippery gallantries; that to win the woman he loves, only a knave or a coward advances under cover, with subterfuges, and a retreat secured behind him: but Pen spoke not on this matter to Mr. Warrington, knowing pretty well that he was guilty, and what his friend's verdict would be.

Colonel Altamont had not been for many weeks absent on his foreign tour, Sir Francis Clavering having retired meanwhile into the country pursuant to his agreement with Major Pendennis, when the ills of fate began to fall rather suddenly and heavily upon the sole remaining partner of the little firm of Shepherd's Inn. When Strong, at parting with

Altamont, refused the loan proffered by the latter in the fulness of his purse and the generosity of his heart, he made such a sacrifice to conscience and delicacy as caused him many an after twinge and pang; he and felt — it was not very many hours in his life he had experienced the feeling — that in this juncture of his affairs he had been too delicate and too scrupulous. Why should a fellow in want refuse a kind offer kindly made? Why should a thirsty man decline a pitcher of water from a friendly hand, because it was a little soiled? Strong's conscience smote him for refusing what the other had fairly come by, and generously proffered: and he thought ruefully, now it was too late, that Altamont's cash would have been as well in his pocket as in that of the gambling — house proprietor at Baden or Ems, with whom his Excellency would infallibly leave his Derby winnings. It was whispered among the tradesmen, bill-discounters, and others who had commercial dealings with Captain Strong, that he and the Baronet had parted company, and that the Captain's "paper" was henceforth of no value. The tradesmen, who had put a wonderful confidence in him hitherto — for who could resist Strong's jolly face and frank and honest demeanour? — now began to pour in their bills with a cowardly mistrust and unanimity. The knocks at the Shepherd's Inn chambers door were constant, and tailors, bootmakers, pastrycooks who had furnished dinners, in their own persons, or by the boys their representatives, held levees on Strong's stairs. To these were added one or two persons of a less clamorous but far more sly and dangerous sort — the young clerks of lawyers, namely, who lurked about the Inn, or concerted with Mr. Campion's young man in the chambers hard by, having in their dismal pocketbooks copies of writs to be served on Edward Strong, requiring him to appear on an early day next term before our Sovereign Lady the Queen, and answer to, etc. etc.

From this invasion of creditors, poor Strong, who had not a guinea in his pocket, had, of course, no refuge but that of the Englishman's castle, into which he retired, shutting the outer and inner door upon the enemy, and not quitting his stronghold until after nightfall. Against this outer barrier the foe used to come and knock and curse in vain, whilst the Chevalier peeped at them from behind the little curtain which he had put over the orifice of his letter-box; and had the dismal satisfaction of seeing the faces of furious clerk and fiery dun, as they dashed up against the door and retreated from it. But as they could not be always at his gate, or sleep on his staircase, the enemies of the Chevalier sometimes left him free.

Strong, when so pressed by his commercial antagonists, was not quite alone in his defence against them, but had secured for himself an ally or two. His friends were instructed to communicate with him by a system of private signals: and they thus kept the garrison from starving by bringing in necessary supplies, and kept up Strong's heart and prevented him from surrendering by visiting him and cheering him in his retreat. Two of Ned's most faithful allies were Huxter and Miss Fanny Bolton: when hostile visitors were prowling about the Inn, Fanny's little sisters were taught a particular cry or jodel, which they innocently whooped in the court: when Fanny and Huxter came up to visit Strong, they archly sang this same note at his door; when that barrier was straightway opened, the honest garrison came out smiling, the provisions and the pot of porter were brought in, and in the society of his faithful friends the beleaguered one passed a comfortable night. There are some men who could not live under this excitement, but Strong was a brave man, as we have said, who had seen service and never lost heart in peril.

But besides allies, our general had secured for himself, under difficulties, that still more necessary aid, a retreat. It has been mentioned in a former part of this history, how Messrs. Costigan and Bows lived in the house next door to Captain Strong, and that the window of one of their rooms was not very far off the kitchen-window which was situated in the upper story of Strong's chambers. A leaden water-pipe and gutter served for the two; and Strong, looking out from his kitchen one day, saw that he could spring with great ease up to the sill of his neighbour's window, and clamber up the pipe which communicated from one to the other. He had laughingly shown this refuge to his chum, Altamont; and they had agreed that it would be as well not to mention the circumstance to Captain Costigan, whose duns were numerous, and who would be constantly flying down the pipe into their apartments if this way of escape were shown to him.

But now that the evil days were come, Strong made use of the passage, and one afternoon burst in upon Bows and Costigan with his jolly face, and explained that the enemy was in waiting on his staircase, and that he had taken this means of giving them the slip. So while Mr. Marks's aides-de-camp were in waiting in the passage of No. 3, Strong walked down the steps of No. 4, dined at the Albion, went to the play, and returned home at midnight, to the astonishment of Mrs. Bolton and Fanny, who had not seen him quit his chambers and could not conceive how he could have passed the line of sentries.

Strong bore this siege for some weeks with admirable spirit and resolution, and as only such an old and brave soldier

would, for the pains and privations which he had to endure were enough to depress any man of ordinary courage; and what vexed and riled him (to use his own expression) was the infernal indifference and cowardly ingratitude of Clavering, to whom he wrote letter after letter, which the Baronet never acknowledged by a single word, or by the smallest remittance, though a five-pound note, as Strong said, at that time would have been a fortune to him.

But better days were in store for the Chevalier, and in the midst of his despondency and perplexities there came to him a most welcome aid. "Yes, if it hadn't been for this good fellow here," said Strong — "for a good fellow you are, Altamont, my boy, and hang me if I don't stand by you as long as I live — I think, Pendennis, it would have been all up with Ned Strong. I was the fifth week of my being kept a prisoner, for I couldn't be always risking my neck across that water-pipe, and taking my walks abroad through poor old Cos's window, and my spirit was quite broken, sir — dammy, quite beat, and I was thinking of putting an end to myself, and should have done it in another week, when who should drop down from heaven but Altamont!"

"Heaven ain't exactly the place, Ned," said Altamont. "I came from Baden-Baden," said he, "and I'd had a deuced lucky month there, that's all."

"Well, sir, he took up Marks's bill, and he paid the other fellows that were upon me, like a man, sir, that he did," said Strong, enthusiastically.

"And I shall be very happy to stand a bottle of claret for this company, and as many more as the company chooses," said Mr. Altamont, with a blush. "Hallo! waiter, bring us a magnum of the right sort, do you hear? And we'll drink our healths all round, sir — and may every good fellow like Strong find another good fellow to stand by him at a pinch. That's my sentiment, Mr. Pendennis, though I don't like your name."

"No! And why?" asked Arthur.

Strong pressed the Colonel's foot under the table here; and Altamont, rather excited, filled up another bumper, nodded to Pen, drank off his wine, and said, "He was a gentleman, and that was sufficient, and they were all gentlemen."

The meeting between these "all gentlemen" took place at Richmond, whither Pendennis had gone to dinner, and where he found the Chevalier and his friend at table in the coffee-room. Both of the latter were exceedingly hilarious, talkative, and excited by wine; and Strong, who was an admirable story-teller, told the story of his own siege, and adventures, and escapes with great liveliness and humour, and described the talk of the sheriff's officers at his door, the pretty little signals of Fanny, the grotesque exclamations of Costigan when the Chevalier burst in at his window, and his final rescue by Altamont, in a most graphic manner, and so as greatly to interest his hearers.

"As for me, it's nothing," Altamont said. "When a ship's paid off, a chap spends his money, you know. And it's the fellers at the black and red at Baden-Baden that did it. I won a good bit of money there, and intend to win a good bit more, don't I, Strong? I'm going to take him with me. I've got a system. I'll make his fortune, I tell you. I'll make your fortune, if you like — dammy, everybody's fortune. But what I'll do, and no mistake, boys, I promise you. I'll put in for that little Fanny. Dammy, sir, what do you think she did? She had two pound, and I'm blest if she didn't go and lend it to Ned Strong! Didn't she, Ned? Let's drink her health."

"With all my heart," said Arthur, and pledged this toast with the greatest cordiality.

Mr. Altamont then began, with the greatest volubility, at great length, to describe his system. He said that it was infallible, if played with coolness; that he had it from a chap at Baden, who had lost by it, it was true, but because he had not enough capital; if he could have stood one more turn of the wheel, he would have had all his money back; that he and several more chaps were going to make a bank, and try it; and that he would put every shilling he was worth into it, and had come back to the country for the express purpose of fetching away his money, and Captain Strong; that Strong should play for him; that he could trust Strong and his temper much better than he could his own; and much better than Bloundell-Bloundell or the Italian that "stood in." As he emptied his bottle, the Colonel described at full length all his plans and prospects to Pen, who was interested in listening to his story, and the confessions of his daring and lawless good-humour.

"I met that queer fellow Altamont the other day," Pen said to his uncle, a day or two afterwards.

"Altamont? What Altamont? There's Lord Westport's son," said the Major.

"No, no; the fellow who came tipsy into Clavering's dining-room one day when we were there," said the nephew, laughing, "he said he did not like the name of Pendennis, though he did me the honour to think that I was a good fellow."

"I don't know any man of the name of Altamont, I give you my honour," said the impenetrable Major; "and as for your acquaintance, I think the less you have to do with him the better, Arthur."

Arthur laughed again. "He is going to quit the country, and make his fortune by a gambling system. He and my amiable college acquaintance, Bloundell, are partners, and the Colonel takes out Strong with him as aide-de-camp. What is it that binds the Chevalier and Clavering, I wonder?"

"I should think, mind you, Pen, I should think, but of course I have only the idea, that there has been something in Clavering's previous life which gives these fellows and some others a certain power over him; and if there should be no such a secret, which affair of ours, my boy, dammy, I say, it ought to be a lesson to a man to keep himself straight in life, and not to give any man a chance over him."

"Why, I think you have some means of persuasion over Clavering, uncle, or why should he give me that seat in Parliament?"

"Clavering thinks he ain't fit for Parliament," the Major answered. "No more he is. What's to prevent him from putting you or anybody else into his place if he likes? Do you think that vernment or the Opposition would make any bones about accepting the seat if he offered it to them! Why should you be more squeamish than the first men, and the most honourable men, and men of the highest birth and position in the country, begad?" The Major had an answer of this kind to most of Pen's objections, and Pen accepted his uncle's replies, not so much because he believed them, but because he wished to believe them. We do a thing — which of us has not? — not because "everybody does it," but because we like it; and our acquiescence, alas! proves not that everybody is right, but that we and the rest of the world are poor creatures alike.

At his next visit to Tunbridge, Mr. Pen did not forget to amuse Miss Blanche with the history which he had learned at Richmond of the Chevalier's imprisonment, and of Altamont's gallant rescue. And after he had told his tale in his usual satirical way, he mentioned with praise and emotion little Fanny's generous behaviour to the Chevalier, and Altamont's enthusiasm in her behalf.

Miss Blanche was somewhat jealous, and a good deal piqued and curious about Fanny. Among the many confidential little communications which Arthur made to Miss Amory in the course of their delightful rural drives and their sweet evening walks, it may be supposed that our hero would not forget a story so interesting to himself and so likely to be interesting to her, as that of the passion and cure of the poor little Ariadne of Shepherd's Inn. His own part in that drama he described, to do him justice, with becoming modesty; the moral which he wished to draw from the tale being one in accordance with his usual satirical mood, viz., that women get over their first loves quite as easily as men do (for the fair Blanche, in their intimes conversations, did not cease to twit Mr. Pen about his notorious failure in his own virgin attachment to the Fotheringay), and, number one being withdrawn, transfer themselves to number two without much difficulty. And poor little Fanny was offered up in sacrifice as an instance to prove this theory. What griefs she had endured and surmounted, what bitter pangs of hopeless attachment she had gone through, what time it had taken to heal those wounds of the tender little bleeding heart, Mr. Pen did not know, or perhaps did not choose to know; for he was at once modest and doubtful about his capabilities as a conqueror of hearts, and averse to believe that he had executed any dangerous ravages on that particular one, though his own instance and argument told against himself in this case; for if, as he said, Miss Fanny was by this time in love with her surgical adorer, who had neither good looks, nor good manners, nor wit, nor anything but ardour and fidelity to recommend him, must she not in her first sickness of the love-complaint have had a serious attack, and suffered keenly for a man who had certainly a number of the showy qualities which Mr. Huxter wanted?

"You wicked odious creature," Miss Blanche said, "I believe that you are enraged with Fanny for being so impudent as to forget you, and that you are actually jealous of Mr. Huxter." Perhaps Miss Amory was right, as the blush which came in spite of himself and tingled upon Pendennis's cheek (one of those blows with which a man's vanity is constantly slapping his face) proved to Pen that he was angry to think he had been superseded by such a rival. By such a fellow as that! without any conceivable good quality! O Mr. Pendennis! (although this remark does not apply to such a smart fellow as you) if Nature had not made that provision for each sex in the credulity of the other, which sees good qualities where none exist, good looks in donkeys' ears, wit in their numskulls, and music in their bray, there would not have been near so much marrying and giving in marriage as now obtains, and as is necessary for the due propagation and continuance of the noble race to which we belong.

“Jealous or not,” Pen said, “and, Blanche, I don’t say no, I should have liked Fanny to have come to a better end than that. I don’t like histories that end in that cynical way; and when we arrive at the conclusion of the story of a pretty girl’s passion, to find such a figure as Huxter’s at the last page of the tale. Is a life a compromise, my lady fair, and the end of the battle of love an ignoble surrender? Is the search for the Cupid which my poor little Psyche pursued in the darkness — the god of her soul’s longing — the god of the blooming cheek and rainbow pinions — to result in Huxter smelling of tobacco and gallypots? I wish, though I don’t see it in life, that people could be like Jenny and Jessamy, or my Lord and Lady Clementina in the story-books and fashionable novels, and at once under the ceremony, and, as it were, at the parson’s benediction, become perfectly handsome and good and happy ever after.”

“And don’t you intend to be good and happy, pray, Monsieur le Misanthrope — and are you very discontented with your lot — and will your marriage be a compromise”—(asked the author of ‘Mes Larmes,’ with a charming moue)—“and is your Psyche an odious vulgar wretch? You wicked satirical creature, I can’t abide you! You take the hearts of young things, play with them, and fling them away with scorn. You ask for love and trample on it. You — you make me cry, that you do, Arthur, and — and don’t — and I won’t be consoled in that way — and I think Fanny was quite right in leaving such a heartless creature.”

“Again, I don’t say no,” said Pen, looking very gloomily at Blanche, and not offering by any means to repeat the attempt at consolation, which had elicited that sweet monosyllable “don’t” from the young lady. “I don’t think I have much of what people call heart; but I don’t profess it. I made my venture when I was eighteen, and lighted my lamp and went in search of Cupid. And what was my discovery of love? — a vulgar dancing-woman! I failed, as everybody does, almost everybody; only it is luckier to fail before marriage than after.”

“Merci du choix, Monsieur,” said the Sylphide, making a curtsy.

“Look, my little Blanche,” said Pen, taking her hand, and with his voice of sad good-humour; “at least I stoop to no flatteries.”

“Quite the contrary,” said Miss Blanche.

And tell you no foolish lies, as vulgar men do. Why should you and I, with our experience, ape romance and dissemble passion? I do not believe Miss Blanche Amory to be peerless among the beautiful, nor the greatest poetess, nor the most surpassing musician, any more than I believe you to be the tallest woman in the whole world — like the giantess whose picture we saw as we rode through the fair yesterday. But if I don’t set you up as a heroine, neither do I offer you your very humble servant as a hero. But I think you are — well, there, I think you are very sufficiently good-looking.”

“Merci,” Miss Blanche said, with another curtsy.

“I think you sing charmingly. I’m sure you’re clever. I hope and believe that you are good-natured, and that you will be companionable.”

“And so, provided I bring you a certain sum of money and a seat in Parliament, you condescend to fling to me your royal pocket-handkerchief,” said Blanche. “Que d’honneur! We used to call your Highness the Prince of Fair Oaks. What an honour to think that I am to be elevated to the throne, and to bring the seat in Parliament as backsheesh to the sultan! I am glad I am clever, and that I can play and sing to your liking; my songs will amuse my lord’s leisure.”

“And if thieves are about the house,” said Pen, grimly pursuing the simile, “forty besetting thieves in the shape of lurking cares and enemies in ambush and passions in arms, my Morgiana will dance round me with a tambourine, and kill all my rogues and thieves with a smile. Won’t she?” But Pen looked as if he did not believe that she would. “Ah, Blanche,” he continued after a pause, “don’t be angry; don’t be hurt at my truth-telling. — Don’t you see that I always take you at your word? You say you will be a slave and dance — I say, dance. You say, ‘I take you with what you bring.’ I say, ‘I take you with what you bring.’ To the necessary deceits and hypocrisies of our life, why add any that are useless and unnecessary? If I offer myself to you because I think we have a fair chance of being happy together, and because by your help I may get for both of us a good place and a not undistinguished name, why ask me to feign raptures and counterfeit romance, in which neither of us believe? Do you want me to come wooing in a Prince Prettyman’s dress from the masquerade warehouse, and to pay you compliments like Sir Charles Grandison? Do you want me to make you verses as in the days when we were — when we were children? I will if you like, and sell them to Bacon and Bungay afterwards. Shall I feed my pretty princess with bonbons?”

“Mais j’adore les bonbons, moi,” said the little Sylphide, with a queer piteous look.

"I can buy a hatful at Fortnum and Mason's for a guinea. And it shall have its bonbons, its pooty little sugar-plums, that it shall," Pen said with a bitter smile. "Nay, my dear, nay, my dearest little Blanche, don't cry. Dry the pretty eyes, I can't bear that;" and he proceeded to offer that consolation which the circumstance required, and which the tears, the genuine tears of vexation, which now sprang from the angry eyes of the author of 'Mes Larmes' demanded.

The scornful and sarcastic tone of Pendennis quite frightened and overcame the girl. "I— I don't want your consolation. I— I never was — so — spoken to before — by any of my — my — by anybody"— she sobbed out, with much simplicity.

"Anybody!" shouted out Pen, with a savage burst of laughter, and Blanche blushed one of the most genuine blushes which her cheek had ever exhibited, and she cried out, "O Arthur, vous etes un homme terrible!" She felt bewildered, frightened, oppressed, the worldly little flirt who had been playing at love for the last dozen years of her life, and yet not displeased at meeting a master.

"Tell me, Arthur," she said, after a pause in this strange love-making. "Why does Sir Francis Clavering give up his seat in Parliament?"

"Au fait, why does he give it to me?" asked Arthur, now blushing in his turn.

"You always mock me, sir," she said. "If it is good to be in Parliament, why does Sir Francis go out?"

"My uncle has talked him over. He always said that you were not sufficiently provided for. In the — the family disputes, when your mamma paid his debts so liberally, it was stipulated, I suppose, that you — that is, that I— that is, upon my word, I don't know why he goes out of Parliament," Pen said, with rather a forced laugh. "You see, Blanche, that you and I are two good little children, and that this marriage has been arranged for us by our mammas and uncles, and that we must be obedient, like a good little boy and girl."

So, when Pen went to London, he sent Blanche a box of bonbons, each sugar-plum of which was wrapped up in ready-made French verses, of the most tender kind; and, besides, despatched to her some poems of his own manufacture, quite as artless and authentic; and it was no wonder that he did not tell Warrington what his conversations with Miss Amory had been, of so delicate a sentiment were they, and of a nature so necessarily private.

And if, like many a worse and better man, Arthur Pendennis, the widow's son, was meditating an apostasy, and going to sell himself to — we all know whom — at least the renegade did not pretend to be a believer in the creed to which he was ready to swear. And if every woman and man in this kingdom, who has sold her or himself for money or position, as Mr. Pendennis was about to do, would but purchase a copy of his memoirs, what tons of volumes Messrs. Bradbury and Evans would sell!



CHAPTER LXVI

IN WHICH PEN BEGINS HIS CANVASS

Melancholy as the great house at Clavering Park had been in the days before his marriage, when its bankrupt proprietor was a refugee in foreign lands, it was not much more cheerful now when Sir Francis Clavering came to inhabit it. The greater part of the mansion was shut up, and the Baronet only occupied a few of the rooms on the ground floor, where his housekeeper and her assistant from the lodge-gate waited upon the luckless gentleman in his forced retreat, and cooked a part of the game which he spent the dreary mornings in shooting. Lightfoot, his man, had passed over to my Lady's service; and, as Pen was informed in a letter from Mr. Smirke, who performed the ceremony, had executed his prudent intention of marrying Mrs. Bonner, my Lady's woman, who, in her mature years, was stricken with the charms of the youth, and endowed him with her savings and her mature person.

To be landlord and landlady of the Clavering Arms was the ambition of both of them; and it was agreed that they were to remain in Lady Clavering's service until quarter-day arrived, when they were to take possession of their hotel. Pen graciously promised that he would give his election dinner there, when the Baronet should vacate his seat in the young man's favour; and, as it had been agreed by his uncle, to whom Clavering seemed to be able to refuse nothing, Arthur came down in September on a visit to Clavering Park, the owner of which was very glad to have a companion who would relieve his loneliness, and perhaps would lend him a little ready money.

Pen furnished his host with these desirable supplies a couple of days after he had made his appearance at Clavering; and no sooner were these small funds in Sir Francis's pocket, than the latter found he had business at Chatteris and at the neighbouring watering-places, of which ——— shire boasts many, and went off to see to his affairs, which were transacted, as might be supposed, at the county race-grounds and billiard-rooms. Arthur could live alone well enough, having many mental resources and amusements which did not require other persons' company: he could walk with the gamekeeper of a morning, and for the evenings there was a plenty of books and occupation for a literary genius like Mr. Arthur, who required but a cigar and a sheet of paper or two to make the night pass away pleasantly. In truth, in two or three days he had found the society of Sir Francis Clavering perfectly intolerable; and it was with a mischievous eagerness and satisfaction that he offered Clavering the little pecuniary aid which the latter according to his custom solicited, and supplied him with the means of taking flight from his own house.

Besides, our ingenious friend had to ingratiate himself with the townspeople of Clavering, and with the voters of the borough which he hoped to represent; and he set himself to this task with only the more eagerness, remembering how unpopular he had before been in Clavering, and determined to vanquish the odium which he had inspired amongst the simple people there. His sense of humour made him delight in this task. Naturally rather reserved and silent in public, he became on a sudden as frank, easy, and jovial as Captain Strong. He laughed with everybody who would exchange a laugh with him, shook hands right and left, with what may be certainly called a dexterous cordiality; made his appearance at the market-day and the farmers' ordinary; and, in fine, acted like a consummate hypocrite, and as gentlemen of the highest birth and most spotless integrity act when they wish to make themselves agreeable to their constituents, and have some end to gain of the country-folks. How is it that we allow ourselves not to be deceived, but to be ingratiated so readily by a glib tongue, a ready laugh, and a frank manner? We know, for the most part, that it is false coin, and we take it we know that it is flattery, which it costs nothing to distribute to everybody, and we had rather have it than be without it. Friend Pen went about at Clavering, laboriously simple and adroitly pleased, and quite a different being from the scornful and rather sulky young dandy whom the inhabitants remembered ten years ago.

The Rectory was shut up. Doctor Portman was gone, with his gout and his family, to Harrogate — an event which Pen deplored very much in a letter to the Doctor, in which, in a few kind and simple words, he expressed his regret at not seeing his old friend, whose advice he wanted and whose aid he might require some day: but Pen consoled himself for the Doctor's absence by making acquaintance with Mr. Simcoe, the opposition preacher, and with the two partners of the cloth-factory at Chatteris, and with the Independent preacher there, all of whom he met at Clavering Athenaeum, which the Liberal party had set up in accordance with the advanced spirit of the age, and perhaps in opposition to the aristocratic old reading-room, into which the Edinburgh Review had once scarcely got an admission, and where no tradesmen were

allowed an entrance. He propitiated the younger partner of the cloth-factory, by asking him to dine in a friendly way at the Park; he complimented the Honourable Mrs. Simcoe with hares and partridges from the same quarter, and a request to read her husband's last sermon; and being a little unwell one day, the rascal took advantage of the circumstance to show his tongue to Mr. Huxter, who sent him medicines and called the next morning. How delighted old Pendennis would have been with his pupil! Pen himself was amused with the sport in which he was engaged, and his success inspired him with a wicked good-humour.

And yet, as he walked out of Clavering of a night, after "presiding" at a meeting of the Athenaeum, or working through an evening with Mrs. Simcoe, who, with her husband, was awed by the young Londoner's reputation, and had heard of his social successes; as he passed over the old familiar bridge of the rushing Brawl, and heard that well-remembered sound of waters beneath, and saw his own cottage of Fair Oaks among the trees, their darkling outlines clear against the starlit sky, different thoughts no doubt came to the young man's mind, and awakened pangs of grief and shame there. There still used to be a light in the windows of the room which he remembered so well, and in which the Saint who loved him had passed so many hours of care and yearning and prayer. He turned away his gaze from the faint light which seemed to pursue him with its wan reproachful gaze, as though it was his mother's spirit watching and warning. How clear the night was! How keen the stars shone! how ceaseless the rush of the flowing waters! the old home trees whispered, and waved gently their dark heads and branches over the cottage roof. Yonder, in the faint starlight glimmer, was the terrace where, as a boy, he walked of summer evenings, ardent and trustful, unspotted, untried, ignorant of doubts or passions; sheltered as yet from the world's contamination in the pure and anxious bosom of love. The clock of the near town tolling midnight, with a clang, disturbs our wanderer's reverie, and sends him onwards towards his night's resting-place, through the lodge into Clavering avenue, and under the dark arcades of the rustling limes.

When he sees the cottage the next time, it is smiling in sunset; those bedroom windows are open where the light was burning the night before; and Pen's tenant, Captain Stokes, of the Bombay Artillery (whose mother, old Mrs. Stokes, lives in Clavering), receives his landlord's visit with great cordiality: shows him over the grounds and the new pond he has made in the back-garden from the stables; talks to him confidentially about the roof and chimneys, and begs Mr. Pendennis to name a day when he will do himself and Mrs. Stokes the pleasure to, etc. Pen, who has been a fortnight in the country, excuses himself for not having called sooner upon the Captain by frankly owning that he had not the heart to do it. "I understand you, sir," the Captain says; and Mrs. Stokes, who had slipped away at the ring of the bell (how odd it seemed to Pen to ring the bell!), comes down in her best gown, surrounded by her children. The young ones clamb about Stokes: the boy jumps into an arm-chair. It was Pen's father's arm-chair; and Arthur remembers the days when he would as soon have thought of mounting the king's throne as of seating himself in that arm-chair. He asks if Miss Stokes — she is the very image of her mamma — if she can play? He should like to hear a tune on that piano. She plays. He hears the notes of the old piano once more, enfeebled by age, but he does not listen to the player. He is listening to Laura singing as in the days of their youth, and sees his mother bending and beating time over the shoulder of the girl.

The dinner at Fair Oaks given in Pen's honour by his tenant, and at which old Mrs. Stokes, Captain Glanders, Squire Hobnel and the clergyman and his lady from Tinckleton, were present, was very stupid and melancholy for Pen, until the waiter from Clavering (who aided the captain's stable-boy and Mrs. Stokes's butler) whom Pen remembered as a street boy, and who was now indeed barber in that place, dropped a plate over Pen's shoulder, on which Mr. Hobnell (who also employed him) remarked, "I suppose, Hodson, your hands are slippery with bear's-grease. He's always dropping the crockery about, that Hodson is — haw, haw!" On which Hodson blushed, and looked so disconcerted, that Pen burst out laughing; and good-humour and hilarity were the order of the evening. For the second course, there was a hare and partridges top and bottom, and when after the withdrawal of the servants Pen said to the Vicar of Tinckleton, "I think, Mr. Stooks, you should have asked Hodson to cut the hare," the joke was taken instantly by the clergyman, who was followed in the course of a few minutes by Captains Stokes and Glanders, and by Mr. Hobnell, who arrived rather late, but with an immense guffaw.

While Mr. Pen was engaged in the country in the above schemes, it happened that the lady of his choice, if not of his affections, came up to London from the Tunbridge villa bound upon shopping expeditions or important business, and in company of old Mrs. Bonner, her mother's maid, who had lived and quarrelled with Blanche many times since she was an infant, and who now being about to quit Lady Clavering's service for the hymeneal state, was anxious like a good soul to

bestow some token of respectful kindness upon her old and young mistress before she quitted them altogether, to take her post as the wife of Lightfoot, and landlady of the Clavering Arms.

The honest woman took the benefit of Miss Amory's taste to make the purchase which she intended to offer her ladyship; and, requested the fair Blanche to choose something for herself that should be to her liking, and remind her of her old nurse who had attended her through many a wakeful night, and eventful teething, and childish fever, and who loved her like a child of her own a'most. These purchases were made, and as the nurse insisted on buying an immense Bible for Blanche, the young lady suggested that Bonner should purchase a large Johnson's Dictionary for her mamma. Each of the two women might certainly profit by the present made to her.

Then Mrs. Bonner invested money in some bargains in linen-drapery, which might be useful at the Clavering Arms, and bought a red and yellow neck-handkerchief, which Blanche could see at once was intended for Mr. Lightfoot. Younger than herself by at least five-and-twenty years, Mrs. Bonner regarded that youth with a fondness at once parental and conjugal, and loved to lavish ornaments on his person, which already glittered with pins, rings, shirt-studs, and chains and seals, purchased at the good creature's expense.

It was in the Strand that Mrs. Bonner made her purchases, aided by Miss Blanche, who liked the fun very well; and when the old lady had bought everything that she desired, and was leaving the shop, Blanche, with a smiling face, and a sweet bow to one of the shopmen, said, "Pray, sir, will you have the kindness to show us the way to Shepherd's Inn?"

Shepherd's Inn was but a few score of yards off, Old Castle Street was close by, the elegant young shopman pointed out the turning which the young lady was to take, and she and her companion walked off together.

"Shepherd's Inn! what can you want in Shepherd's Inn, Miss Blanche?" Bonner inquired. "Mr. Strong lives there. Do you want to go and see the Captain?"

"I should like to see the Captain very well. I like the Captain; but it is not him I want. I want to see a dear little good girl, who was very kind to — to Mr. Arthur when he was so ill last year, and saved his life almost; and I want to thank her and ask her if she would like anything. I looked out several of my dresses on purpose this morning, Bonner!" and she looked at Bonner as if she had a right to admiration, and had performed an act of remarkable virtue. Blanche, indeed, was very fond of sugar-plums; she would have fed the poor upon them, when she had had enough, and given a country girl a ball-dress, when she had worn it and was tired of it.

"Pretty girl — pretty young woman!" mumbled Mrs. Bonner. "I know I want no pretty young women to come about Lightfoot," and in imagination she peopled the Clavering Arms with a harem of the most hideous chambermaids and barmaids.

Blanche, with pink and blue, and feathers, and flowers, and trinkets (that wondrous invention, a chatelaine, was not extant yet, or she would have had one, we may be sure), and a shot-silk dress, and a wonderful mantle, and a charming parasol, presented a vision of elegance and beauty such as bewildered the eyes of Mrs. Bolton, who was scrubbing the lodge-floor of Shepherd's Inn and caused Betsy-Jane and Ameliar-Ann to look with delight.

Blanche looked on them with a smile of ineffable sweetness and protection; like Rowena going to see Rebecca; like Marie Antoinette visiting the poor in the famine; like the Marchioness of Carabas alighting from her carriage-and-four at a pauper-tenant's door, and taking from John No II. the packet of Epsom salts for the invalid's benefit, carrying it with her own imperial hand into the sick-room — Blanche felt a queen stepping down from her throne to visit a subject, and enjoyed all the bland consciousness of doing a good action.

"My good woman! I want to see Fanny — Fanny Bolton; is she here?"

Mrs. Bolton had a sudden suspicion, from the splendour of Blanche's appearance, that it must be a play-actor, or something worse.

"What do you want with Fanny, pray?" she asked.

"I am Lady Clavering's daughter — you have heard of Sir Francis Clavering? And I wish very much indeed to see Fanny Bolton."

"Pray step in, miss. — Betsy-Jane, where's Fanny?"

Betsy-Jane said Fanny had gone into No. 3 staircase, on which Mrs. Bolton said she was probably in Strong's rooms, and bade the child go and see if she was there.

"In Captain Strong's rooms! oh, let us go to Captain Strong's rooms," cried out Miss Blanche. "I know him very well. You dearest little girl, show us the way to Captain Strong!" cried out Miss Blanche, for the floor reeked with the recent scrubbing, and the goddess did not like the smell of brown-soap.

And as they passed up the stairs, a gentleman by the name of Costigan, who happened to be swaggering about the court, and gave a very knowing look with his "oi" under Blanche's bonnet, remarked to himself, "That's a devilish foine gyurll, bedad, goan up to Sthrong and Altamont: they're always having foine gyurlls up their stairs."

"Hallo — hwhat's that?" he presently said, looking up at the windows: from which some piercing shrieks issued.

At the sound of the voice of a distressed female the intrepid Cos rushed up the stairs as fast as his old legs would carry him, being nearly overthrown by Strong's servant, who was descending the stair. Cos found the outer door of Strong's chambers opened, and began to thunder at the knocker. After many and fierce knocks, the inner door was partially unclosed, and Strong's head appeared.

"It's oi, me boy. Hwhat's that noise, Sthrong?" asked Costigan.

"Go to the d —!" was the only answer, and the door was shut on Cos's venerable red nose: and he went downstairs muttering threats at the indignity offered to him, and vowing that he would have satisfaction. In the meanwhile the reader, more lucky than Captain Costigan, will have the privilege of being made acquainted with the secret which was withheld from that officer.

It has been said of how generous a disposition Mr. Altamont was, and when he was well supplied with funds how liberally he spent them. Of a hospitable turn, he had no greater pleasure than drinking in company with other people; so that there was no man more welcome at Greenwich and Richmond than the Emissary of the Nawaub of Lucknow.

Now it chanced that on the day when Blanche and Mrs. Bonner ascended the staircase to Strong's room in Shepherd's Inn, the Colonel had invited Miss Delaval of the ——— Theatre Royal, and her mother, Mrs. Hodge, to a little party down the river, and it had been agreed that they were to meet at Chambers, and thence walk down to a port in the neighbouring Strand to take water. So that when Mrs. Bonner and Mes Larmes came to the door, where Grady, Altamont's servant, was standing, the domestic said, "Walk in, ladies," with the utmost affability, and led them into the room, which was arranged as if they had been expected there. Indeed, two bouquets of flowers, bought at Covent Garden that morning, and instances of the tender gallantry of Altamont, were awaiting his guests upon the table. Blanche smelt at the bouquet, and put her pretty little dainty nose into it, and tripped about the room, and looked behind the curtains, and at the books and prints, and at the plan of Clavering estate hanging up on the wall; and had asked the servant for Captain Strong, and had almost forgotten his existence and the errand about which she had come, namely, to visit Fanny Bolton; so pleased was she with the new adventure, and the odd, strange, delightful, droll little idea of being in a bachelor's chambers in a queer old place in the city!

Grady meanwhile, with a pair of ample varnished boots, had disappeared into his master's room. Blanche had hardly the leisure to remark how big the boots were, and how unlike Mr. Strong's.

"The women's come," said Grady, helping his master to the boots.

"Did you ask 'em if they would take a glass of anything?" asked Altamont.

Grady came out — "He says, will you take anything to drink?" the domestic asked of them; at which Blanche, amused with the artless question, broke out into a pretty little laugh, and asked of Mrs. Bonner, "Shall we take anything to drink?"

"Well, you may take it or lave it," said Mr. Grady, who thought his offer slighted, and did not like the contemptuous manners of the new-comers, and so left them.

"Will we take anything to drink?" Blanche asked again: and again began to laugh.

"Grady," bawled out a voice from the chamber within:— a voice that made Mrs. Bonner start.

Grady did not answer: his song was heard from afar off, from the kitchen, his upper room, where Grady was singing at his work.

"Grady, my coat!" again roared the voice from within.

"Why, that is not Mr. Strong's voice," said the Sylphide, still half laughing. "Grady my coat! — Bonner, who is Grady my coat? We ought to go away."

Bonner still looked quite puzzled at the sound of the voice which she had heard.

The bedroom door here opened and the individual who had called out “Grady, my coat,” appeared without the garment in question.

He nodded to the women, and walked across the room. “I beg your pardon, ladies. Grady, bring my coat down, sir! Well, my dears, it’s a fine day, and we’ll have a jolly lark at —”

He said no more; for here Mrs. Bonner, who had been looking at him with scared eyes, suddenly shrieked out, “Amory! Amory!” and fell back screaming and fainting in her chair.

The man, so apostrophised, looked at the woman an instant, and, rushing up to Blanche, seized her and kissed her. “Yes, Betsy,” he said, “by G— it is me. Mary Bonner knew me. What a fine gal we’ve grown! But it’s a secret, mind. I’m dead, though I’m your father. Your poor mother don’t know it. What a pretty gal we’ve grown! Kiss me — kiss me close, my Betsy? D—— it, I love you: I’m your old father.”

Betsy or Blanche looked quite bewildered, and began to scream too — once, twice, thrice; and it was her piercing shrieks which Captain Costigan heard as he walked the court below.

At the sound of these shrieks the perplexed parent clasped his hands (his wristbands were open, and on one brawny arm you could see letters tattooed in blue), and, rushing to his apartment, came back with an eau-de-Cologne bottle from his grand silver dressing-case, with the fragrant contents of which he began liberally to sprinkle Bonner and Blanche.

The screams of these women brought the other occupants of the chambers into the room: Grady from his kitchen, and Strong from his apartment in the upper story. The latter at once saw from the aspect of the two women what had occurred.

“Grady, go and wait in the court,” he said, “and if anybody comes — you understand me.”

“Is it the play-actress and her mother?” said Grady.

“Yes — confound you — say that there’s nobody in chambers, and the party’s off for today.”

“Shall I say that, sir? and after I bought them bokays?” asked Grady of his master.

“Yes,” said Amory, with a stamp of his foot; and Strong going to the door, too, reached it just in time to prevent the entrance of Captain Costigan, who had mounted the stair.

The ladies from the theatre did not have their treat to Greenwich, nor did Blanche pay her visit to Fanny Bolton on that day. And Cos, who took occasion majestically to inquire of Grady what the mischief was, and who was crying? — had for answer that ’twas a woman, another of them, and that they were, in Grady’s opinion, the cause of ‘most all the mischief in the world.



CHAPTER LXVII

IN WHICH PEN BEGINS TO DOUBT ABOUT HIS ELECTION

Whilst Pen, in his own county, was thus carrying on his selfish plans and parliamentary schemes, news came to him that Lady Rockminster had arrived at Baymouth, and had brought with her our friend Laura. At the announcement that Laura his sister was near him, Pen felt rather guilty. His wish was to stand higher in her esteem, perhaps; than in that of any other person in the world. She was his mother's legacy to him. He was to be her patron and protector in some sort. How would she brave the news which he had to tell her; and how should he explain the plans which he was meditating? He felt as if neither he nor Blanche could bear Laura's dazzling glance of calm scrutiny, and as if he would not dare to disclose his worldly hopes and ambitions to that spotless judge. At her arrival at Baymouth, he wrote a letter thither which contained a great number of fine phrases and protests of affection, and a great deal of easy satire and raillery; in the midst of all which Mr. Pen could not help feeling that he was in panic, and that he was acting like a rogue and hypocrite.

How was it that a simple country girl should be the object of fear and trembling to such an accomplished gentleman as Mr. Pen? His worldly tactics and diplomacy, his satire and knowledge of the world, could not bear the test of her purity, he felt somehow. And he had to own to himself that his affairs were in such a position, that he could not tell the truth to that honest soul. As he rode from Clavering to Baymouth he felt as guilty as a schoolboy who doesn't know his lesson and is about to face the awful master. For is not truth the master always, and does she not have the power and hold the book?

Under the charge of her kind, though somewhat wayward and absolute patroness, Lady Rockminster, Laura had seen somewhat of the world in the last year, had gathered some accomplishments, and profited by the lessons of society. Many a girl who had been accustomed to that too great tenderness in which Laura's early life had been passed, would have been unfitted for the changed existence which she now had to lead. Helen worshipped her two children, and thought, as home-bred women will, that all the world was made for them, or to be considered after them. She tended Laura with a watchfulness of affection which never left her. If she had a headache, the widow was as alarmed as if there had never been an aching head before in the world. She slept and woke, read and moved under her mother's fond superintendence, which was now withdrawn from her, along with the tender creature whose anxious heart would beat no more. And painful moments of grief and depression no doubt Laura had, when she stood in the great careless world alone. Nobody heeded her griefs or her solitude. She was not quite the equal, in social rank, of the lady whose companion she was, or of the friends and relatives of the imperious, but kind old dowager. Some very likely bore her no goodwill — some, perhaps, slighted her: it might have been that servants were occasionally rude; their mistress certainly was often. Laura not seldom found herself in family meetings, the confidence and familiarity of which she felt were interrupted by her intrusion; and her sensitiveness of course was wounded at the idea that she should give or feel this annoyance. How many governesses are there in the world, thought cheerful Laura — how many ladies, whose necessities make them slaves and companions by profession! What bad tempers and coarse unkindness have not these to encounter? How infinitely better my lot is with these really kind and affectionate people than that of thousands of unprotected girls! It was with this cordial spirit that our young lady adapted herself to her new position; and went in advance of her fortune with a trustful smile.

Did you ever know a person who met Fortune in that way, whom the goddess did not regard kindly? Are not even bad people won by a constant cheerfulness and a pure and affectionate heart? When the babes in the wood, in the ballad, looked up fondly and trustfully at those notorious rogues whom their uncle had set to make away with the little folks, we all know how one of the rascals relented, and made away with the other — not having the heart to be unkind to so much innocence and beauty. Oh, happy they who have that virgin loving trust and sweet smiling confidence in the world, and fear no evil because they think none! Miss Laura Bell was one of these fortunate persons; and besides the gentle widow's little cross, which, as we have seen, Pen gave her, had such a sparkling and brilliant kohinoor in her bosom, as is even more precious than that famous jewel; for it not only fetches a price, and is retained, by its owner in another world where diamonds are stated to be of no value, but here, too, is of inestimable worth to its possessor; is a talisman against evil, and lightens up the darkness of life, like Cogia Hassan's famous stone.

So that before Miss Bell had been a year in Lady Rockminster's house, there was not a single person in it whose love

she had not won by the use of this talisman. From the old lady to the lowest dependent of her bounty, Laura had secured the goodwill and kindness of everybody. With a mistress of such a temper, my Lady's woman (who had endured her mistress for forty years, and had been clawed and scolded and jibed every day and night in that space of time) could not be expected to have a good temper of her own; and was at first angry against Miss Laura, as she had been against her Ladyship's fifteen preceding companions. But when Laura was ill at Paris, this old woman nursed her in spite of her mistress, who was afraid of catching the fever, and absolutely fought for her medicine with Martha from Fair Oaks, now advanced to be Miss Laura's own maid. As she was recovering, Grandjean the chef wanted to kill her by the numbers of delicacies which he dressed for her, and wept when she ate her first slice of chicken. The Swiss major-domo of the house celebrated Miss Bell's praises in almost every European language, which he spoke with indifferent incorrectness; the coachman was happy to drive her out; the page cried when he heard she was ill; and Calverley and Coldstream (those two footmen, so large, so calm ordinarily, and so difficult to move) broke out into extraordinary hilarity at the news of her convalescence, and intoxicated the page at a wine-shop, to fete Laura's recovery. Even Lady Diana Pynsent (our former acquaintance Mr. Pynsent had married by this time), Lady Diana, who had had a considerable dislike to Laura for some time, was so enthusiastic as to say that she thought Miss Bell was a very agreeable person, and that grandmamma had found a great *trouvaille* in her. All this goodwill and kindness Laura had acquired, not by any arts, not by any flattery, but by the simple force of good-nature, and by the blessed gift of pleasing and being pleased.

On the one or two occasions when he had seen Lady Rockminster, the old lady, who did not admire him, had been very pitiless and abrupt with our young friend, and perhaps Pen expected when he came to Baymouth to find Laura installed in her house in the quality of humble companion, and treated no better than himself. When she heard of his arrival she came running downstairs, and I am not sure that she did not embrace him in the presence of Calverley and Coldstream: not that those gentlemen ever told: if the *fractus orbis* had come to a smash, if Laura, instead of kissing Pen, had taken her scissors and snipped off his head — Calverley and Coldstream would have looked on impavily, without allowing a grain of powder to be disturbed by the calamity.

Laura had so much improved in health and looks that Pen could not but admire her. The frank and kind eyes which met his, beamed with good-health; the cheek which he kissed blushed with beauty. As he looked at her, artless and graceful, pure and candid, he thought he had never seen her so beautiful. Why should he remark her beauty now so much, and remark too to himself that he had not remarked it sooner? He took her fair trustful hand and kissed it fondly: he looked in her bright clear eyes, and read in them that kindling welcome which he was always sure to find there. He was affected and touched by the tender tone and the pure sparkling glance; their innocence smote him somehow and moved him.

"How good you are to me, Laura — sister!" said Pen; "I don't deserve that you should — that you should be so kind to me."

"Mamma left you to me," she said, stooping down and brushing his forehead with her lips hastily. "You know you were to come to me when you were in trouble, or to tell me when you were very happy: that was our compact, Arthur, last year, before we parted. Are you very happy now, or are you in trouble — which is it?" and she looked at him with an arch glance of kindness. "Do you like going into Parliament! Do you intend to distinguish yourself there? How I shall tremble for your first speech!"

"Do you know about the Parliament plan, then?" Pen asked.

"Know? — all the world knows! I have heard it talked about many times. Lady Rockminster's doctor talked about it today. I daresay it will be in the *Chatteris* paper tomorrow. It is all over the county that Sir Francis Clavering, of Clavering, is going to retire, in behalf of Mr. Arthur Pendennis, of Fair Oaks; and that the young and beautiful Miss Blanche Amory is —"

"What! that too?" asked Pendennis.

"That, too, dear Arthur. *Tout se sait*, as somebody would say, whom I intend to be very fond of; and who I am sure is very clever and pretty. I have had a letter from Blanche. The kindest of letters. She speaks so warmly of you, Arthur! I hope — I know she feels what she writes. — When is it to be, Arthur? Why did you not tell me? I may come and live with you then, mayn't I?"

"My home is yours, dear Laura, and everything I have," Pen said. "If I did not tell you, it was because — because — I do

not know: nothing is decided as yet. No words have passed between us. But you think Blanche could be happy with me — don't you? Not a romantic fondness, you know. I have no heart, I think; I've told her so: only a sober-sided attachment:— and want my wife on one side of the fire and my sister on the other — Parliament in the session and Fair Oaks in the holidays, and my Laura never to leave me until somebody who has a right comes to take her away."

Somebody who has a right — somebody with a right! Why did Pen, as he looked at the girl and slowly uttered the words, begin to feel angry and jealous of the invisible somebody with the right to take her away? Anxious, but a minute ago, how she would take the news regarding his probable arrangements with Blanche, Pen was hurt somehow that she received the intelligence so easily, and took his happiness for granted.

"Until somebody comes," Laura said, with a laugh, "I will stay at home and be aunt Laura, and take care of the children when Blanche is in the world. I have arranged it all. I am an excellent housekeeper. Do you know I have been to market at Paris with Mrs. Beck, and have taken some lessons from M. Grandjean? And I have had some lessons in Paris in singing too, with the money which you sent me, you kind boy: and I can sing much better now: and I have learned to dance, though not so well as Blanche; and when you become a minister of state, Blanche shall present me:" and with this, and with a provoking good-humour, she performed for him the last Parisian curtsy.

Lady Rockminster came in whilst this curtsy was being performed, and gave to Arthur one finger to shake; which he took, and over which he bowed as well as he could, which, in truth, was very clumsily.

"So you are going to be married, sir," said the old lady.

"Scold him, Lady Rockminster, for not telling us," Laura said, going away: which, in truth, the old lady began instantly to do. "So you are going to marry, and to go into Parliament in place of that good-for-nothing Sir Francis Clavering. I wanted him to give my grandson his seat — why did he not give my grandson his seat? I hope you are to have a great deal of money with Miss Amory. I wouldn't take her without a great deal."

"Sir Francis Clavering is tired of Parliament," Pen said, wincing, "and — and I rather wish to attempt that career. The rest of the story is at least premature."

"I wonder, when you had Laura at home, you could take up with such an affected little creature as that," the old lady continued.

"I am very sorry Miss Amory does not please your ladyship," said Pen, smiling.

"You mean — that it is no affair of mine, and that I am not going to marry her. Well, I'm not, and I'm very glad I am not — a little odious thing — when I think that a man could prefer her to my Laura, I've no patience with him, and so I tell you, Mr. Arthur Pendennis."

"I am very glad you see Laura with such favourable eyes," Pen said.

"You are very glad, and you are very sorry. What does it matter, sir, whether you are very glad or very sorry? A young man who prefers Miss Amory to Miss Bell has no business to be sorry or glad. A young man who takes up with such a crooked lump of affectation as that little Amory — for she is crooked, I tell you she is — after seeing my Laura, has no right to hold up his head again. Where is your friend Bluebeard? The tall young man, I mean — Warrington, isn't his name? Why does he not come down, and marry Laura? What do the young men mean by not marrying such a girl as that? They all marry for money now. You are all selfish and cowards. We ran away with each other, and made foolish matches in my time. I have no patience with the young men! When I was at Paris in the winter, I asked all the three attaches at the Embassy why they did not fall in love with Miss Bell? They laughed — they said they wanted money. You are all selfish — you are all cowards."

"I hope before you offered Miss Bell to the attaches," said Pen, with some heat, "you did her the favour to consult her?"

"Miss Bell has only a little money. Miss Bell must marry soon. Somebody must make a match for her, sir; and a girl can't offer herself," said the old dowager, with great state. "Laura, my dear, I've been telling your cousin that all the young men are selfish; and that there is not a pennyworth of romance left among them. He is as bad as the rest."

"Have you been asking Arthur why he won't marry me?" said Laura, with a kindling smile, coming back and taking her cousin's hand. (She had been away, perhaps, to hide some traces of emotion, which she did not wish others to see.) "He is going to marry somebody else; and I intend to be very fond of her, and to go and live with them, provided he then does not ask every bachelor who comes to his house, why he does not marry me?"

The terrors of Pen's conscience being thus appeased, and his examination before Laura over without any reproaches

on the part of the latter, Pen began to find that his duty and inclination led him constantly to Baymouth, where Lady Rockminster informed him that a place was always reserved for him at her table. "And I recommend you to come often," the old lady said, "for Grandjean is an excellent cook, and to be with Laura and me will do your manners good. It is easy to see that you are always thinking about yourself. Don't blush and stammer — almost all young men are always thinking about themselves. My sons and grandsons always were until I cured them. Come here, and let us teach you to behave properly; you will not have to carve, that is done at the side-table. Hecker will give you as much wine as is good for you; and on days when you are very good and amusing you shall have some champagne. Hecker, mind what I say. Mr. Pendennis is Miss Laura's brother; and you will make him comfortable, and see that he does not have too much wine, or disturb me whilst I am taking my nap after dinner. You are selfish: I intend to cure you of being selfish. You will dine here when you have no other engagements; and if it rains you had better put up at the hotel." As long as the good lady could order everybody round about her, she was not hard to please; and all the slaves and subjects of her little dowager court trembled before her, but loved her.

She did not receive a very numerous or brilliant society. The doctor, of course, was admitted as a constant and faithful visitor; the vicar and his curate; and on public days the vicar's wife and daughters, and some of the season visitors at Baymouth, were received at the old lady's entertainments: but generally the company was a small one, and Mr. Arthur drank his wine by himself, when Lady Rockminster retired to take her doze, and to be played and sung to sleep by Laura after dinner.

"If my music can give her a nap," said the good-natured girl, "ought I not to be very glad that it can do so much good? Lady Rockminster sleeps very little of nights: and I used to read to her until I fell ill at Paris, since when she will not hear of my sitting up."

"Why did you not write to me when you were ill?" asked Pen, with a blush.

"What good could you do me? I had Martha to nurse me and the doctor every day. You are too busy to write to women or to think about them. You have your books and your newspapers, and your politics and your railroads to occupy you. I wrote when I was well."

And Pen looked at her, and blushed again, as he remembered that, during all the time of her illness, he had never written to her and had scarcely thought about her.

In consequence of his relationship, Pen was free to walk and ride with his cousin constantly, and in the course of those walks and rides, could appreciate the sweet frankness of her disposition, and the truth, simplicity, and kindness of her fair and spotless heart. In their mother's lifetime, she had never spoken so openly or so cordially as now. The desire of poor Helen to make an union between her two children, had caused a reserve on Laura's part towards Pen; for which, under the altered circumstances of Arthur's life, there was now no necessity. He was engaged to another woman; and Laura became his sister at once — hiding, or banishing from herself, any doubts which she might have as to his choice; striving to look cheerfully forward, and hope for his prosperity; promising herself to do all that affection might do to make her mother's darling happy.

Their talk was often about the departed mother. And it was from a thousand stories which Laura told him that Arthur was made aware how constant and absorbing that silent maternal devotion had been; which had accompanied him present and absent through life, and had only ended with the fond widow's last breath. One day the people in Clavering saw a lad in charge of a couple of horses at the churchyard-gate: and it was told over the place that Pen and Laura had visited Helen's grave together. Since Arthur had come down into the country, he had been there once or twice: but the sight of the sacred stone had brought no consolation to him. A guilty man doing a guilty deed: a mere speculator, content to lay down his faith and honour for a fortune and a worldly career; and owning that his life was but a contemptible surrender — what right had he in the holy place? what booted it to him in the world he lived in, that others were no better than himself? Arthur and Laura rode by the gates of Fair Oaks; and he shook hands with his tenant's children, playing on the lawn and the terrace — Laura looked steadily at the cottage wall, at the creeper on the porch and the magnolia growing up to her window. "Mr. Pendennis rode by today," one of the boys told his mother, "with a lady, and he stopped and talked to us, and he asked for a bit of honeysuckle off the porch, and gave it the lady. I couldn't see if she was pretty; she had her veil down. She was riding one of Cramp's horses, out of Baymouth."

As they rode over the downs between home and Baymouth, Pen did not speak much, though they rode very close

together. He was thinking what a mockery life was, and how men refuse happiness when they may have it; or, having it, kick it down; or barter it, with their eyes open, for a little worthless money or beggarly honour. And then the thought came, what does it matter for the little space? The lives of the best and purest of us are consumed in a vain desire, and end in a disappointment: as the dear soul's who sleeps in her grave yonder. She had her selfish ambition, as much as Caesar had; and died, baulked of her life's longing. The stone covers over our hopes and our memories. Our place knows us not. "Other people's children are playing on the grass," he broke out, in a hard voice, "where you and I used to play, Laura. And you see how the magnolia we planted has grown up since our time. I have been round to one or two of the cottages where my mother used to visit. It is scarcely more than a year that she is gone, and the people whom she used to benefit care no more for her death than for Queen Anne's. We are all selfish: the world is selfish: there are but a few exceptions, like you, my dear, to shine like good deeds in a naughty world, and make the blackness more dismal."

"I wish you would not speak in that way, Arthur," said Laura, looking down and bending her head to the honeysuckle on her breast. "When you told the little boy to give me this, you were not selfish."

"A pretty sacrifice I made to get it for you!" said the sneerer.

"But your heart was kind and full of love when you did so. One cannot ask for more than love and kindness; and if you think humbly of yourself Arthur, the love and kindness are — diminished — are they? I often thought our dearest mother spoiled you at home, by worshipping you; and that if you are — I hate the word — what you say, her too great fondness helped to make you so. And as for the world, when men go out into it, I suppose they cannot be otherwise than selfish. You have to fight for yourself, and to get on for yourself, and to make a name for yourself. Mamma and your uncle both encouraged you in this ambition. If it is a vain thing, why pursue it? I suppose such a clever man as you intend to do a great deal of good to the country, by going into Parliament, or you would not wish to be there. What are you going to do when you are in the House of Commons?"

"Women don't understand about politics, my dear," Pen said sneering at himself as he spoke.

"But why don't you make us understand? I could never tell about Mr. Pynsent why he should like to be there so much. He is not a clever man —"

"He certainly is not a genius, Pynsent," said Pen.

"Lady Diana says that he attends Committees all day; that then again he is at the House all night; that he always votes as he is told; that he never speaks; that he will never get on beyond a subordinate place; and as his grandmother tells him, he is choked with red-tape. Are you going to follow the same career; Arthur? What is there in it so brilliant that you should be so eager for it? I would rather that you should stop at home, and write books — good books, kind books, with gentle kind thoughts, such as you have, dear Arthur, and such as might do people good to read. And if you do not win fame, what then? You own it is vanity, and you can live very happily without it. I must not pretend to advise; but I take you at your own word about the world; and as you own it is wicked, and that it tires you, ask you why you don't leave it?"

"And what would you have me do?" asked Arthur.

"I would have you bring your wife to Fairoaks to live there, and study, and do good round about you. I would like to see your own children playing on the lawn, Arthur, and that we might pray in our mother's church again once more, dear brother. If the world is a temptation, are we not told to pray that we may not be led into it?"

"Do you think Blanche would make a good wife for a petty country gentleman? Do you think I should become the character very well, Laura?" Pen asked. "Remember temptation walks about the hedgerows as well as the city streets: and idleness is the greatest tempter of all."

"What does — does Mr. Warrington say?" said Laura, as a blush mounted up to her cheek, and of which Pen saw the fervour, though Laura's veil fell over her face to hide it.

Pen rode on by Laura's side silently for a while. George's name so mentioned brought back the past to him, and the thoughts which he had once had regarding George and Laura. Why should the recurrence of the thought agitate him, now that he knew the union was impossible? Why should he be curious to know if, during the months of their intimacy, Laura had felt a regard for Warrington? From that day until the present time George had never alluded to his story, and Arthur remembered now that since then George had scarcely ever mentioned Laura's name.

At last he came close to her. "Tell me something, Laura," he said.

She put back her veil and looked at him. "What is it, Arthur?" she asked — though from the tremor of her voice she

guessed very well.

"Tell me — but for George's misfortune — I never knew him speak of it before or since that day — would you — would you have given him — what you refused me?"

"Yes, Pen," she said, bursting into tears,

"He deserved you better than I did," poor Arthur groaned forth, with an indescribable pang at his heart. "I am but a selfish wretch, and George is better, nobler, truer, than I am. God bless him!"

"Yes, Pen," said Laura, reaching out her hand to her cousin, and he put his arm round her, and for a moment she sobbed on his shoulder.

The gentle girl had had her secret, and told it. In the widow's last journey from Fair Oaks, when hastening with her mother to Arthur's sick-bed, Laura had made a different confession; and it was only when Warrington told his own story, and described the hopeless condition of his life, that she discovered how much her feelings had changed, and with what tender sympathy, with what great respect, delight, and admiration she had grown to regard her cousin's friend. Until she knew that some plans she might have dreamed of were impossible, and that Warrington, reading in her heart, perhaps, had told his melancholy story to warn her, she had not asked herself whether it was possible that her affections could change; and had been shocked and seared by the discovery of the truth. How should she have told it to Helen, and confessed her shame? Poor Laura felt guilty before her friend, with the secret which she dared not confide to her; felt as if she had been ungrateful for Helen's love and regard; felt as if she had been wickedly faithless to Pen in withdrawing that love from him which he did not even care to accept; humbled even and repentant before Warrington, lest she should have encouraged him by undue sympathy, or shown the preference which she began to feel.

The catastrophe which broke up Laura's home, and the grief and anguish which she felt for her mother's death, gave her little leisure for thoughts more selfish; and by the time she rallied from that grief the minor one was also almost cured. It was but for a moment that she had indulged a hope about Warrington. Her admiration and respect for him remained as strong as ever. But the tender feeling with which she knew she had regarded him, was schooled into such calmness, that it may be said to have been dead and passed away. The pang which it left behind was one of humility and remorse. "Oh, how wicked and proud I was about Arthur," she thought, "how self-confident and unforgiving! I never forgave from my heart this poor girl, who was fond of him, or him for encouraging her love; and I have been more guilty than she, poor, little, artless creature! I, professing to love one man, could listen to another only too eagerly; and would not pardon the change of feelings in Arthur, whilst I myself was changing and unfaithful." And so humiliating herself, and acknowledging her weakness, the poor girl sought for strength and refuge in the manner in which she had been accustomed to look for them.

She had done no wrong: but there are some folks who suffer for a fault ever so trifling as much as others whose stout consciences can walk under crimes of almost any weight; and poor Laura chose to fancy that she had acted in this delicate juncture of her life as a very great criminal. She determined that she had done Pen a great injury by withdrawing that love which, privately in her mother's hearing, she had bestowed upon him; that she had been ungrateful to her dead benefactress by ever allowing herself to think of another or of violating her promise; and that, considering her own enormous crimes, she ought to be very gentle in judging those of others, whose temptations were much greater, very likely, and whose motives she could not understand.

A year back Laura would have been indignant at the idea that Arthur should marry Blanche: and her high spirit would have risen, as she thought that from worldly motives he should stoop to one so unworthy. Now when the news was brought to her of such a chance (the intelligence was given to her by old Lady Rockminster, whose speeches were as direct and rapid as a slap on the face), the humbled girl winced a little at the blow, but bore it meekly, and with a desperate acquiescence. "He has a right to marry, he knows a great deal more of the world than I do," she argued with herself. "Blanche may not be so light-minded as she seemed, and who am I to be her judge? I daresay it is very good that Arthur should go into Parliament and distinguish himself, and my duty is to do everything that lies in my power to aid him and Blanche, and to make his home happy. I daresay I shall live with them. If I am godmother to one of their children, I will leave her my three thousand pounds!" And forthwith she began to think what she could give Blanche out of her small treasures, and how best to conciliate her affection. She wrote her forthwith a kind letter, in which, of course, no mention was made of the plans in contemplation, but in which Laura recalled old times, and spoke her goodwill, and in reply to this she received an eager answer from Blanche: in which not a word about marriage was said, to be sure, but Mr. Pendennis

was mentioned two or three times in the letter, and they were to be henceforth, dearest Laura, and dearest Blanche, and loving sisters, and so forth.

When Pen and Laura reached home, after Laura's confession (Pen's noble acknowledgment of his own inferiority and generous expression of love for Warrington, causing the girl's heart to throb, and rendering doubly keen those tears which she sobbed on his shoulder), a little slim letter was awaiting Miss Bell in the hall, which she trembled rather guiltily as she unsealed, and which Pen blushed as he recognised: for he saw instantly that it was from Blanche.

Laura opened it hastily, and cast her eyes quickly over it, as Pen kept his fixed on her, blushing.

"She dates from London," Laura said. "She has been with old Bonner, Lady Clavering's maid. Bonner is going to marry Lightfoot the butler. Where do you think Blanche has been?" she cried out eagerly.

"To Paris, to Scotland, to the Casino?"

"To Shepherd's Inn, to see Fanny; but Fanny wasn't there, and Blanche is going to leave a present for her. Isn't it kind of her and thoughtful?" And she handed the letter to Pen, who read —

"I saw Madame Mere, who was scrubbing the room, and looked at me with very scrubby looks; but la belle Fanny was not au logis; and as I heard that she was in Captain Strong's apartments, Bonner and I mounted au troisieme to see this famous beauty. Another disappointment — only the Chevalier Strong and a friend of his in the room: so we came away after all without seeing the enchanting Fanny.

"Je t'envoie mille et mille baisers. When will that horrid canvassing be over? Sleeves are worn, etc. etc. etc."

After dinner the doctor was reading the Times. "A young gentleman I attended when he was here some eight or nine years ago, has come into a fine fortune," the doctor said. "I see here announced the death of John Henry Foker, Esq., of Logwood Hall, at Pau, in the Pyrenees, on the 15th ult."



CHAPTER LXVIII

IN WHICH THE MAJOR IS BIDDEN TO STAND AND DELIVER

Any gentleman who has frequented the Wheel of Fortune public-house, where it may be remembered that Mr. James Morgan's Club was held, and where Sir Francis Clavering had an interview with Major Pendennis, is aware that there are three rooms for guests upon the ground floor, besides the bar where the landlady sits. One is a parlour frequented by the public at large; to another room gentlemen in livery resort; and the third apartment, on the door of which "Private" is painted, is that hired by the Club of "The Confidentials," of which Messrs Morgan and Lightfoot were members.

The noiseless Morgan had listened to the conversation between Strong and Major Pendennis at the latter's own lodgings, and had carried away from it matter for much private speculation; and a desire of knowledge had led him to follow his master when the Major came to the Wheel of Fortune, and to take his place quietly in the Confidential room, whilst Pendennis and Clavering had their discourse in the parlour. There was a particular corner in the Confidential room from which you could hear almost all that passed in the next apartment; and as the conversation between the two gentlemen there was rather angry, and carried on in a high key, Morgan had the benefit of overhearing almost the whole of it and what he heard, strengthened the conclusions which his mind had previously formed.

"He knew Altamont at once, did he, when he saw him in Sydney? Clavering ain't no more married to my Lady than I am! Altamont's the man: Altamont's a convict; young Harthur comes into Parlyment, and the Gov'nor promises not to split. By Jove, what a sly old rogue it is, that old Gov'nor! No wonder he's anxious to make the match between Blanche and Harthur: why, she'll have a hundred thousand if she's a penny, and bring her man a seat in Parlyment into the bargain." Nobody saw, but a physiognomist would have liked to behold, the expression of Mr. Morgan's countenance, when this astounding intelligence was made clear to him. "But for my hage, and the confounded preudices of society," he said, surveying himself in the glass, "dammy, James Morgan, you might marry her yourself." But if he could not marry Miss Blanche and her fortune, Morgan thought he could mend his own by the possession of this information, and that it might be productive of benefit to him from very many sources. Of all the persons whom the secret affected, the greater number would not like to have it known. For instance, Sir Francis Clavering, whose fortune it involved, would wish to keep it quiet; Colonel Altamont, whose neck it implicated, would naturally be desirous to hush it: and that young hupstart beast, Mr. Harthur, who was for getting' into Parlyment on the strenth of it, and was as proud as if he was a duke with half a millium a year (such, we grieve to say, was Morgan's opinion of his employer's nephew), would pay anythink sooner than let the world know that he was married to a convick's daughter, and had got his seat in Parlyment by trafficking with this secret. As for Lady C., Morgan thought, if she's tired of Clavering, and wants to get rid of him, she'll pay: if she's frightened about her son, and fond of the little beggar, she'll pay all the same: and Miss Blanche will certainly come down handsome to the man who will put her into her rights, which she was unjustly defrauded of them, and no mistake. "Dammy," concluded the valet, reflecting upon this wonderful hand which luck had given him to play, "with such cards as these, James Morgan, you are a made man. It may be a reg'lar enewity to me. Every one of 'em must susscribe. And with what I've made already, I may cut business, give my old Gov'nor warning, turn gentleman, and have a servant of my own, begad." Entertaining himself with calculations such as these, that were not a little likely to perturb a man's spirit, Mr. Morgan showed a very great degree of self-command by appearing and being calm, and by not allowing his future prospects in any way to interfere with his present duties.

One of the persons whom the story chiefly concerned, Colonel Altamont, was absent from London when Morgan was thus made acquainted with his history. The valet knew of Sir Francis Clavering's Shepherd's Inn haunt, and walked thither an hour or two after the Baronet and Pendennis had had their conversation together. But that bird was flown; Colonel Altamont had received his Derby winnings, and was gone to the Continent. The fact of his absence was exceedingly vexatious to Mr. Morgan. "He'll drop all that money at the gambling-shops on the Rhind," thought Morgan, "and I might have had a good bit of it. It's confounded annoying to think he's gone and couldn't have waited a few days longer." Hope, triumphant or deferred, ambition or disappointment, victory or patient ambush, Morgan bore all alike, with similar equable countenance. Until the proper day came, the Major's boots were varnished and his hair was curled, his early cup of

tea was brought to his bedside, his oaths, rebukes, and senile satire borne, with silent, obsequious fidelity. Who would think, to see him waiting upon his master, packing and shouldering his trunks, and occasionally assisting at table, at the country-houses where he might be staying, that Morgan was richer than his employer, and knew his secrets and other people's? In the profession Mr. Morgan was greatly respected and admired, and his reputation for wealth and wisdom got him much renown at most supper-tables: the younger gentlemen voted him stoopid, a feller of no idears, and a fogey, in a word: but not one of them would not say amen to the heartfelt prayer which some of the most serious-minded among the gentlemen uttered, "When I die may I cut up as well as Morgan Pendennis!"

As became a man of fashion, Major Pendennis spent the autumn passing from house to house of such country friends as were at home to receive him; and if the Duke happened to be abroad, the Marquis in Scotland, condescending to sojourn with Sir John or the plain Squire. To say the truth, the old gentleman's reputation was somewhat on the wane: many of the men of his time had died out, and the occupants of their halls and the present wearers of their titles knew not Major Pendennis: and little cared for his traditions of "the wild Prince and Poins," and of the heroes of fashion passed away. It must have struck the good man with melancholy as he walked by many a London door, to think how seldom it was now opened for him, and how often he used to knock at it — to what banquets and welcome he used to pass through it — a score of years back. He began to own that he was no longer of the present age, and dimly to apprehend that the young men laughed at him. Such melancholy musings must come across many a Pall Mall philosopher. The men, thinks he, are not such as they used to be in his time: the old grand manner and courtly grace of life are gone: what is Castlewood House and the present Castlewood, compared to the magnificence of the old mansion and owner? The late lord came to London with four postchaises and sixteen horses: all the North Road hurried out to look at his cavalcade: the people in London streets even stopped as his procession passed them. The present lord travels with five bagmen in a railway carriage, and sneaks away from the station, smoking a cigar in a brougham. The late lord in autumn filled Castlewood with company, who drank claret till midnight: the present man buries himself in a hut on a Scotch mountain, and passes November in two or three closets in an entresol at Paris, where his amusements are a dinner at a cafe and a box at a little theatre. What a contrast there is between his Lady Lorraine, the Regent's Lady Lorraine, and her little ladyship of the present era! He figures to himself the first, beautiful, gorgeous, magnificent in diamonds and velvets, daring in rouge, the wits of the world (the old wits, the old polished gentlemen — not the canaille of today with their language of the cabstand, and their coats smelling of smoke) bowing at her feet; and then thinks of today's Lady Lorraine — a little woman in a black silk gown, like a governess, who talks astronomy, and labouring classes, and emigration, and the deuce knows what, and lurks to church at eight o'clock in the morning. Abbots-Lorraine, that used to be the noblest house in the county, is turned into a monastery — a regular La Trappe. They don't drink two glasses of wine after dinner, and every other man at table is a country curate, with a white neckcloth, whose talk is about Polly Higson's progress at school, or widow Watkins's lumbago. "And the other young men, those lounging guardsmen and great lazy dandies — sprawling over sofas and billiard-tables, and stealing off to smoke pipes in each other's bedrooms, caring for nothing, reverencing nothing, not even an old gentleman who has known their fathers and their betters, not even a pretty woman — what a difference there is between these men, who poison the very turnips and stubble-fields with their tobacco, and the gentlemen of our time!" thinks the Major; "the breed is gone — there's no use for 'em; they're replaced by a parcel of damned cotton — spinners and utilitarians, and young sprigs of parsons with their hair combed down their barks. I'm getting old: they're getting past me: they laugh at us old boys," thought old Pendennis. And he was not far wrong; the times and manners which he admired were pretty nearly gone — the gay young men "larked" him irreverently, whilst the serious youth had a grave pity and wonder at him; which would have been even more painful to bear, had the old gentleman been aware of its extent. But he was rather simple: his examination of moral questions had never been very deep; it had never struck him perhaps, until very lately, that he was otherwise than a most respectable and rather fortunate man. Is there no old age but his without reverence? Did youthful folly never jeer at other bald pates? For the past two or three years, he had begun to perceive that his day was well-nigh over, and that the men of the new time had begun to reign.

After a rather unsuccessful autumn season, then, during which he was faithfully followed by Mr. Morgan, his nephew Arthur being engaged, as we have seen, at Clavering, it happened that Major Pendennis came back for a while to London, at the dismal end of October, when the fogs and the lawyers come to town. Who has not looked with interest at those loaded cabs, piled boxes, and crowded children, rattling through the streets on the dun October evenings; stopping at the dark houses, where they discharge nurse and infant, girls, matron and father, whose holidays are over? Yesterday it was

France and sunshine, or Broadstairs and liberty; today comes work and a yellow fog; and, ye gods! what a heap of bills there lies in Master's study! And the clerk has brought the lawyer's papers from Chambers; and in half an hour the literary man knows that the printer's boy will be in the passage; and Mr. Smith with that little account (that particular little account) has called presentient of your arrival, and has left word that he will call tomorrow morning at ten. Who amongst us has not said Good-bye to his holiday; returned to dun London, and his fate; surveyed his labours and liabilities laid out before him, and been aware of that inevitable little account to settle? Smith and his little account in the morning, symbolise duty, difficulty, struggle, which you will meet, let us hope, friend, with a manly and honest heart. — And you think of him, as the children are slumbering once more in their own beds, and the watchful housewife tenderly pretends to sleep.

Old Pendennis had no special labours or bills to encounter on the morrow, as he had no affection at home to soothe him. He had always money in his desk sufficient for his wants; and being by nature and habit tolerably indifferent to the wants of other people, these latter were not likely to disturb him. But a gentleman may be out of temper though he does not owe a shilling and though he may be ever so selfish, he must occasionally feel dispirited and lonely. He had had two or three twinges of gout in the country-house where he had been staying: the birds were wild and shy, and the walking over the ploughed fields had fatigued him deucedly: the young men had laughed at him, and he had been peevish at table once or twice: he had not been able to get his whist of an evening: and, in fine, was glad to come away. In all his dealings with Morgan, his valet, he had been exceedingly sulky and discontented. He had sworn at him and abused him for many days past. He had scalded his mouth with bad soup at Swindon. He had left his umbrella in the railroad carriage: at which piece of forgetfulness, he was in such a rage, that he cursed Morgan more freely than ever. Both, the chimneys smoked furiously in his lodgings; and when he caused the windows to be flung open, he swore so acrimoniously, that Morgan was inclined to fling him out of window too, through that opened casement. The valet swore after his master, as Pendennis went down the street on his way to the Club.

Bays's was not at all pleasant. The house had been new painted, and smelt of varnish and turpentine, and a large streak of white paint inflicted itself on the back of the old boy's fur-collared surtout. The dinner was not good: and the three most odious men in all London — old Hawkshaw, whose cough and accompaniments are fit to make any man uncomfortable; old Colonel Gripsey, who seizes on all the newspapers; and that irreclaimable old bore Jawkins, who would come and dine at the next table to Pendennis, and describe to him every inn-bill which he had paid in his foreign tour: each and all of these disagreeable personages and incidents had contributed to make Major Pendennis miserable; and the Club waiter trod on his toe as he brought him his coffee. Never alone appear the Immortals. The Furies always hunt in company: they pursued Pendennis from home to the Club, and from the Club home.

Whilst the Major was absent from his lodgings, Morgan had been seated in the landlady's parlour, drinking freely of hot brandy-and-water, and pouring out on Mrs. Brixham some of the abuse which he had received from his master upstairs. Mrs. Brixham was Mr. Morgan's slave. He was his landlady's landlord. He had bought the lease of the house which she rented; he had got her name and her son's to acceptances, and a bill of sale which made him master of the luckless widow's furniture. The young Brixham was a clerk in an insurance office, and Morgan could put him into what he called quod any day. Mrs. Brixham was a clergyman's widow, and Mr. Morgan, after performing his duties on the first floor, had a pleasure in making the old lady fetch him his bootjack and his slippers. She was his slave. The little black profiles of her son and daughter; the very picture of Tiddlecot Church, where she was married, and her poor dear Brixham lived and died, was now Morgan's property, as it hung there over the mantelpiece of his back-parlour. Morgan sate in the widow's back-room, in the ex-curate's old horse-hair study-chair, making Mrs. Brixham bring supper for him, and fill his glass again and again.

The liquor was bought with the poor woman's own coin, and hence Morgan indulged in it only the more freely; and he had eaten his supper and was drinking a third tumbler, when old Pendennis returned from the Club, and went upstairs to his rooms. Mr. Morgan swore very savagely at him and his bell, when he heard the latter, and finished his tumbler of brandy before he went up to answer the summons.

He received the abuse consequent on this delay in silence, nor did the Major condescend to read in the flushed face and glaring eyes of the man, the anger under which he was labouring. The old gentleman's foot-bath was at the fire; his gown and slippers awaiting him there. Morgan knelt down to take his boots off with due subordination: and as the Major abused him from above, kept up a growl of maledictions below at his feet. Thus, when Pendennis was crying "Confound you, sir, mind that strap — curse you, don't wrench my foot off," Morgan sotto voce below was expressing a wish to strangle

him, drown him, and punch his head off.

The boots removed, it became necessary to divest Mr. Pendennis of his coat: and for this purpose the valet had necessarily to approach very near to his employer; so near that Pendennis could not but perceive what Mr. Morgan's late occupation had been; to which he adverted in that simple and forcible phraseology which men are sometimes in the habit of using to their domestics; informing Morgan that he was a drunken beast, and that he smelt of brandy.

At this the man broke out, losing patience, and flinging up all subordination, "I'm drunk, am I? I'm a beast, am I? I'm d — d, am I? you infernal old miscreant. Shall I wring your old head off, and drown yer in that pail of water? Do you think I'm a-goin' to bear your confounded old harrogance, you old Wigsby! Chatter your old hivories at me, do you, you grinning old baboon! Come on, if you are a man, and can stand to a man. Ha! you coward, knives, knives!"

"If you advance a step, I'll send it into you," said the Major, seizing up a knife that was on the table near him. "Go downstairs, you drunken brute, and leave the house; send for your book and your wages in the morning, and never let me see your insolent face again. This d — d impertinence of yours has been growing for some months past. You have been growing too rich. You are not fit for service. Get out of it, and out of the house."

"And where would you wish me to go, pray, out of the 'ouse?" asked the man, "and won't it be equal convenient tomorrow mornin'? — tootyfay mame shose, sivvoplay, munseer?"

"Silence, you beast, and go!" cried out the Major.

Morgan began to laugh, with rather a sinister laugh. "Look yere, Pendennis," he said, seating himself; "since I've been in this room you've called me beast, brute, dog: and d — d me, haven't you? How do you suppose one man likes that sort of talk from another? How many years have I waited on you, and how many damns and cusses have you given me, along with my wages? Do you think a man's a dog, that you can talk to him in this way? If I choose to drink a little, why shouldn't I? I've seen many a gentleman drunk form'ly, and peraps have the abit from them. I ain't a-goin' to leave this house, old feller, and shall I tell you why? The house is my house, every stick of furnitur' in it is mine, excep' your old traps, and your shower-bath, and your wigbox. I've bought the place, I tell you, with my own industry and perseverance. I can show a hundred pound, where you can show a fifty, or your damned supersellious nephew either. I've served you honourable, done everythink for you these dozen years, and I'm a dog, am I? I'm a beast, am I? That's the language for gentlemen, not for our rank. But I'll bear it no more. I throw up your service; I'm tired on it; I've combed your old wig and buckled your old girths and waistbands long enough, I tell you. Don't look savage at me, I'm sitting in my own chair, in my own room, a-telling the truth to you. I'll be your beast, and your brute, and your dog, no more, Major Pendennis Alf Pay."

The fury of the old gentleman, met by the servant's abrupt revolt, had been shocked and cooled by the concussion, as much as if a sudden shower-bath or a pail of cold water had been flung upon him. That effect produced, and his anger calmed, Morgan's speech had interested him, and he rather respected his adversary, and his courage in facing him; as of old days, in the fencing-room, he would have admired the opponent who hit him.

"You are no longer my servant," the Major said, "and the house may be yours; but the lodgings are mine, and you will have the goodness to leave them. To-morrow morning, when we have settled our accounts, I shall remove into other quarters. In the meantime, I desire to go to bed, and have not the slightest wish for your further company."

"We'll have a settlement, don't you be afraid," Morgan said, getting up from his chair. "I ain't done with you yet; nor with your family, nor with the Clavering family, Major Pendennis; and that you shall know."

"Have the goodness to leave the room, sir — I'm tired," said the Major.

"Hah! you'll be more tired of me afore you've done," answered the man, with a sneer, and walked out of the room; leaving the Major to compose himself as best he might, after the agitation of this extraordinary scene.

He sate and mused by his fireside over the past events, and the confounded impudence and ingratitude of servants; and thought how he should get a new man: how devilish unpleasant it was for a man of his age, and with his habits, to part with a fellow to whom he had been accustomed: how Morgan had a receipt for boot-varnish, which was incomparably better and more comfortable to the feet than any he had ever tried: how very well he made mutton-broth, and tended him when he was unwell. "Gad, it's a hard thing to lose a fellow of that sort: but he must go," thought the Major. "He has grown rich, and impudent since he has grown rich. He was horribly tipsy and abusive to-night. We must part, and I must go out of the lodgings. Dammy, I like the lodgings; I'm used to 'em. It's very unpleasant, at my time of life, to change my quarters." And so on, mused the old gentleman. The shower-bath had done him good: the testiness was gone: the loss of the

umbrella, the smell of paint at the Club, were forgotten under the superior excitement. "Confound the insolent villain!" thought the old gentleman. "He understood my wants to a nicety: he was the best servant in England." He thought about his servant as a man thinks of a horse that has carried him long and well, and that has come down with him, and is safe no longer. How the deuce to replace him? Where can he get such another animal?

In these melancholy cogitations the Major, who had donned his own dressing-gown and replaced his head of hair (a little grey had been introduced into the coiffure of late by Mr. Truefitt, which had given the Major's head the most artless and respectable appearance); in these cogitations, we say, the Major, who had taken off his wig and put on his night-handkerchief, sat absorbed by the fireside, when a feeble knock came at his door, which was presently opened by the landlady of the lodgings.

"God bless my soul, Mrs. Brixham!" cried out the Major, startled that a lady should behold him in the simple apparel of his night-toilet. "It — it's very late, Mrs. Brixham."

"I wish I might speak to you, sir," said the landlady, very piteously.

"About Morgan, I suppose? He has cooled himself at the pump. Can't take him back, Mrs. Brixham. Impossible. I'd determined to part with him before, when I heard of his dealings in the discount business — I suppose you've heard of them, Mrs. Brixham? My servant's a capitalist, begad."

"Oh, sir," said Mrs. Brixham, "I know it to my cost. I borrowed from him a little money five years ago; and though I have paid him many times over, I am entirely in his power. I am ruined by him, sir. Everything I had is his. He's a dreadful man."

"Eh, Mrs. Brixham? tout pis — dev'lish sorry for you, and that I must quit your house after lodging here so long: there's no help for it. I must go."

"He says we must all go, sir," sobbed out the luckless widow. He came downstairs from you just now — he had been drinking, and it always makes him very wicked — and he said that you had insulted him, sir, and treated him like a dog, and spoken to him unkindly; and he swore he would be revenged, and — and I owe him a hundred and twenty pounds, sir — and he has a bill of sale of all my furniture — and says he will turn me out of my house, and send my poor George to prison. He has been the ruin of my family, that man."

"Dev'lish sorry, Mrs. Brixham; pray take a chair. What can I do?"

"Could you not intercede with him for us? George will give half his allowance; my daughter can send something. If you will but stay on, sir, and pay a quarter's rent in advance —"

"My good madam, I would as soon give you a quarter in advance as not, if I were going to stay in the lodgings. But I can't; and I can't afford to fling away twenty pounds, my good madam. I'm a poor half-pay officer, and want every shilling I have, begad. As far as a few pounds goes — say five pounds — I don't say — and shall be most happy, and that sort of thing; and I'll give it you in the morning with pleasure: but — but it's getting late, and I have made a railroad journey."

"God's will be done, sir," said the poor woman, drying her tears. I must bear my fate."

"And a dev'lish hard one it is, and most sincerely I pity you, Mrs. Brixham. I— I'll say ten pounds, if you will permit me. Good night."

"Mr. Morgan, sir, when he came downstairs, and when — when I besought him to have pity on me, and told him he had been the ruin of my family, said something which I did not well understand — that he would ruin every family in the house — that he knew something would bring you down too — and that you should pay him for your — your insolence to him. I— I must own to you, that I went down on my knees to him, sir; and he said, with a dreadful oath against you, that he would have you on your knees."

"Me? — by Gad, that is too pleasant! Where is the confounded fellow?"

"He went away, sir. He said he should see you in the morning. Oh, pray try and pacify him, and save me and my poor boy." And the widow went away with this prayer, to pass her night as she might, and look for the dreadful morrow.

The last words about himself excited Major Pendennis so much, that his compassion for Mrs. Brixham's misfortunes was quite forgotten in the consideration of his own case.

"Me on my knees?" thought he, as he got into bed: "confound his impudence! Who ever saw me on my knees? What the devil does the fellow know? Gad, I've not had an affair these twenty years. I defy him." And the old compaigner turned

round and slept pretty sound, being rather excited and amused by the events of the day — the last day in Bury Street, he was determined it should be. “For it’s impossible to stay on with a valet over me, and a bankrupt landlady. What good can I do this poor devil of a woman? I’ll give her twenty pound — there’s Warrington’s twenty pound, which he has just paid — but what’s the use? She’ll want more, and more, and more, and that cormorant Morgan will swallow all. No, dammy, I can’t afford to know poor people; and tomorrow I’ll say Good-bye — to Mrs. Brixham and Mr. Morgan.”



CHAPTER LXIX

IN WHICH THE MAJOR NEITHER YIELDS HIS MONEY NOR HIS LIFE

Early next morning Pendennis's shutters were opened by Morgan, who appeared as usual, with a face perfectly grave and respectful, bearing with him the old gentleman's clothes, cans of water, and elaborate toilet requisites.

"It's you, is it?" said the old fellow from his bed. "I shan't take you back again, you understand."

"I ave not the least wish to be took back agin, Major Pendennis," Mr. Morgan said, with grave dignity, "nor to serve you nor hany man. But as I wish you to be comftable as long as you stay in my house, I came up to do what's nessary." And once more, and for the last time, Mr. James Morgan laid out the silver dressing-case, and strapped the shining razor.

These offices concluded, he addressed himself to the Major with an indescribable solemnity, and said: "Thinkin' that you would most likely be in want of a respectable pusson, until you suited yourself, I spoke to a young man last night, who is 'ere."

"Indeed," said the warrior in the tent-bed.

"He ave lived in the fust famlies, and I can vouch for his respectability."

"You are monstrous polite," grinned the old Major. And the truth is, that after the occurrences of the previous evening, Morgan had gone out to his own Club at the Wheel of Fortune, and there finding Frosch, a courier and valet just returned from a foreign tour with young Lord Cubley, and for the present disposable, had represented to Mr. Frosch, that he, Morgan, had "a devil of a blow hup with his own Gov'nor, and was goin' to retire from the business haltogether, and that if Frosch wanted a tempory job, he might probbly have it by applying in Bury Street."

"You are very polite," said the Major, "and your recommendation, I am sure, will have every weight."

Morgan blushed; he felt his master was 'a-chaffin' of him.' "The man have awaited on you before, sir," he said with great dignity. "Lord De la Pole, sir, gave him to his nephew young Lord Cubley, and he have been with him on his foring tour, and not wishing to go to Fitzurse Castle, which Frosch's chest is delicate, and he cannot bear the cold in Scotland, he is free to serve you or not, as you choose."

"I repeat, sir, that you are exceedingly polite," said the Major. Come in, Frosch — you will do very well — Mr. Morgan, will you have the great kindness to —"

"I shall show him what is nessary, sir, and what is customry for you to wish to ave done. Will you please to take breakfast 'ere or at the Club, Major Pendennis?"

"With your kind permission, I will breakfast here, and afterwards we will make our little arrangements."

"If you please, sir."

"Will you now oblige me by leaving the room?"

Morgan withdrew; the excessive politeness of his ex-employer made him almost as angry as the Major's bitterest words. And whilst the old gentleman is making his mysterious toilet, we will also modestly retire.

After breakfast, Major Pendennis and his new aide-de-camp occupied themselves in preparing for their departure. The establishment of the old bachelor was not very complicated. He encumbered himself with no useless wardrobe. A bible (his mother's), a road book, Pen's novel (calf elegant), and the Duke of Wellington's Despatches, with a few prints, maps, and portraits of that illustrious general, and of various sovereigns and consorts of this country, and of the General under whom Major Pendennis had served in India, formed his literary and artistical collection: he was always ready to march at a few hours' notice, and the cases in which he had brought his property into his lodgings some fifteen years before, were still in the lofts amply sufficient to receive all his goods. These, the young woman who did the work of the house, and who was known by the name of Betty to her mistress, and of "Slavey" to Mr. Morgan, brought down from their resting-place, and obediently dusted and cleaned under the eyes of the terrible Morgan. His demeanour was guarded and solemn; he had spoken no word as yet to Mrs. Brixham respecting his threats of the past night, but he looked as if he would execute them, and the poor widow tremblingly awaited her fate.

Old Pendennis, armed with his cane, superintended the package of his goods and chattels, under the hands of Mr.

Frosch, and the Slavey burned such of his papers as he did not care to keep; flung open doors and closets until they were all empty; and now all boxes and chests were closed, except his desk, which was ready to receive the final accounts of Mr. Morgan.

That individual now made his appearance, and brought his books. "As I wish to speak to you in privick, peraps you will ave the kindness to request Frosch to step downstairs," he said, on entering.

"Bring a couple of cabs, Frosch, if you please — and wait downstairs until I ring for you," said the Major. Morgan saw Frosch downstairs, watched him go along the street upon his errand, and produced his books and accounts, which were simple and very easily settled.

"And now, sir," said he, having pocketed the cheque which his ex-employer gave him, and signed his name to his book with a flourish, "and now that accounts is closed between us, sir," he said, "I porpose to speak to you as one man to another"—(Morgan liked the sound of his own voice; and, as an individual, indulged in public speaking whenever he could get an opportunity, at the Club, or the housekeeper's room)—"and I must tell you, that I'm in possession of certing infamation."

"And may I inquire of what nature, pray?" asked the Major.

"It's valuble information, Major Pendennis, as you know very well. I know of a marriage as is no marriage — of a honourable Baronet as is no more married than I am; and which his wife is married to somebody else, as you know too, sir."

Pendennis at once understood all. "Ha! this accounts for your behaviour. You have been listening at the door, sir, I suppose," said the Major, looking very haughty; "I forgot to look at the keyhole when I went to that public-house, or I might have suspected what sort of a person was behind it."

"I may have my schemes as you may have yours, I suppose," answered Morgan. "I may get my information, and I may act on that information, and I may find that information valuble as anybody else may. A poor servant may have a bit of luck as well as a gentleman, mayn't he? Don't you be putting on your aughty looks, sir, and comin' the aristocrat over me. That's all gammon with me. I'm an Englishman, I am, and as good as you."

"To what the devil does this tend, sir? and how does the secret which you have surprised concern me, I should like to know?" asked Major Pendennis, with great majesty.

"How does it concern me, indeed! how grand we are! How does it concern my nephew, I wonder? How does it concern my nephew's seat in Parlyment: and to subornation of bigamy? How does it concern that? What, are you to be the only man to have a secret, and to trade on it? Why shouldn't I go halves, Major Pendennis? I've found it out too. Look here! I ain't goin' to be unreasonable with you. Make it worth my while, and I'll keep the thing close. Let Mr. Arthur take his seat, and his rich wife, if you like; I don't want to marry her. But I will have my share, as sure as my name's James Morgan. And if I don't —"

"And if you don't, sir — what?" Pendennis asked.

"If I don't, I split, and tell all. I smash Clavering, and have him and his wife up for bigamy — so help me, I will! I smash young Hopeful's marriage, and I show up you and him as makin' use of this secret, in order to squeeze a seat in Parlyment out of Sir Francis, and a fortune out of his wife."

"Mr. Pendennis knows no more of this business than the babe unborn, sir," cried the Major, aghast. "No more than Lady Clavering, than Miss Amory does."

"Tell that to the marines, Major," replied the valet; "that cock won't fight with me."

"Do you doubt my word, you villain?"

"No bad language. I don't care one twopence'a'p'ny whether your word's true or not. I tell you, I intend this to be a nice little annuity to me, Major: for I have every one of you; and I ain't such a fool as to let you go. I should say that you might make it five hundred a year to me among you, easy. Pay me down the first quarter now and I'm as mum as a mouse. Just give a note for one twenty-five. There's your cheque-book on your desk."

"And there's this too, you villain," cried the old gentleman. In the desk to which the valet pointed was a little double-barrelled pistol, which had belonged to Pendennis's old patron; the Indian commander-inchief, and which had accompanied him in many a campaign. "One more word, you scoundrel and I'll shoot you, like a mad dog. Stop — by Jove,

I'll do it now. You'll assault me, will you? You'll strike at an old man, will you, you lying coward? Kneel down and say your prayers, sir, for by the Lord you shall die."

The Major's face glared with rage at his adversary, who looked terrified before him for a moment, and at the next, with a shriek of "Murder!" sprang towards the open window, under which a policeman happened to be on his beat. "Murder! Police!" bellowed Mr. Morgan.

To his surprise, Major Pendennis wheeled away the table and walked to the other window, which was also open. He beckoned the policeman. "Come up. here, policeman," he said, and then went and placed himself against the door.

"You miserable sneak," he said to Morgan; "the pistol hasn't been loaded these fifteen years, as you would have known very well, if you had not been such a coward. That policeman is coming, and I will have him up, and have your trunks searched; I have reason to believe that you are a thief, sir. I know you are. I'll swear to the things."

"You gave 'em to me — you gave 'em to me!" cried Morgan.

The Major laughed. "We'll see," he said; and the guilty valet remembered some fine lawn-fronted shirts — a certain gold-headed cane — an opera-glass, which he had forgotten to bring down, and of which he had assumed the use along with certain articles of his master's clothes, which the old dandy neither wore nor asked for.

Policeman X entered; followed by the seared Mrs. Brixham and her maid-of-all-work, who had been at the door and found some difficulty in closing it against the street amateurs, who wished to see the row. The Major began instantly to speak.

"I have had occasion to discharge this drunken scoundrel," he said. "Both last night and this morning he insulted and assaulted me. I am an old man and took up a pistol. You see it is not loaded, and this coward cried out before he was hurt. I am glad you are come. I was charging him with taking my property, and desired to examine his trunks and his room."

"The velvet cloak you ain't worn these three years, nor the weskits, and I thought I might take the shirts, and I— I take my hoath I intended to put back the hopera-glass," roared Morgan, writhing with rage and terror.

"The man acknowledges that he is a thief," the Major said, calmly. "He has been in my service for years, and I have treated him with every kindness and confidence. We will go upstairs and examine his trunks."

In those trunks Mr. Morgan had things which he would fain keep from public eyes. Mr. Morgan, the bill-discounter, gave goods as well as money to his customers. He provided young spendthrifts with snuff boxes and pins and jewels and pictures and cigars, and of a very doubtful quality those cigars and jewels and pictures were. Their display at a police-office, the discovery of his occult profession, and the exposure of the Major's property, which he had appropriated, indeed, rather than stolen — would not have added to the reputation of Mr. Morgan. He looked a piteous image of terror and discomfiture.

"He'll smash me, will he?" thought the Major. "I'll crush him now, and finish with him."

But he paused. He looked at poor Mrs. Brixham's scared face; and he thought for a moment to himself that the man brought to bay and in prison might make disclosures which had best be kept secret, and that it was best not to deal too fiercely with a desperate man.

"Stop," he said, "policeman. I'll speak with this man by himself."

"Do you give Mr. Morgan in charge?" said the policeman.

"I have brought no charge as yet," the Major said, with a significant look at his man.

"Thank you, sir," whispered Morgan, very low.

"Go outside the door, and wait there, policeman, if you please. — Now, Morgan, you have played one game with me, and you have not had the best of it, my good man. No, begad, you've not had the best of it, though you had the best hand; and you've got to pay, too, now, you scoundrel."

"Yes, sir," said the man.

"I've only found out, within the last week, the game which you have been driving, you villain. Young De Boots, of the Blues, recognised you as the man who came to barracks, and did business one-third in money, one-third in eau-de-Cologne, and one-third in French prints, you confounded demure old sinner! I didn't miss anything, or care a straw what you'd taken, you booby; but I took the shot, and it hit — hit the bull's-eye, begad. Dammy, six, I'm an old campaigner."

"What do you want with me, sir?"

"I'll tell you. Your bills, I suppose, you keep about you in that dem'd great leather pocket-book, don't you? You'll burn Mrs. Brixham's bill?"

"Sir, I ain't a-goin' to part with my property," growled the man.

"You lent her sixty pounds five years ago. She and that poor devil of an insurance clerk, her son, have paid you fifty pounds a year ever since; and you have got a bill of sale of her furniture, and her note of hand for a hundred and fifty pounds. She told me so last night. By Jove, sir, you've bled that poor woman enough."

"I won't give it up," said Morgan; "If I do I'm —"

"Policeman!" cried the Major.

"You shall have the bill," said Morgan. "You're not going to take money of me, and you a gentleman?"

"I shall want you directly," said the Major to X, who here entered, and who again withdrew.

"No, my good sir," the old gentleman continued; "I have not any desire to have further pecuniary transactions with you; but we will draw out a little paper, which you will have the kindness to sign. No, stop! — you shall write it: you have improved immensely in writing of late, and have now a very good hand. You shall sit down and write, if you please — there, at that table — so — let me see — we may as well have the date. Write 'Bury Street, St. James's, October 21, 18 —.'"

And Mr. Morgan wrote as he was instructed, and as the pitiless old Major continued:—

"I, James Morgan, having come in extreme poverty into the service of Arthur Pendennis, Esquire, of Bury Street, St. James's, a Major in her Majesty's service, acknowledge that I received liberal wages and board wages from my employer, during fifteen years.'— You can't object to that, I am sure," said the Major.

"During fifteen years," wrote Morgan.

"In which time, by my own care and prudence," the dictator resumed, "I have managed to amass sufficient money to purchase the house in which my master resides, and, besides, to effect other savings. Amongst other persons from whom I have had money, I may mention my present tenant, Mrs. Brixham, who, in consideration of sixty pounds advanced by me five years since, has paid back to me the sum of two hundred and fifty pounds sterling, besides giving me a note of hand for one hundred and twenty pounds, which I restore to her at the desire of my late master, Major Arthur Pendennis, and therewith free her furniture, of which I had a bill of sale.'— Have you written?"

"I think if this pistol was loaded, I'd blow your brains out," said Morgan.

"No, you wouldn't. You have too great a respect for your valuable life, my good man," the Major answered. "Let us go on and begin a new sentence.

"And having, in return for my master's kindness, stolen his property from him, which I acknowledge to be now upstairs in my trunks; and having uttered falsehoods regarding his and other honourable families, I do hereby, in consideration of his clemency to me, express my regret for uttering these falsehoods, and for stealing his property; and declare that I am not worthy of belief, and that I hope'— yes, begad —that I hope to amend for the future. Signed, James Morgan."

"I'm d — d if I sign it," said Morgan.

"My good man, it will happen to you, whether you sign or no, begad," said the old fellow, chuckling at his own wit. "There, I shall not use this, you understand, unless — unless I am compelled to do so. Mrs. Brixham, and our friend the policeman, will witness it, I dare say, without reading it: and I will give the old lady back her note of hand, and say, which you will confirm, that she and you are quits. I see there is Frosch come back with the cab for my trunks; I shall go to an hotel. — You may come in now, policeman; Mr. Morgan and I have arranged our little dispute. If Mrs. Brixham will sign this paper, and you, policeman, will do so, I shall be very much obliged to you both. Mrs. Brixham, you and your worthy landlord, Mr. Morgan, are quits. I wish you joy of him. Let Frosch come and pack the rest of the things."

Frosch, aided by the Slavey, under the calm superintendence of Mr. Morgan, carried Major Pendennis's boxes to the cabs in waiting; and Mrs. Brixham, when her persecutor was not by, came and asked a Heaven's blessing upon the Major, her preserver, and the best and quietest and kindest of lodgers. And having given her a finger to shake, which the humble lady received with a curtsy, and over which she was ready to make a speech full of tears, the Major cut short that valedictory oration, and walked out of the house to the hotel in Jermyn Street, which was not many steps from Morgan's door.

That individual, looking forth from the parlour-window, discharged anything but blessings at his parting guest; but the stout old boy could afford not to be frightened at Mr. Morgan, and flung him a look of great contempt and humour as he strutted away with his cane.

Major Pendennis had not quitted his house of Bury Street many hours, and Mr. Morgan was enjoying his otium in a dignified manner, surveying the evening fog, and smoking a cigar, on the door-steps, when Arthur Pendennis, Esq., the hero of this history, made his appearance at the well-known door.

“My uncle out, I suppose, Morgan?” he said to the functionary; knowing full well that to smoke was treason, in the presence of the Major.

“Major Pendennis is out, sir,” said Morgan, with gravity, bowing, but not touching the elegant cap which he wore. “Major Pendennis have left this house today, sir, and I have no longer the honour of being in his service, sir.”

“Indeed, and where is he?”

“I believe he have taken temporary lodgings at Cox’s hotel, in Jummin Street,” said Mr. Morgan; and added, after a pause, “Are you in town for some time, pray, sir? Are you in Chambers? I should like to have the honour of waiting on you there: and would be thankful if you would favour me with a quarter of an hour.”

“Do you want my uncle to take you back?” asked Arthur, insolent and good-natured.

“I want no such thing; I’d see him —” The man glared at him for a minute, but he stopped. “No, sir, thank you,” he said in a softer voice; “it’s only with you that I wish to speak, on some business which concerns you; and perhaps you would favour me by walking into my house.”

“If it is but for a minute or two, I will listen to you, Morgan,” said Arthur; and thought to himself, “I suppose the fellow wants me to patronise him;” and he entered the house. A card was already in the front windows, proclaiming that apartments were to be let; and having introduced Mr. Pendennis into the dining-room, and offered him a chair, Mr. Morgan took one himself, and proceeded to convey some information to him, of which the reader has already had cognisance.



CHAPTER LXX

IN WHICH PENDENNIS COUNTS HIS EGGS

Our friend had arrived in London on that day only, though but for a brief visit; and having left some fellow-travellers at an hotel to which he had conveyed them from the West, he hastened to the Chambers in Lamb Court, which were basking in as much sun as chose to visit that dreary but not altogether comfortless building. Freedom stands in lieu of sunshine in chambers; and Templars grumble, but take their ease in their Inn. Pen's domestic announced to him that Warrington was in Chambers too, and, of course, Arthur ran up to his friend's room straightway, and found it, as of old, perfumed with the pipe, and George once more at work with his newspapers and reviews. The pair greeted each other with the rough cordiality which young Englishmen use one to another: and which carries a great deal of warmth and kindness under its rude exterior. Warrington smiled and took his pipe out of his mouth, and said, "Well, young one!" Pen advanced and held out his hand, and said, "How are you, old boy?" And so this greeting passed between two friends who had not seen each other for months. Alphonse and Frederic would have rushed into each other's arms and shrieked *Ce bon coeur! ce cher Alphonse!* over each other's shoulders. Max and Wilhelm would have bestowed half a dozen kisses, scented with Havannah, upon each other's mustachios. "Well, young one!" "How are you, old boy?" is what two Britons say: after saving each other's lives, possibly, the day before. To-morrow they will leave off shaking hands, and only wag their heads at one another as they come to breakfast. Each has for the other the very warmest confidence and regard: each would share his purse with the other: and hearing him attacked would break out in the loudest and most enthusiastic praise of his friend; but they part with a mere Good-bye, they meet with a mere How-d'you-do? and they don't write to each other in the interval. Curious, modesty, strange stoical decorum of English friendship! "Yes, we are not demonstrative like those confounded foreigners," says Hardman: who not only shows no friendship, but never felt any all his life long.

"Been in Switzerland?" says Pen.

"Yes," says Warrington.

"Couldn't find a bit of tobacco fit to smoke till we came to Strasburg, where I got some caporal." The man's mind is full, very likely, of the great sights which he has seen, of the great emotions with which the vast works of nature have inspired it. But his enthusiasm is too coy to show itself, even to his closest friend, and he veils it with a cloud of tobacco. He will speak more fully of confidential evenings, however, and write ardently and frankly about that which he is shy of saying. The thoughts and experience of his travel will come forth in his writings; as the learning, which he never displays in talk, enriches his style with pregnant allusion and brilliant illustration, colours his generous eloquence, and points his wit.

The elder gives a rapid account of the places which he has visited in his tour. He has seen Switzerland, North Italy, and the Tyrol — he has come home by Vienna, and Dresden, and the Rhine. He speaks about these places in a shy sulky voice, as if he had rather not mention them at all, and as if the sight of them had rendered him very unhappy. The outline of the elder man's tour thus gloomily sketched out, the young one begins to speak. He has been in the country — very much bored — canvassing uncommonly slow — he is here for a day or two, and going on to — to the neighbourhood of Tunbridge Wells, to some friends that will be uncommonly slow, too. How hard it is to make an Englishman acknowledge that he is happy!

"And the seat in Parliament, Pen? Have you made it all right?" asks Warrington.

"All right — as soon as Parliament meets and a new writ can be issued, Clavering retires, and I step into his shoes," says Pen.

"And under which king does Bezonian speak or die?" asked Warrington. "Do we come out as Liberal Conservative, or as Government man, or on our own hook?"

"Hem! There are no politics now; every man's politics, at least, are pretty much the same. I have not got acres enough to make me a Protectionist; nor could I be one, I think, if I had all the land in the county. I shall go pretty much with Government, and in advance of them upon some social questions which I have been getting up during the vacation; — don't grin, you old cynic, I have been getting up the Blue Books, and intend to come out rather strong on the Sanitary and Colonisation questions."

"We reserve to ourselves the liberty of voting against Government, though we are generally friendly. We are, however,

friends of the people avant tout. We give lectures at the Clavering Institute, and shake hands with the intelligent mechanics. We think the franchise ought to be very considerably enlarged; at the same time we are free to accept office some day, when the House has listened to a few crack speeches from us, and the Administration perceives our merit."

"I am not Moses," said Pen, with, as usual, somewhat of melancholy in his voice. "I have no laws from Heaven to bring down to the people from the mountain. I don't belong to the mountain at all, or set up to be a leader and reformer of mankind. My faith is not strong enough for that; nor my vanity, nor my hypocrisy, great enough. I will tell no lies, George, that I promise you; and do no more than coincide in those which are necessary and pass current, and can't be got in without recalling the whole circulation. Give a man at least the advantage of his sceptical turn. If I find a good thing to say in the House, I will say it; a good measure, I will support it; a fair place, I will take it, and be glad of my luck. But I would no more flatter a great man than a mob; and now you know as much about my politics as I do. What call have I to be a Whig? Whiggism is not a divine institution. Why not vote with the Liberal Conservatives? They have done for the nation what the Whigs would never have done without them. Who converted both? — the Radicals and the country outside. I think the Morning Post is often right, and Punch is often wrong. I don't profess a call, but take advantage of a chance. Parlons d'autre chose."

"The next thing at your heart, after ambition is love, I suppose?" Warrington said. "How have our young loves prospered? Are we going to change our condition, and give up our chambers? Are you going to divorce me, Arthur, and take unto yourself a wife?"

"I suppose so. She is very good-natured and lively. She sings, and she don't mind smoking. She'll have a fair fortune — I don't know how much — but my uncle augurs everything from the Begum's generosity, and says that she will come down very handsomely. And I think Blanche is dev'lish fond of me," said Arthur, with a sigh.

"That means that we accept her caresses and her money."

"Haven't we said before that life was a transaction?" Pendennis said. "I don't pretend to break my heart about her. I have told her pretty fairly what my feelings are — and — and have engaged myself to her. And since I saw her last, and for the last two months especially, whilst I have been in the country, I think she has been growing fonder and fonder of me; and her letters to me, and especially to Laura, seem to show it. Mine have been simple enough — no raptures, nor vows, you understand — but looking upon the thing as an *affaire faite*; and not desirous to hasten or defer the completion."

"And Laura? how is she?" Warrington asked frankly.

"Laura, George," said Pen, looking his friend hard in the face — "by heaven, Laura is the best, and noblest, and dearest girl the sun ever shone upon." His own voice fell as he spoke: it seemed as if he could hardly utter the words: he stretched out his hand to his comrade, who took it and nodded his head.

"Have you only found out that now, young un?" Warrington said after a pause.

"Who has not learned things too late, George?" cried Arthur, in his impetuous way, gathering words and emotion as he went on. "Whose life is not a disappointment? Who carries his heart entire to the grave without a mutilation? I never knew anybody who was happy quite: or who has not had to ransom himself out of the hands of Fate with the payment of some dearest treasure or other. Lucky if we are left alone afterwards, when we have paid our fine, and if the tyrant visits us no more. Suppose I have found out that I have lost the greatest prize in the world, now that it can't be mine — that for years I had an angel under my tent, and let her go? — am I the only one — ah, dear old boy, am I the only one? And do you think my lot is easier to bear because I own that I deserve it? She's gone from us. God's blessing be with her! She might have stayed, and I lost her; it's like Undine: isn't it, George?"

"She was in this room once," said George.

He saw her there — he heard the sweet low voice — he saw the sweet smile and eyes shining so kindly — the face remembered so fondly — thought of in what night-watches — blest and loved always — gone now! A glass that had held a nosegay — a bible with Helen's handwriting — were all that were left him of that brief flower of his life. Say it is a dream: say it passes: better the recollection of a dream than an aimless waking from a blank stupor.

The two friends sate in silence a while, each occupied with his own thoughts and aware of the other's. Pen broke it presently, by saying that he must go and seek for his uncle, and report progress to the old gentleman. The Major had written in a very bad humour; the Major was getting old. "I should like to see you in Parliament, and snugly settled with a comfortable house and an heir to the name before I make my bow. Show me these," the Major wrote, "and then, let old

Arthur Pendennis make room for the younger fellows; he has walked the Pall Mall pave long enough.”

“There is a kindness about the old heathen,” said Warrington. “He cares for somebody besides himself, at least for some other part of himself besides that which is buttoned into his own coat; — for you and your race. He would like to see the progeny of the Pendennises multiplying and increasing, and hopes that they may inherit the land. The old patriarch blesses you from the Club window of Bays’s, and is carried off and buried under the flags of St. James’s Church, in sight of Piccadilly, and the cabstand, and the carriages going to the levee. It is an edifying ending.”

“The new blood I bring into the family,” mused Pen, “is rather tainted. If I had chosen, I think my father-inlaw Amory would not have been the progenitor I should have desired for my race; nor my grandfather-inlaw Snell; nor our Oriental ancestors. By the way, who was Amory? Amory was lieutenant of an Indiaman. Blanche wrote some verses about him, about the storm, the mountain wave, the seaman’s grave, the gallant father, and that sort of thing. Amory was drowned commanding a country ship between Calcutta and Sydney; Amory and the Begum weren’t happy together. She has been unlucky in her selection of husbands, the good old lady, for, between ourselves, a more despicable creature than Sir Francis Clavering, of Clavering Park, Baronet, never —” “Never legislated for his country,” broke in Warrington; at which Pen blushed rather.

“By the way, at Baden,” said Warrington, “I found our friend the Chevalier Strong in great state, and wearing his orders. He told me that he had quarrelled with Clavering, of whom he seemed to have almost as bad an opinion as you have, and in fact, I think, though I will not be certain, confided to me his opinion, that Clavering was an utter scoundrel. That fellow Bloundell, who taught you card-playing at Oxbridge, was with Strong; and time, I think, has brought out his valuable qualities, and rendered him a more accomplished rascal than he was during your undergraduateship. But the king of the place was the famous Colonel Altamont, who was carrying all before him, giving flies to the whole society, and breaking the bank, it was said.”

“My uncle knows something about that fellow — Clavering knows something about him. There’s something louche regarding him. But come! I must go to Bury Street, like a dutiful nephew.” And, taking his hat, Pen prepared to go.

“I will walk, too,” said Warrington. And they descended the stairs, stopping, however, at Pen’s chambers, which, as the reader has been informed, were now on the lower story.

Here Pen began sprinkling himself with eau-de-Cologne, and carefully scenting his hair and whiskers with that odoriferous water.

“What is the matter? You’ve not been smoking. Is it my pipe that has poisoned you?” growled Warrington.

“I am going to call upon some women,” said Pen. “I’m — I’m going to dine with ’em. They are passing through town, and are at an hotel in Jermyn Street.”

Warrington looked with good-natured interest at the young fellow dandifying himself up to a pitch of completeness; and appearing at length in a gorgeous shirt-front and neckcloth, fresh gloves, and glistening boots. George had a pair of thick high-lows, and his old shirt was torn about the breast, and ragged at the collar, where his blue beard had worn it.

“Well, young un,” said he, simply, “I like you to be a buck; somehow. When I walk about with you, it is as if I had a rose in my button-hole. And you are still affable. I don’t think there is any young fellow in the Temple turns out like you; and I don’t believe you were ever ashamed of walking with me yet.”

“Don’t laugh at me, George.” said Pen.

“I say, Pen,” continued the other, sadly, “if you write — if you write to Laura, I wish you would say ‘God bless her’ from me.”

Pen blushed; and then looked at Warrington; and then — and then burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughing.

“I’m going to dine with her,” he said. “I brought her and Lady Rockminster up from the country today — made two days of it — slept last night at Bath — I say, George, come and dine, too. I may ask any one I please, and the old lady is constantly talking about you.”

George refused. George had an article to write. George hesitated; and oh, strange to say! at last he agreed to go. It was agreed that they should go and call upon the ladies; and they marched away in high spirits to the hotel in Jermyn Street. Once more the dear face shone upon him; once more the sweet voice spoke to him, and the tender hand pressed a welcome.

There still wanted half an hour to dinner. "You will go and see your uncle now, Mr. Pendennis," old Lady Rockminster said. "You will not bring him to dinner-no — his old stories are intolerable; and I want to talk to Mr. Warrington; I daresay he will amuse us. I think we have heard all your stories. We have been together for two whole days, and I think we are getting tired of each other."

So, obeying her ladyship's orders, Arthur went downstairs and walked to his uncle's lodgings.



CHAPTER LXXI

FIAT JUSTITIA

The dinner was served when Arthur returned, and Lady Rockminster began to scold him for arriving late. But Laura, looking at her cousin, saw that his face was so pale and scared, that she interrupted her imperious patroness; and asked, with tender alarm, what had happened? Was Arthur ill?

Arthur drank a large bumper of sherry. "I have heard the most extraordinary news; I will tell you afterwards," he said, looking at the servants. He was very nervous and agitated during the dinner. "Don't tramp and beat so with your feet under the table," Lady Rockminster said. "You have trodden on Fido, and upset his saucer. You see Mr. Warrington keeps his boots quiet."

At the dessert — it seemed as if the unlucky dinner would never be over — Lady Rockminster said, "This dinner has been exceedingly stupid. I suppose something has happened, and that you want to speak to Laura. I will go and have my nap. I am not sure that I shall have any tea — no. Good night, Mr. Warrington. You must come again, and when there is no business to talk about." And the old lady, tossing up her head, walked away from the room with great dignity.

George and the others had risen with her, and Warrington was about to go away, and was saying "Good night" to Laura, who, of course, was looking much alarmed about her cousin, when Arthur said, "Pray, stay, George. You should hear my news too, and give me your counsel in this case. I hardly know how to act in it."

"It's something about Blanche, Arthur," said Laura, her heart beating, and her cheek blushing as she thought it had never blushed in her life.

"Yes — and the most extraordinary story," said Pen. "When I left you to go to my uncle's lodgings, I found his servant, Morgan, who has been with him so long, at the door, and he said that he and his master had parted that morning; that my uncle had quitted the house, and had gone to an hotel — this hotel. I asked for him when I came in; but he was gone out to dinner. Morgan then said that he had something of a most important nature to communicate to me, and begged me to step into the house; his house it is now. It appears the scoundrel has saved a great deal of money whilst in my uncle's service, and is now a capitalist and a millionaire, for what I know. Well, I went into the house, and what do you think he told me? This must be a secret between us all — at least if we can keep it, now that it is in possession of that villain. Blanche's father is not dead. He has come to life again. The marriage between Clavering and the Begum is no marriage."

"And Blanche, I suppose, is her grandfather's heir," said Warrington.

"Perhaps: but the child of what a father! Amory is an escaped convict — Clavering knows it; my uncle knows it — and it was with this piece of information held over Clavering in terrorem that the wretched old man got him to give up his borough to me."

"Blanche doesn't know it," said Laura, "nor poor Lady Clavering?"

"No," said Pen; "Blanche does not even know the history of her father. She knew that he and her mother had separated, and had heard as a child, from Bonner, her nurse, that Mr. Amory was drowned in New South Wales. He was there as a convict, not as a ship's-captain, as the poor girl thought. Lady Clavering has told me that they were not happy, and that her husband was a bad character. She would tell me all, she said, some day; and I remember her saying to me, with tears in her eyes, that it was hard for a woman to be forced to own that she was glad to hear her husband was dead: and that twice in her life she should have chosen so badly. What is to be done now? The man can't show and claim his wife: death is probably over him if he discovers himself: return to transportation certainly. But the rascal has held the threat of discovery over Clavering for some time past, and has extorted money from him time after time."

"It is our friend Colonel Altamont, of course," said Warrington "I see all now."

"If the rascal comes back," continued Arthur, "Morgan, who knows his secret, will use it over him — and having it in his possession, proposes to extort money from us all. The d — d rascal supposed I was cognisant of it," said Pen, white with anger; "asked me if I would give him an annuity to keep it quiet; threatened me, me, as if I was trafficking with this wretched old Begum's misfortune, and would extort a seat in Parliament out of that miserable Clavering. Good heavens! was my uncle mad, to tamper in such a conspiracy? Fancy our mother's son, Laura, trading on such a treason!"

"I can't fancy it, dear Arthur," said Laura, seizing Arthur's hand, and kissing it.

"No!" broke out Warrington's deep voice, with a tremor; he surveyed the two generous and loving young people with a pang of indescribable love and pain. "No. Our boy can't meddle with such a wretched intrigue as that. Arthur Pendennis can't marry a convict's daughter; and sit in Parliament as member for the hulks. You must wash your hands of the whole affair, Pen. You must break off. You must give no explanations of why and wherefore, but state that family reasons render a match impossible. It is better that those poor women should fancy you false to your word than that they should know the truth. Besides, you can get from that dog Clavering — I can fetch that for you easily enough an acknowledgment that the reasons which you have given to him as the head of the family are amply sufficient for breaking off the union. Don't you think with me, Laura?" He scarcely dared to look her in the face as he spoke. Any lingering hope that he might have — any feeble hold that he might feel upon the last spar of his wrecked fortune, he knew he was casting away; and he let the wave of his calamity close over him. Pen had started up whilst he was speaking, looking eagerly at him. He turned his head away. He saw Laura rise up also and go to Pen, and once more take his hand and kiss it. "She thinks so too — God bless her!" said George.

"Her father's shame is not Blanche's fault, dear Arthur, is it?" Laura said, very pale, and speaking very quickly. "Suppose you had been married, would you desert her because she had done no wrong? Are you not pledged to her? Would you leave her because she is in misfortune? And if she is unhappy, wouldn't you console her? Our mother would, had she been here." And, as she spoke, the kind girl folded her arms round him, and buried her face upon his heart.

"Our mother is an angel with God," Pen sobbed out. "And you are the dearest and best of women — the dearest, the dearest and the best. Teach me my duty. Pray for me that I may do it — pure heart. God bless you — God bless you, my sister!"

"Amen," groaned out Warrington, with his head in his hands. "She is right," he murmured to himself. "She can't do any wrong, I think — that girl." Indeed, she looked and smiled like an angel. Many a day after he saw that smile — saw her radiant face as she looked up at Pen — saw her putting back her curls, blushing and smiling, and still looking fondly towards him.

She leaned for a moment her little fair hand on the table, playing on it. "And now, and now," she said, looking at the two gentlemen —

"And what now?" asked George.

"And now we will have some tea," said Miss Laura, with her smile.

But before this unromantic conclusion to a rather sentimental scene could be suffered to take place, a servant brought word that Major Pendennis had returned to the hotel, and was waiting to see his nephew. Upon this announcement, Laura, not without some alarm, and an appealing look to Pen, which said, "Behave yourself well — hold to the right, and do your duty — be gentle, but firm with your uncle" — Laura, we say, with these warnings written in her face, took leave of the two gentlemen, and retreated to her dormitory. Warrington, who was not generally fond of tea, yet grudged that expected cup very much. Why could not old Pendennis have come in an hour later? Well, an hour sooner or later, what matter? The hour strikes at last. The inevitable moment comes to say Farewell, The hand is shaken, the door closed, and the friend gone; and, the brief joy over, you are alone. "In which of those many windows of the hotel does her light beam?" perhaps he asks himself as he passes down the street. He strides away to the smoking-room of a neighbouring Club, and, there applies himself to his usual solace of a cigar. Men are brawling and talking loud about politics, opera-girls, horse-racing, the atrocious tyranny of the committee:— bearing this sacred secret about him, he enters into this brawl. Talk away, each louder than the other. Rattle and crack jokes. Laugh and tell your wild stories. It is strange to take one's place and part in the midst of the smoke and din, and think every man here has his secret ego most likely, which is sitting lonely and apart, away in the private chamber, from the loud game in which the rest of us is joining!

Arthur, as he traversed the passages of the hotel, felt his anger rousing up within him. He was indignant to think that yonder old gentleman whom he was about to meet, should have made him such a tool and puppet, and so compromised his honour and good name. The old fellow's hand was very cold and shaky when Arthur took it. He was coughing; he was grumbling over the fire; Frosch could not bring his dressing-gown or arrange his papers as that d — d confounded impudent scoundrel of a Morgan. The old gentleman bemoaned himself, and cursed Morgan's ingratitude with peevish pathos.

"The confounded impudent scoundrel! He was drunk last night, and challenged me to fight him, Pen; and, begad, at one time I was so excited that I thought I should have driven a knife into him; and the infernal rascal has made ten thousand pound, I believe — and deserves to be hanged, and will be; but, curse him, I wish he could have lasted out my time. He knew all my ways, and, dammy, when I rang the bell, the confounded thief brought the thing I wanted — not like that stupid German lout. And what sort of time have you had in the country? Been a good deal with Lady Rockminster? You can't do better. She is one of the old school — *vieille ecole, bonne ecole*, hey? Dammy, they don't make gentlemen and ladies now; and in fifty years you'll hardly know one man from another. But they'll last my time. I ain't long for this business: I am getting very old, Pen, my boy; and, gad, I was thinking today, as I was packing up my little library, there's a bible amongst the books that belonged to my poor mother; I would like you to keep that, Pen. I was thinking, sir, that you would most likely open the box when it was your property, and the old fellow was laid under the sod, sir," and the Major coughed and wagged his old head over the fire.

His age — his kindness, disarmed Pen's anger somewhat, and made Arthur feel no little compunction for the deed which he was about to do. He knew that the announcement which he was about to make would destroy the darling hope of the old gentleman's life, and create in his breast a woful anger and commotion.

"Hey — hey — I'm off, sir," nodded the Elder; "but I'd like to read a speech of yours in the Times before I go — 'Mr. Pendennis said, Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking' — hey, sir? hey, Arthur? Begad, you look dev'lish well and healthy, sir. I always said my brother Jack would bring the family right. You must go down into the west, and buy the old estate, sir. *Nec tenui penna*, hey? We'll rise again, sir — rise again on the wing — and, begad, I shouldn't be surprised that you will be a Baronet before you die."

His words smote Pen. "And it is I," he thought, "that am going to fling down the poor old fellow's air-castle. Well, it must be. Here goes. — I — I went into your lodgings at Bury Street, though I did not find you," Pen slowly began — "and I talked with Morgan, uncle."

"Indeed!" The old gentleman's cheek began to flush involuntarily, and he muttered, "The cat's out of the bag now, begad!"

"He told me a story, sir, which gave me the deepest surprise and pain," said Pen.

The Major tried to look unconcerned. "What — that story about — about — What-d'-you-call-'em, hey?"

"About Miss Amory's father — about Lady Clavering's first husband, and who he is, and what."

"Hem — a dev'lish awkward affair!" said the old man, rubbing his nose. "I — I've been aware of that — eh — confounded circumstance for some time."

"I wish I had known it sooner, or not at all," said Arthur, gloomily.

"He is all safe," thought the Senior, greatly relieved. "Gad! I should have liked to keep it from you altogether — and from those two poor women, who are as innocent as unborn babes in the transaction."

"You are right. There is no reason why the two women should hear it; and I shall never tell them — though that villain, Morgan, perhaps may," Arthur said, gloomily. "He seems disposed to trade upon his secret, and has already proposed terms of ransom to me. I wish I had known of the matter earlier, sir. It is not a very pleasant thought to me that I am engaged to a convict's daughter."

"The very reason why I kept it from you — my dear boy. But Miss Amory is not a convict's daughter, don't you see? Miss Amory is the daughter of Lady Clavering, with fifty or sixty thousand pounds for a fortune; and her father-in-law, a Baronet and country gentleman, of high reputation, approves of the match, and gives up his seat in Parliament to his son-in-law. What can be more simple?"

"Is it true, sir?"

"Begad, yes, it is true, of course it's true. Amory's dead. I tell you he is dead. The first sign of life he shows, he is dead. He can't appear. We have him at a deadlock, like the fellow in the play — the 'Critic,' hey? — dev'lish amusing play, that 'Critic.' Monstrous witty man, Sheridan; and so was his son. By Gad, sir, when I was at the Cape, I remember —"

The old gentleman's garrulity, and wish to conduct Arthur to the Cape, perhaps arose from a desire to avoid the subject which was nearest his nephew's heart; but Arthur broke out, interrupting him — "If you had told me this tale sooner, I believe you would have spared me and yourself a great deal of pain and disappointment; and I should not have found myself tied to an engagement from which I can't, in honour, recede."

"No, begad, we've fixed you — and a man who's fixed to a seat in Parliament, and a pretty girl, with a couple of thousand a year, is fixed to no bad thing, let me tell you," said the old man.

"Great Heavens, sir!" said Arthur, "are you blind? Can't you see?"

"See what, young gentleman?" asked the other.

"See, that rather than trade upon this secret of Amory's," Arthur cried out, "I would go and join my father-in-law at the hulks! See, that rather than take a seat in Parliament as a bribe from Clavering for silence, I would take the spoons off the table! See, that you have given me a felon's daughter for a wife; doomed me to poverty and shame; cursed my career when it might have been — when it might have been so different but for you! Don't you see that we have been playing a guilty game, and have been overreached; — that in offering to marry this poor girl, for the sake of her money, and the advancement she would bring, I was degrading myself, and prostituting my honour?"

"What in Heaven's name do you mean, sir?" cried the old man.

"I mean to say that there is a measure of baseness which I can't pass," Arthur said. "I have no other words for it, and am sorry if they hurt you. I have felt, for months past, that my conduct in this affair has been wicked, sordid, and worldly. I am rightly punished by the event, and having sold myself for money and a seat in Parliament, by losing both."

"How do you mean that you lose either?" shrieked the old gentleman. "Who the devil's to take your fortune or your seat away from you? By G — Clavering shall give 'em to you. You shall have every shilling of eighty thousand pounds."

"I'll keep my promise to Miss Amory, sir," said Arthur.

"And, begad, her parents shall keep theirs to you."

"Not so, please God," Arthur answered. "I have sinned, but, Heaven help me, I will sin no more. I will let Clavering off from that bargain which was made without my knowledge. I will take no money with Blanche but that which was originally settled upon her; and I will try to make her happy. You have done it. You have brought this on me, sir. But you knew no better: and I forgive —"

"Arthur — in God's name — in your father's, who, by Heavens, was the proudest man alive, and had the honour of the family always at heart — in mine — for the sake of a poor broken-down old fellow, who has always been dev'lish fond of you — don't fling this chance away — I pray you, I beg you, I implore you, my dear, dear boy, don't fling this chance away. It's the making of you. You're sure to get on. You'll be a Baronet; it's three thousand a year: dammy, on my knees, there, I beg of you, don't do this."

And the old man actually sank down on his knees, and, seizing one of Arthur's hands, looked up piteously at him. It was cruel to remark the shaking hands, the wrinkled and quivering face, the old eyes weeping and winking, the broken voice. "Ah, sir," said Arthur, with a groan, "you have brought pain enough on me, spare me this. You have wished me to marry Blanche. I marry her. For God's sake, sir, rise! I can't bear it."

"You — you mean to say that you will take her as a beggar, and be one yourself?" said the old gentleman, rising up and coughing violently.

"I look at her as a person to whom a great calamity has befallen, and to whom I am promised. She cannot help the misfortune; and as she had my word when she was prosperous, I shall not withdraw it now she is poor. I will not take Clavering's seat, unless afterwards it should be given of his free will. I will not have a shilling more than her original fortune."

"Have the kindness to ring the bell," said the old gentleman. "I have done my best, and said my say; and I'm a dev'lish old fellow. And — and — it don't matter. And — and Shakspeare was right — and Cardinal Wolsey — begad — 'and had I but served my God as I've served you' — yes, on my knees, by Jove, to my own nephew — I mightn't have been — Good night, sir, you needn't trouble yourself to call again."

Arthur took his hand, which the old man left to him; it was quite passive and clammy. He looked very much oldened; and it seemed as if the contest and defeat had quite broken him.

On the next day he kept his bed, and refused to see his nephew.



CHAPTER LXXII

IN WHICH THE DECKS BEGIN TO CLEAR

When, arrayed in his dressing-gown, Pen walked up, according to custom, to Warrington's chambers next morning, to inform his friend of the issue of the last night's interview with his uncle, and to ask, as usual, for George's advice and opinion, Mrs. Flanagan, the laundress, was the only person whom Arthur found in the dear old chambers. George had taken a carpet-bag, and was gone. His address was to his brother's house, in Suffolk. Packages addressed to the newspaper and review for which he wrote lay on the table, awaiting delivery.

"I found him at the table, when I came, the dear gentleman!" Mrs. Flanagan said, "writing at his papers, and one of the candles was burned out; and hard as his bed is, he wasn't in it all night, sir."

Indeed, having sat at the Club until the brawl there became intolerable to him, George had walked home, and had passed the night finishing some work on which he was employed, and to the completion of which he bent himself with all his might. The labour was done, and the night was worn away somehow, and the tardy November dawn came and looked in on the young man as he sate over his desk. In the next day's paper, or quarter's review, many of us very likely admired the work of his genius, the variety of his illustration, the fierce vigour of his satire, the depth of his reason. There was no hint in his writing of the other thoughts which occupied him, and always accompanied him in his work — a tone more melancholy than was customary, a satire more bitter and impatient than that which he afterwards showed, may have marked the writings of this period of his life to the very few persons who knew his style or his name. We have said before, could we know the man's feelings as well as the author's thoughts — how interesting most books would be! — more interesting than merry. I suppose harlequin's face behind his mask is always grave, if not melancholy — certainly each man who lives by the pen, and happens to read this, must remember, if he will, his own experiences, and recall many solemn hours of solitude and labour. What a constant care sate at the side of the desk and accompanied him! Fever or sickness were lying possibly in the next room: a sick child might be there, with a wife watching over it terrified and in prayer: or grief might be bearing him down, and the cruel mist before the eyes rendering the paper scarce visible as he wrote on it, and the inexorable necessity drove on the pen. What man among us has not had nights and hours like these? But to the manly heart — severe as these pangs are, they are endurable: long as the night seems, the dawn comes at last, and the wounds heal, and the fever abates, and rest comes, and you can afford to look back on the past misery with feelings that are anything but bitter.

Two or three books for reference, fragments of torn-up manuscript, drawers open, pens and inkstand, lines half visible on the blotting-paper, a bit of sealing-wax twisted and bitten and broken into sundry pieces — such relics as these were about the table, and Pen flung himself down in George's empty chair — noting things according to his wont, or in spite of himself. There was a gap in the bookcase (next to the old College Plato, with the Boniface Arms), where Helen's bible used to be. He has taken that with him, thought Pen. He knew why his friend was gone. Dear, dear old George!

Pen rubbed his hand over his eyes. Oh, how much wiser, how much better, how much nobler he is than I! he thought. Where was such a friend, or such a brave heart? Where shall I ever hear such a frank voice, and kind laughter? Where shall I ever see such a true gentleman? No wonder she loved him. God bless him! What was I compared to him? What could she do else but love him? To the end of our days we will be her brothers, as fate wills that we can be no more. We'll be her knights, and wait on her: and when we're old, we'll say how we loved her. Dear, dear old George!

When Pen descended to his own chambers, his eye fell on the letter-box of his outer door, which he had previously overlooked, and there was a little note to A. P., Esq., in George's well-known handwriting, George had put into Pen's box probably as he was going away.

"Dear Pen — I shall be half-way home when you breakfast, and intend to stay over Christmas, in Norfolk, or elsewhere.

"I have my own opinion of the issue of matters about which we talked in J—— St. yesterday; and think my presence de trop.

"Vale. G. W."

"Give my very best regards and adieux to your cousin."

And so George was gone, and Mrs. Flanagan, the laundress, ruled over his empty chambers.

Pen of course had to go and see his uncle on the day after their colloquy, and not being admitted, he naturally went to Lady Rockminster's apartments, where the old lady instantly asked for Bluebeard, and insisted that he should come to dinner.

"Bluebeard is gone," Pen said, and he took out poor George's scrap of paper, and handed it to Laura, who looked at it — did not look at Pen in return, but passed the paper back to him, and walked away. Pen rushed into an eloquent eulogium upon his dear old George to Lady Rockminster, who was astonished at his enthusiasm. She had never heard him so warm in praise of anybody; and told him with her usual frankness, that she didn't think it had been in his nature to care so much about any other person.

As Mr. Pendennis was passing in Waterloo Place, in one of his many walks to the hotel where Laura lived, and whither duty to his uncle carried Arthur every day, Arthur saw issuing from Messrs. Gimcrack's celebrated shop an old friend, who was followed to his brougham by an obsequious shopman bearing parcels. The gentleman was in the deepest mourning: the brougham, the driver, and the horse were in mourning. Grief in easy circumstances and supported by the comfortablest springs and cushions, was typified in the equipage and the little gentleman, its proprietor.

"What, Foker! Hail, Foker!" cried out Pen — the reader, no doubt, has likewise recognised Arthur's old schoolfellow — and he held out his hand to the heir of the late lamented John Henry Foker, Esq., the master of Logwood and other houses, the principal partner in the great brewery of Foker and Co.: the greater portion of Foker's Entire.

A little hand, covered with a glove of the deepest ebony, and set off by three inches of a snowy wristband, was put forth to meet Arthur's salutation. The other little hand held a little morocco case, containing, no doubt, something precious, of which Mr. Foker had just become proprietor in Messrs. Gimcrack's shop. Pen's keen eyes and satiric turn showed him at once upon what errand Mr. Foker had been employed; and he thought of the heir in Horace pouring forth the gathered wine of his father's vats; and that human nature is pretty much the same in Regent Street as in the Via Sacra.

"Le Roi est mort. Vive le Roi!" said Arthur.

"Ah!" said the other. "Yes. Thank you — very much obliged. How do you do, Pen? — very busy — good-bye!" and he jumped into the black brougham, and sate like a little black Care behind the black coachman. He had blushed on seeing Pen, and shown other signs of guilt and perturbation, which Pen attributed to the novelty of his situation; and on which he began to speculate in his usual sardonic manner.

"Yes: so wags the world," thought Pen. "The stone closes over Harry the Fourth, and Harry the Fifth reigns in his stead. The old ministers at the brewery come and kneel before him with their books; the draymen, his subjects, fling up their red caps, and shout for him. What a grave deference and sympathy the bankers and the lawyers show! There was too great a stake at issue between those two that they should ever love each other very cordially. As long as one man keeps another out of twenty thousand a year, the younger must be always hankering after the crown, and the wish must be the father to the thought of possession. Thank Heaven, there was no thought of money between me and our dear mother, Laura."

"There never could have been. You would have spurned it!" cried Laura. "Why make yourself more selfish than you are, Pen; and allow your mind to own for an instant that it would have entertained such — such dreadful meanness? You make me blush for you, Arthur: you make me ——" her eyes finished this sentence, and she passed her handkerchief across them.

"There are some truths which women will never acknowledge," Pen said, "and from which your modesty always turns away. I do not say that I ever knew the feeling, only that I am glad I had not the temptation. Is there any harm in that confession of weakness?"

"We are all taught to ask to be delivered from evil, Arthur," said Laura, in a low voice. "I am glad if you were spared from that great crime; and only sorry to think that you could by any possibility have been led into it. But you never could; and you don't think you could. Your acts are generous and kind: you disdain mean actions. You take Blanche without money, and without a bribe. Yes, thanks be to Heaven, dear brother. You could not have sold yourself away; I knew you could not when it came to the day, and you did not. Praise be — be where praise is due. Why does this horrid scepticism pursue you, my Arthur? Why doubt and sneer at your own heart — at every one's? Oh, if you knew the pain you give me — how I lie awake and think of those hard sentences, dear brother, and wish them unspoken, unthought!"

"Do I cause you many thoughts and many tears, Laura?" asked Arthur. The fulness of innocent love beamed from her in reply. A smile heavenly pure, a glance of unutterable tenderness, sympathy, pity, shone in her face — all which indications of love and purity Arthur beheld and worshipped in her, as you would watch them in a child, as one fancies one might regard them in an angel.

"I— I don't know what I have done," he said, simply, "to have merited such regard from two such women. It is like undeserved praise, Laura — or too much good fortune, which frightens one — or a great post, when a man feels that he is not fit for it. Ah, sister, how weak and wicked we are; how spotless, and full of love and truth, Heaven made you! I think for some of you there has been no fall," he said, looking at the charming girl with an almost paternal glance of admiration. "You can't help having sweet thoughts, and doing good actions. Dear creature! they are the flowers which you bear."

"And what else, sir?" asked Laura. "I see a sneer coming over your face. What is it? Why does it come to drive all the good thoughts away?"

"A sneer, is there? I was thinking, my dear, that nature in making you so good and loving did very well: but ——"

"But what? What is that wicked but? and why are you always calling it up?"

"But will come in spite of us. But is reflection. But is the sceptic's familiar, with whom he has made a compact; and if he forgets it, and indulges in happy day-dreams, or building of air-castles, or listens to sweet music let us say, or to the bells ringing to church, But taps at the door, and says, Master, I am here. You are my master; but I am yours. Go where you will you can't travel without me. I will whisper to you when you are on your knees at church. I will be at your marriage pillow. I will sit down at your table with your children. I will be behind your deathbed curtain. That is what But is," Pen said.

"Pen, you frighten me," cried Laura.

"Do you know what But came and said to me just now, when I was looking at you? But said, If that girl had reason as well as love, she would love you no more. If she knew you as you are — the sullied, selfish being which you know — she must part from you, and could give you no love and no sympathy. Didn't I say," he added fondly, "that some of you seem exempt from the fall? Love you know; but the knowledge of evil is kept from you."

"What is this you young folks are talking about?" asked Lady Rockminster, who at this moment made her appearance in the room, having performed, in the mystic retirement of her own apartments, and under the hands of her attendant, those elaborate toilet-rites without which the worthy old lady never presented herself to public view. "Mr. Pendennis, you are always coming here."

"It is very pleasant to be here," Arthur said; "and we were talking, when you came in, about my friend Foker, whom I met just now; and who, as your ladyship knows, has succeeded to his father's kingdom."

"He has a very fine property, he has fifteen thousand a year. He is my cousin. He is a very worthy young man. He must come and see me," said Lady Rockminster, with a look at Laura.

"He has been engaged for many years past to his cousin," Lady ——

"Lady Ann is a foolish little chit," Lady Rockminster said, with much dignity; "and I have no patience with her. She has outraged every feeling of society. She has broken her father's heart, and thrown away fifteen thousand a year."

"Thrown away? What has happened?" asked Pen.

"It will be the talk of the town in a day or two; and there is no need why I should keep the secret any longer," said Lady Rockminster, who had written and received a dozen letters on the subject. "I had a letter yesterday from my daughter, who was staying at Drummington until all the world was obliged to go away on account of the frightful catastrophe which happened there. When Mr. Foker came home from Nice, and after the funeral, Lady Ann went down on her knees to her father, said that she never could marry her cousin, that she had contracted another attachment, and that she must die rather than fulfil her contract. Poor Lord Rosherville, who is dreadfully embarrassed, showed his daughter what the state of his affairs was, and that it was necessary that the arrangements should take place; and in fine, we all supposed that she had listened to reason, and intended to comply with the desires of her family. But what has happened? — last Thursday she went out after breakfast with her maid, and was married in the very church in Drummington Park to Mr. Hobson, her father's own chaplain and her brother's tutor; a red-haired widower with two children. Poor dear Rosherville is in a dreadful way: he wishes Henry Foker should marry Alice or Barbara; but Alice is marked with the small-pox, and Barbara is ten years older than he is. And, of course, now the young man is his own master, he will think of choosing for himself.

The blow on Lady Agnes is very cruel. She is inconsolable. She has the house in Grosvenor Street for her life, and her settlement, which was very handsome. Have you not met her? Yes, she dined one day at Lady Clavering's — the first day I saw you, and a very disagreeable young man I thought you were. But I have formed you. We have formed him, haven't we, Laura? Where is Bluebeard? let him come. That horrid Grindley, the dentist, will keep me in town another week."

To the latter part of her ladyship's speech Arthur gave no ear. He was thinking for whom could Foker be purchasing those trinkets which he was carrying away from the jeweller's? Why did Harry seem anxious to avoid him? Could he be still faithful to the attachment which had agitated him so much, and sent him abroad eighteen months back? Psha! The bracelets and presents were for some of Harry's old friends of the Opera or the French theatre. Rumours from Naples and Paris, rumours such as are borne to Club smoking-rooms, had announced that the young man had found distractions; or, precluded from his virtuous attachment, the poor fellow had flung himself back upon his old companions and amusements — not the only man or woman whom society forces into evil, or debars from good; not the only victim of the world's selfish and wicked laws.

As a good thing when it is to be done cannot be done too quickly, Laura was anxious that Pen's marriage intentions should be put into execution as speedily as possible, and pressed on his arrangements with rather a feverish anxiety. Why could she not wait? Pen could afford to do so with perfect equanimity, but Laura would hear of no delay. She wrote to Pen: she implored Pen: she used every means to urge expedition. It seemed as if she could have no rest until Arthur's happiness was complete.

She offered herself to dearest Blanche to come and stay at Tunbridge with her, when Lady Rockminster should go on her intended visit to the reigning house of Rockminster; and although the old dowager scolded, and ordered, and commanded, Laura was deaf and disobedient: she must go to Tunbridge, she would go to Tunbridge: she who ordinarily had no will of her own, and complied smilingly with anybody's whim and caprices, showed the most selfish and obstinate determination in this instance. The dowager lady must nurse herself in her rheumatism, she must read herself to sleep, if she would not hear her maid, whose voice croaked, and who made sad work of the sentimental passages in the novels — Laura must go — and be with her new sister. In another week, she proposed, with many loves and regards to dear Lady Clavering, to pass some time with dearest Blanche.

Dearest Blanche wrote instantly in reply to dearest Laura's No. 1, to say with what extreme delight she should welcome her sister: how charming it would be to practise their old duets together, to wander o'er the grassy sward, and amidst the yellowing woods of Penshurst and Southborough! Blanche counted the hours till she should embrace her dearest friend.

Laura, No. 2, expressed her delight at dearest Blanche's affectionate reply. She hoped that their friendship would never diminish; that the confidence between them would grow in after years; that they should have no secrets from each other; that the aim of the life of each would be to make one person happy.

Blanche, No. 2, followed in two days. "How provoking! Their house was very small, the two spare bedrooms were occupied by that horrid Mrs. Planter and her daughter, who had thought proper to fall ill (she always fell ill in country-houses), and she could not or would not be moved for some days."

Laura, No. 3. "It was indeed very provoking. L. had hoped to hear one of dearest B.'s dear songs on Friday; but she was the more consoled to wait, because Lady R. was not very well, and liked to be nursed by her. Poor Major Pendennis was very unwell, too, in the same hotel — too unwell even to see Arthur, who was constant in his calls on his uncle. Arthur's heart was full of tenderness and affection. She had known Arthur all her life. She would answer" — yes, even in italics she would answer — "for his kindness, his goodness, and his gentleness."

Blanche, No. 3. "What is this most surprising, most extraordinary letter from A. P.? What does dearest Laura know about it? What has happened? What, what mystery is enveloped under his frightful reserve?"

Blanche, No. 3, requires an explanation; and it cannot be better given than in the surprising and mysterious letter of Arthur Pendennis.



CHAPTER LXXIII

MR. AND MRS. SAM HUXTER

“Dear Blanche,” Arthur wrote, “you are always reading and dreaming pretty dramas, and exciting romances in real life: are you now prepared to enact a part of one? And not the pleasantest part, dear Blanche, that in which the heroine takes possession of her father’s palace and wealth, and introducing her husband to the loyal retainers and faithful vassals, greets her happy bridegroom with ‘All of this is mine and thine,’— but the other character, that of the luckless lady, who suddenly discovers that she is not the Prince’s wife, but Claude Melnotte’s the beggar’s: that of Alnaschar’s wife, who comes in just as her husband has kicked over the tray of porcelain which was to be the making of his fortune — But stay; Alnaschar, who kicked down the china, was not a married man; he had cast his eye on the Vizier’s daughter, and his hopes of her went to the ground with the shattered bowls and tea-cups.

“Will you be the Vizier’s daughter, and refuse and laugh to scorn Alnaschar, or will you be the Lady of Lyons, and love the penniless Claude Melnotte? I will act that part if you like. I will love you my best in return. I will do my all to make your humble life happy: for humble it will be: at least the odds are against any other conclusion; we shall live and die in a poor prosy humdrum way. There will be no stars and epaulettes for the hero of our story. I shall write one or two more stories, which will presently be forgotten. I shall be called to the Bar, and try to get on in my profession: perhaps some day, if I am very lucky, and work very hard (which is absurd), I may get a colonial appointment, and you may be an Indian Judge’s lady. Meanwhile. I shall buy back the Pall Mall Gazette; the publishers are tired of it since the death of poor Shandon, and will sell it for a small sum. Warrington will be my right hand, and write it up to a respectable sale. I will introduce you to Mr. Finucane the sub-editor, and I know who in the end will be Mrs. Finucane — a very nice gentle creature, who has lived sweetly through a sad life and we will jog on, I say, and look out for better times, and earn our living decently. You shall have the opera-boxes, and superintend the fashionable intelligence, and break your little heart in the poet’s corner. Shall we live over the offices? — there are four very good rooms, a kitchen, and a garret for Laura, in Catherine Street in the Strand; or would you like a house in the Waterloo Road? — it would be very pleasant, only there is that halfpenny toll at the Bridge. The boys may go to King’s College, mayn’t they? Does all this read to you like a joke?

“Ah, dear Blanche, it is no joke, and I am sober and telling the truth. Our fine day-dreams are gone. Our carriage has whirled out of sight like Cinderella’s: our house in Belgravia has been whisked away into the air by a malevolent Genius, and I am no more a member of Parliament than I am a Bishop on his bench in the House of Lords, or a Duke with a garter at his knee. You know pretty well what my property is, and your own little fortune: we may have enough with those two to live in decent comfort; to take a cab sometimes when we go out to see our friends, and not to deny ourselves an omnibus when we are tired. But that is all: is that enough for you, my little dainty lady? I doubt sometimes whether you can bear the life which I offer you — at least, it is fair that you should know what it will be. If you say, ‘Yes, Arthur, I will follow your fate whatever it may be, and be a loyal and loving wife to aid and cheer you’ — come to me, dear Blanche, and may God help me so that I may do my duty to you. If not, and you look to a higher station, I must not bar Blanche’s fortune — I will stand in the crowd, and see your ladyship go to Court when you are presented, and you shall give me a smile from your chariot window. I saw Lady Mirabel going to the drawing-room last season: the happy husband at her side glittered with stars and cordons. All the flowers in the garden bloomed in the coachman’s bosom. Will you have these and the chariot, or walk on foot and mend your husband’s stockings?

“I cannot tell you now — afterwards I might, should the day come when we may have no secrets from one another — what has happened within the last few hours which has changed all my prospects in life: but so it is, that I have learned something which forces me to give up the plans which I had formed, and many vain and ambitious hopes in which I had been indulging. I have written and despatched a letter to Sir Francis Clavering, saying that I cannot accept his seat in Parliament until after my marriage; in like manner I cannot and will not accept any larger fortune with you than that which has always belonged to you since your grandfather’s death, and the birth of your half-brother. Your good mother is not in the least aware — I hope she never may be — of the reasons which force me to this very strange decision. They arise from a painful circumstance, which is attributable to none of our faults; but, having once befallen, they are as fatal and irreparable as that shock which upset honest Alnaschar’s porcelain, and shattered all his hopes beyond the power of mending. I write

gaily enough, for there is no use in bewailing such a hopeless mischance. We have not drawn the great prize in the lottery, dear Blanche: but I shall be contented enough without it, if you can be so; and I repeat, with all my heart, that I will do my best to make you happy.

“And now, what news shall I give you? My uncle is very unwell, and takes my refusal of the seat in Parliament in sad dudgeon: the scheme was his, poor old gentleman, and he naturally bemoans its failure. But Warrington, Laura, and I had a council of war: they know this awful secret, and back me in my decision. You must love George as you love what is generous and upright and noble; and as for Laura — she must be our Sister, Blanche, our Saint, our good Angel. With two such friends at home, what need we care for the world without; or who is member for Clavering, or who is asked or not asked to the great balls of the season?”

To this frank communication came back the letter from Blanche to Laura, and one to Pen himself, which perhaps his own letter justified. “You are spoiled by the world,” Blanche wrote; “you do not love your poor Blanche as she would be loved, or you would not offer thus lightly to take her or to leave her, no, Arthur, you love me not — a man of the world, you have given me your plighted troth, and are ready to redeem it; but that entire affection, that love whole and abiding, where — where is that vision of my youth? I am but a pastime of your life, and I would be its all; — but a fleeting thought, and I would be your whole soul. I would have our two hearts one; but ah, my Arthur, how lonely yours is! how little you give me of it! You speak of our parting with a smile on your lip; of our meeting, and you care not to hasten it! Is life but a disillusion, then, and are the flowers of our garden faded away? I have wept — I have prayed — I have passed sleepless hours — I have shed bitter, bitter tears over your letter! To you I bring the gushing poesy of my being — the yearnings of the soul that longs to be loved — that pines for love, love, love, beyond all! — that flings itself at your feet, and cries, Love me, Arthur! Your heart beats no quicker at the kneeling appeal of my love! — your proud eye is dimmed by no tear of sympathy! — you accept my soul’s treasure as though ’twere dross! not the pearls from the unfathomable deeps of affection! not the diamonds from the caverns of the heart. You treat me like a slave, and bid me bow to my master! Is this the guerdon of a free maiden — is this the price of a life’s passion? Ah me! when was it otherwise? when did love meet with aught but disappointment? Could I hope (fond fool!) to be the exception to the lot of my race; and lay my fevered brow on a heart that comprehended my own? Foolish girl that I was! One by one, all the flowers of my young life have faded away; and this, the last, the sweetest, the dearest, the fondly, the madly loved, the wildly cherished — where is it? But no more of this. Heed not my bleeding heart. — Bless you, bless you always, Arthur!

“I will write more when I am more collected. My racking brain renders thought almost impossible. I long to see Laura! She will come to us directly we return from the country, will she not? And you, cold one!

B.”

The words of this letter were perfectly clear, and written in Blanche’s neatest hand upon her scented paper; and yet the meaning of the composition not a little puzzled Pen. Did Blanche mean to accept or to refuse his polite offer? Her phrases either meant that Pen did not love her, and she declined him, or that she took him, and sacrificed herself to him, cold as he was. He laughed sardonically over the letter, and over the transaction which occasioned it. He laughed to think how Fortune had jilted him, and how he deserved his slippery fortune. He turned over and over the musky gilt-edged riddle. It amused his humour: he enjoyed it as if it had been a funny story.

He was thus seated, twiddling the queer manuscript in his hand, joking grimly to himself, when his servant came in with a card from a gentleman, who wished to speak to him very particularly. And if Pen had gone out into the passage, he would have seen, sucking his stick, rolling his eyes, and showing great marks of anxiety, his old acquaintance, Mr. Samuel Huxter.

“Mr. Huxter on particular business! Pray, beg Mr. Huxter to come in,” said Pen, amused rather; and not the less so when poor Sam appeared before him.

“Pray take a chair, Mr. Huxter,” said Pen, in his most superb manner. “In what way can I be of service to you?”

“I had rather not speak before the flunk — before the man, Mr. Pendennis:” on which Mr. Arthur’s attendant quitted the room.

“I’m in a fix,” said Mr. Huxter, gloomily.

“Indeed.”

“She sent me to you,” continued the young surgeon.

"What, Fanny? Is she well? I was coming to see her, but I have had a great deal of business since my return to London."

"I heard of you through my governor and Jack Hobnell," broke in Huxter. "I wish you joy, Mr. Pendennis, both of the borough and the lady, sir. Fanny wishes you joy, too," he added, with something of a blush.

"There's many a slip between the cup and the lip! Who knows what may happen, Mr. Huxter, or who will sit in Parliament for Clavering next session?"

"You can do anything with my governor," continued Mr. Huxter. "You got him Clavering Park. The old boy was very much pleased, sir, at your calling him in. Hobnell wrote me so. Do you think you could speak to the governor for me, Mr. Pendennis?"

"And tell him what?"

"I've gone and done it, sir," said Huxter, with a particular look.

"You — you don't mean to say you have — you have done any wrong to that dear little creature, sir?" said Pen, starting up in a great fury.

"I hope not," said Huxter, with a hangdog look: "but I've married her. And I know there will be an awful shindy at home. It was agreed that I should be taken into partnership when I had passed the College, and it was to have been Huxter and Son. But I would have it, confound it. It's all over now, and the old boy's wrote me that he's coming up to town for drugs: he will be here tomorrow, and then it must all come out."

"And when did this event happen?" asked Pen, not over well pleased, most likely, that a person who had once attracted some portion of his royal good graces should have transferred her allegiance, and consoled herself for his loss.

"Last Thursday was five weeks — it was two days after Miss Amory came to Shepherd's Inn," Huxter answered.

Pen remembered that Blanche had written and mentioned her visit. "I was called in," Huxter said. "I was in the Inn looking after old Cos's leg; and about something else too, very likely: and I met Strong, who told me there was a woman taken ill in Chambers, and went up to give her my professional services. It was the old lady who attends Miss Amory — her housekeeper, or some such thing. She was taken with strong hysterics: I found her kicking and screaming like a good one — in Strong's chamber, along with him and Colonel Altamont, and Miss Amory crying and as pale as a sheet; and Altamont fuming about — a regular kick-up. They were two hours in the Chambers; and the old woman went whooping off in a cab. She was much worse than the young one. I called in Grosvenor Place next day to see if I could be of any service, but they were gone without so much as thanking me: and the day after I had business of my own to attend to — a bad business too," said Mr. Huxter, gloomily. "But it's done, and can't be undone; and we must make the best of it"

She has known the story for a month, thought Pen, with a sharp pang of grief, and a gloomy sympathy — this accounts for her letter of today. She will not implicate her father, or divulge his secret; she wishes to let me off from the marriage — and finds a pretext — the generous girl!

"Do you know who Altamont is, sir?" asked Huxter, after the pause during which Pen had been thinking of his own affairs. "Fanny and I have talked him over, and we can't help fancying that it's Mrs. Lightfoot's first husband come to life again, and she who has just married a second. Perhaps Lightfoot won't be very sorry for it," sighed Huxter, looking savagely at Arthur, for the demon of jealousy was still in possession of his soul; and now, and more than ever since his marriage, the poor fellow fancied that Fanny's heart belonged to his rival.

"Let us talk about your affairs," said Pen. "Show me how I can be of any service to you, Huxter. Let me congratulate you on your marriage. I am thankful that Fanny, who is so good, so fascinating, so kind a creature, has found an honest man, and a gentleman who will make her happy. Show me what I can do to help you."

"She thinks you can, sir," said Huxter, accepting Pen's proffered hand, "and I'm very much obliged to you, I'm sure; and that you might talk over my father, and break the business to him, and my mother, who always has her back up about being a clergyman's daughter. Fanny ain't of a good family, I know, and not up to us in breeding and that — but she's a Huxter now."

"The wife takes the husband's rank, of course," said Pen.

"And with a little practice in society," continued Huxter, imbibing his stick, "she'll be as good as any girl in Clavering. You should hear her sing and play on the piano. Did you ever? Old Bows taught her. And she'll do on the stage, if the

governor was to throw me over; but I'd rather not have her there. She can't help being a coquette, Mr. Pendennis, she can't help it. Dammy, sir! I'll be bound to say, that two or three of the Bartholomew chaps, that I've brought into my place, are sitting with her now: even Jack Linton, that I took down as my best man, is as bad as the rest, and she will go on singing and making eyes at him. It's what Bows says, if there were twenty men in a room, and one not taking notice of her, she wouldn't be satisfied until the twentieth was at her elbow."

"You should have her mother with her," said Pen, laughing.

"She must keep the lodge. She can't see so much of her family as she used. I can't, you know, sir, go on with that lot. Consider my rank in life," said Huxter, putting a very dirty hand up to his chin.

"Au fait," said Mr. Pen, who was infinitely amused, and concerning whom *mutato nomine* (and of course concerning nobody else in the world) the fable might have been narrated.

As the two gentlemen were in the midst of this colloquy, another knock came to Pen's door, and his servant presently announced Mr. Bows. The old man followed slowly, his pale face blushing, and his hand trembling somewhat as he took Pen's. He coughed, and wiped his face in his checked cotton pocket-handkerchief, and sate down with his hands on his knees, the sunshining on his bald head. Pen looked at the homely figure with no small sympathy and kindness. This man, too, has had his griefs and his wounds, Arthur thought. This man, too, has brought his genius and his heart, and laid them at a woman's feet; where she spurned them. The chance of life has gone against him, and the prize is with that creature yonder. Fanny's bridegroom, thus mutely apostrophised, had winked meanwhile with one eye at old Bows, and was driving holes in the floor with the cane which he loved.

"So we have lost, Mr. Bows, and here is the lucky winner," Pen said, looking hard at the old man.

"Here is the lucky winner, sir, as you say."

"I suppose you have come from my place?" asked Huxter, who, having winked at Bows with one eye, now favoured Pen with a wink of the other — a wink which seemed to say, "Infatuated old boy — you understand — over head and ears in love with her poor old fool."

"Yes, I have been there ever since you went away. It was Mrs. Sam who sent me after you: who said that she thought you might be doing something stupid — something like yourself, Huxter."

"There's as big fools as I am," growled the young surgeon.

"A few, p'raps," said the old man; "not many, let us trust. Yes, she sent me after you for fear you should offend Mr. Pendennis; and I daresay because she thought you wouldn't give her message to him, and beg him to go and see her; and she knew I would take her errand. Did he tell you that, sir?"

Huxter blushed scarlet, and covered his confusion with an imprecation. Pen laughed; the scene suited his bitter humour more and more.

"I have no doubt Mr. Huxter was going to tell me," Arthur said, "and very much flattered I am sure I shall be to pay my respects to his wife."

"It's in Charterhouse Lane, over the baker's, on the right hand side as you go from St. John's Street," continued Bows, without any pity. "You know Smithfield, Mr. Pendennis? St. John's Street leads into Smithfield. Doctor Johnson has been down the street many a time with ragged shoes, and a bundle of penny-a-lining for the Gent's Magazine. You literary gents are better off now — eh? You ride in your cabs, and wear yellow kid gloves now."

"I have known so many brave and good men fail, and so many quacks and impostors succeed, that you mistake me if you think I am puffed up by my own personal good luck, old friend," Arthur said, sadly. "Do you think the prizes of life are carried by the most deserving? and set up that mean test of prosperity for merit? You must feel that you are as good as I. I have never questioned it. It is you that are peevish against the freaks of fortune, and grudge the good luck that befalls others. It's not the first time you have unjustly accused me, Bows."

"Perhaps you are not far wrong, sir," said the old fellow, wiping his bald forehead. "I am thinking about myself and grumbling; most men do when they get on that subject. Here's the fellow that's got the prize in the lottery; here's the fortunate youth."

"I don't know what you are driving at," Huxter said, who had been much puzzled as the above remarks passed between his two companions.

"Perhaps not," said Bows, drily. "Mrs. H. sent me here to look after you, and to see that you brought that little message to Mr. Pendennis, which you didn't, you see, and so she was right. Women always are; they have always a reason for everything. Why, sir," he said, turning round to Pen with a sneer, "she had a reason even for giving me that message. I was sitting with her after you left us, very quiet and comfortable; I was talking away, and she was mending your shirts, when your two young friends, Jack Linton and Bob Blades, looked in from Bartholomew's; and then it was she found out that she had this message to send. You needn't hurry yourself, she don't want you back again; they'll stay these two hours, I daresay."

Huxter arose with great perturbation at this news, and plunged his stick into the pocket of his paletot, and seized his hat.

"You'll come and see us, sir, won't you?" he said to Pen. "You'll talk over the governor, won't you, sir, if I can get out of this place and down to Clavering?"

"You will promise to attend me gratis if ever I fall ill at Fairoaks, will you, Huxter?" Pen said, good-naturedly. "I will do anything I can for you. I will come and see Mrs. Huxter immediately, and we will conspire together about what is to be done."

"I thought that would send him out, sir," Bows said, dropping into his chair again as soon as the young surgeon had quitted the room. "And it's all true, sir — every word of it. She wants you back again, and sends her husband after you. She cajoles everybody, the little devil. She tries it on you, on me, on poor Costigan, on the young chaps from Bartholomew's. She's got a little court of 'em already. And if there's nobody there, she practises on the old German baker in the shop, or coaxes the black sweeper at the crossing."

"Is she fond of that fellow?" asked Pen.

"There is no accounting for likes and dislikes," Bows answered.

"Yes, she is fond of him; and having taken the thing into her head, she would not rest until she married him. They had their banns published at St. Clement's, and nobody heard it or knew any just cause or impediment. And one day she slips out of the porter's lodge and has the business done, and goes off to Gravesend with Lothario; and leaves a note for me to go and explain all things to her Ma. Bless you! the old woman knew it as well as I did, though she pretended ignorance. And so she goes, and I'm alone again. I miss her, sir, tripping along that court, and coming for her singing lesson; and I've no heart to look into the porter's lodge now, which looks very empty without her, the little flirting thing. And I go and sit and dangle about her lodgings, like an old fool. She makes 'em very trim and nice, though; gets up all Huxter's shirts and clothes: cooks his little dinner, and sings at her business like a little lark. What's the use of being angry? I lent 'em three pound to go on with: for they haven't got a shilling till the reconciliation, and Pa comes down."

When Bows had taken his leave, Pen carried his letter from Blanche, and the news which he had just received, to his usual adviser, Laura. It was wonderful upon how many points Mr. Arthur, who generally followed his own opinion, now wanted another person's counsel. He could hardly so much as choose a waistcoat without referring to Miss Bell: if he wanted to buy a horse he must have Miss Bell's opinion; all which marks of deference tended greatly to the amusement of the shrewd old lady with whom Miss Bell lived, and whose plans regarding her protegee we have indicated.

Arthur produced Blanche's letter then to Laura, and asked her to interpret it. Laura was very much agitated and puzzled by the contents of the note.

"It seems to me," she said, "as if Blanche is acting very artfully."

"And wishes so to place matters that she may take me or leave me? Is it not so?"

"It is, I am afraid, a kind of duplicity which does not augur well for your future happiness; and is a bad reply to your own candour and honesty, Arthur. Do you know, I think, I think — I scarcely like to say what I think," said Laura with a deep blush; but of course the blushing young lady yielded to her cousin's persuasion, and expressed what her thoughts were. "It looks to me, Arthur, as if there might be — there might be somebody else," said, Laura, with a repetition of the blush.

"And if there is," broke in Arthur, "and if I am free once again, will the best and dearest of all women —"

"You are not free, dear brother," Laura said calmly. "You belong to another; of whom I own it grieves me to think ill. But I can't do otherwise. It is very odd that in this letter she does not urge you to tell her the reason why you have broken arrangements which would have been so advantageous to you; and avoids speaking on the subject. She somehow seems to

write as if she knows her father's secret."

Pen said, "Yes, she must know it;" and told the story, which he had just heard from Huxter, of the interview at Shepherd's Inn.

"It was not so that she described the meeting," said Laura; and, going to her desk, produced from it that letter of Blanche's which mentioned her visit to Shepherd's Inn. 'Another disappointment — only the Chevalier Strong and a friend of his in the room.' This was all that Blanche had said. "But she was bound to keep her father's secret, Pen," Laura added. "And yet, and yet — it is very puzzling."

The puzzle was this, that for three weeks after this eventful discovery Blanche had been only too eager about her dearest Arthur; was urging, as strongly as so much modesty could urge, the completion of the happy arrangements which were to make her Arthur's for ever; and now it seemed as if something had interfered to mar these happy arrangements — as if Arthur poor was not quite so agreeable to Blanche as Arthur rich and a member of Parliament — as if there was some mystery. At last she said:

"Tunbridge Wells is not very far off, is it, Arthur? Hadn't you better go and see her?"

They had been in town a week, and neither had thought of that simple plan before!



CHAPTER LXXIV

SHOWS HOW ARTHUR HAD BETTER HAVE TAKEN A RETURN-TICKET

The train carried Arthur only too quickly to Tunbridge, though he had time to review all the circumstances of his life as he made the brief journey; and to acknowledge to what sad conclusions his selfishness and waywardness had led him. "Here is the end of hopes and aspirations," thought he, "of romance and ambitions! Where I yield or where I am obstinate, I am alike unfortunate; my mother implores me, and I refuse an angel! Say I had taken her; forced on me as she was, Laura would never have been an angel to me. I could not have given her my heart at another's instigation; I never could have known her as she is had I been obliged to ask another to interpret her qualities and point out her virtues. I yield to my uncle's solicitations, and accept on his guarantee Blanche, and a seat in Parliament, and wealth, and ambition, and a career; and see! — fortune comes and leaves me the wife without the dowry, which I had taken in compensation of a heart. Why was I not more honest, or am I not less so? It would have cost my poor old uncle no pangs to accept Blanche's fortune whencesoever it came; he can't even understand, he is bitterly indignant, heart-stricken, almost, at the scruples which actuate me in refusing it. I dissatisfy everybody. A maimed, weak, imperfect wretch, it seems as if I am unequal to any fortune. I neither make myself nor any one connected with me happy. What prospect is there for this poor little frivolous girl, who is to take my obscure name and share my fortune? I have not even ambition to excite me, or self-esteem enough to console myself, much more her, for my failure. If I were to write a book that should go through twenty editions, why, I should be the very first to sneer at my reputation. Say I could succeed at the Bar, and achieve a fortune by bullying witnesses and twisting evidence; is that a fame which would satisfy my longings, or a calling in which my life would be well spent? How I wish I could be that priest opposite, who never has lifted his eyes from his breviary, except when we were in Reigate tunnel, when he could not see; or that old gentleman next him, who scowls at him with eyes of hatred over his newspaper. The priest shuts his eyes to the world, but has his thoughts on the book, which is his directory to the world to come. His neighbour hates him as a monster, tyrant, persecutor, and fancies burning martyrs, and that pale countenance looking on, and lighted up by the flame. These have no doubts; these march on trustfully, bearing their load of logic."

"Would you like to look at the paper, sir?" here interposed the stout gentleman (it had a flaming article against the order of the black-coated gentleman who was travelling with them in the carriage), and Pen thanked him and took it, and pursued his reverie, without reading two sentences of the journal.

"And yet, would you take either of those men's creeds, with its consequences?" he thought. "Ah me! you must bear your own burthen, fashion your own faith, think your own thoughts, and pray your own prayer. To what mortal ear could I tell all, if I had a mind? or who could understand all? Who can tell another's shortcomings, lost opportunities, weigh the passions which overpower, the defects which incapacitate reason? — what extent of truth and right his neighbour's mind is organised to perceive and to do? — what invisible and forgotten accident, terror of youth, chance or mischance of fortune, may have altered the whole current of life? A grain of sand may alter it, as the flinging of a pebble may end it. Who can weigh circumstances, passions, temptations, that go to our good and evil account, save One, before whose awful wisdom we kneel, and at whose mercy we ask absolution? Here it ends," thought Pen; "this day or tomorrow will wind up the account of my youth; a weary retrospect, alas! a sad history, with many a page I would fain not look back on! But who has not been tired or fallen, and who has escaped without scars from that struggle?" And his head fell on his breast, and the young man's heart prostrated itself humbly and sadly before that Throne where sits wisdom, and love, and pity for all, and made its confession. "What matters about fame or poverty!" he thought. "If I marry this woman I have chosen, may I have strength and will to be true to her, and to make her happy. If I have children, pray God teach me to speak and to do the truth among them, and to leave them an honest name. There are no splendours for my marriage. Does my life deserve any? I begin a new phase of it; a better than the last may it be, I pray Heaven!"

The train stopped at Tunbridge as Pen was making these reflections; and he handed over the newspaper to his neighbour, of whom he took leave, while the foreign clergyman in the opposite corner still sate with his eyes on his book. Pen jumped out of the carriage then, his carpet-bag in hand, and briskly determined to face his fortune.

A fly carried him rapidly to Lady Clavering's house from the station; and, as he was transported thither, Arthur composed a little speech, which he intended to address to Blanche, and which was really as virtuous, honest, and well-

minded an oration as any man of his turn of mind, and under his circumstances, could have uttered. The purport of it was — “Blanche, I cannot understand from your last letter what your meaning is, or whether my fair and frank proposal to you is acceptable or no. I think you know the reason which induces me to forgo the worldly advantages which a union with you offered, and which I could not accept without, as I fancy, being dishonoured. If you doubt of my affection, here I am ready to prove it. Let Smirke be called in, and let us be married out of hand; and with all my heart I purpose to keep my vow, and to cherish you through life, and to be a true and a loving husband to you.”

From the fly Arthur sprang out then to the hall-door, where he was met by a domestic whom he did not know. The man seemed to be surprised at the approach of the gentleman with the carpet-bag, which he made no attempt to take from Arthur's hands. “Her Ladyship's not at home, sir,” the man remarked.

“I am Mr. Pendennis,” Arthur said. “Where is Lightfoot?”

“Lightfoot is gone,” answered the man. “My Lady is out, and my orders was —”

“I hear Miss Amory's voice in the drawing-room,” said Arthur. “Take the bag to a dressing-room, if you please;” and, passing by the porter, he walked straight towards that apartment, from which, as the door opened, a warble of melodious notes issued.

Our little Siren was at her piano singing with all her might and fascinations. Master Clavering was asleep on the sofa, indifferent to the music; but near Blanche sat a gentleman who was perfectly enraptured with her strain, which was of a passionate and melancholy nature.

As the door opened, the gentleman started up with *Hullo!* the music stopped, with a little shriek from the singer; Frank Clavering woke up from the sofa, and Arthur came forward and said, “What, Foker! how do you do, Foker?” He looked at the piano, and there, by Miss Amory's side, was just such another purple-leather box as he had seen in Harry's hand three days before, when the heir of Logwood was coming out of a jeweller's shop in Waterloo Place. It was opened, and curled round the white satin cushion within was, oh, such a magnificent serpentine bracelet, with such a blazing ruby head and diamond tail!

“How de-do, Pendennis?” said Foker. Blanche made many motions of the shoulders, and gave signs of unrest and agitation. And she put her handkerchief over the bracelet, and then she advanced, with a hand which trembled very much, to greet Pen.

“How is dearest Laura?” she said. The face of Foker looking up from his profound mourning — that face, so piteous and puzzled, was one which the reader's imagination must depict for himself; also that of Master Frank Clavering, who, looking at the three interesting individuals with an expression of the utmost knowingness, had only time to ejaculate the words, “Here's a jolly go!” and to disappear sniggering.

Pen, too, had restrained himself up to that minute; but looking still at Foker, whose ears and cheeks tingled with blushes, Arthur burst out into a fit of laughter, so wild and loud, that it frightened Blanche much more than any the most serious exhibition.

“And this was the secret, was it? Don't blush and turn away, Foker, my boy. Why, man, you are a pattern of fidelity. Could I stand between Blanche and such constancy — could I stand between Miss Amory and fifteen thousand a year?”

“It is not that, Mr. Pendennis,” Blanche said, with great dignity. “It is not money, it is not rank, it is not gold that moves me; but it is constancy, it is fidelity, it is a whole trustful loving heart offered to me, that I treasure — yes, that I treasure!” And she made for her handkerchief, but, reflecting what was underneath it, she paused. “I do not disown, I do not disguise — my life is above disguise — to him on whom it is bestowed, my heart must be for ever bare — that I once thought I loved you — yes, thought I was beloved by you, I own! How I clung to that faith! How I strove, I prayed, I longed to believe it! But your conduct always — your own words so cold, so heartless, so unkind, have undeceived me. You trifled with the heart of the poor maiden! You flung me back with scorn the troth which I had plighted! I have explained all — all to Mr. Foker.”

“That you have,” said Foker, with devotion, and conviction in his looks.

“What, all?” said Pen, with a meaning look at Blanche. “It is I am in fault, is it? Well, well, Blanche, be it so. I won't appeal against your sentence, and bear it in silence. I came down here looking to very different things, Heaven knows, and with a heart most truly and kindly disposed towards you. I hope you may be happy with another, as, on my word, it was my wish to make you so; and I hope my honest old friend here will have a wife worthy of his loyalty, his constancy, and

affection. Indeed they deserve the regard of any woman — even Miss Blanche Amory. Shake hands, Harry; don't look askance at me. Has anybody told you that I was a false and heartless character?"

"I think you're a ——" Foker was beginning, in his wrath, when Blanche interposed.

"Henry, not a word! — I pray you let there be forgiveness!"

"You're an angel, by Jove, you're an angel!" said Foker, at which Blanche looked seraphically up to the chandelier.

"In spite of what has passed, for the sake of what has passed, I must always regard Arthur as a brother," the seraph continued; "we have known each other years, we have trodden the same fields, and plucked the same flowers together. Arthur! Henry! I beseech you to take hands and to be friends! Forgive you! — I forgive you, Arthur, with my heart I do. Should I not do so for making me so happy?"

"There is only one person of us three whom I pity, Blanche," Arthur said, gravely, "and I say to you again, that I hope you will make this good fellow, this honest and loyal creature, happy."

"Happy! O Heavens!" said Harry. He could not speak. His happiness gushed out at his eyes. "She don't know — she can't know how fond I am of her, and — and who am I? a poor little beggar, and she takes me up and says she'll try and I— I— love me. I ain't worthy of so much happiness. Give us your hand, old boy, since she forgives you after your heartless conduct, and says she loves you. I'll make you welcome. I tell you I'll love everybody who loves her. By — — if she tells me to kiss the ground I'll kiss it. Tell me to kiss the ground! I say, tell me. I love you so. You see I love you so."

Blanche looked up seraphically again. Her gentle bosom heaved. She held out one hand as if to bless Harry, and then royally permitted him to kiss it. She took up the pocket-handkerchief and hid her own eyes, as the other fair hand was abandoned to poor Harry's tearful embrace.

"I swear that is a villain who deceives such a loving creature as that," said Pen.

Blanche laid down the handkerchief, and put hand No. 2 softly on Foker's head, which was bent down kissing and weeping over hand No. 1. "Foolish boy?" she said, "it shall be loved as it deserves: who could help loving such a silly creature!"

And at this moment Frank Clavering broke in upon the sentimental trio.

"I say, Pendennis!" he said.

"Well, Frank!"

"The man wants to be paid, and go back. He's had some beer."

"I'll go back with him," cried Pen. "Good-bye, Blanche. God bless you, Foker, old friend. You know, neither of you want me here." He longed to be off that instant.

"Stay — I must say one word to you. One word in private, if you please," Blanche said. "You can trust us together, can't you, Henry?" The tone in which the word Henry was spoken, and the appeal, ravished Foker with delight. "Trust you!" said he. "Oh, who wouldn't trust you! Come along, Franky, my boy."

"Let's have a cigar," said Frank, as they went into the hall.

"She don't like it," said Foker, gently.

"Law bless you — she don't mind. Pendennis used to smoke regular," said the candid youth.

"It was but a short word I had to say," said Blanche to Pen, with great calm, when they were alone. "You never loved me, Mr. Pendennis."

"I told you how much," said Arthur. "I never deceived you."

"I suppose you will go back and marry Laura," continued Blanche.

"Was that what you had to say?" said Pen.

"You are going to her this very night, I am sure of it. There is no denying it. You never cared for me."

"Et vous?"

"Et moi, c'est different. I have been spoilt early. I cannot live out of the world, out of excitement. I could have done so, but it is too late. If I cannot have emotions, I must have the world. You would offer me neither one nor the other. You are blase in everything, even in ambition. You had a career before you, and you would not take it. You give it up! — for what? — for a betise, for an absurd scruple. Why would you not have that seat, and be such a puritain? Why should you refuse what

is mine by right, by right, entendez-vous?”

“You know all, then?” said Pen.

“Only within a month. But I have suspected ever since Baymouth — n’importe since when. It is not too late. He is as if he had never been; and there is a position in the world before you yet. Why not sit in Parliament, exert your talent, and give a place in the world to yourself, to your wife? I take celui-la. Il est bon. Il est riche. Il est — vous le connaissez autant que moi enfin. Think you that I would not prefer un homme qui fera parler de moi? If the secret appears I am rich a millions. How does it affect me? It is not my fault. It will never appear.”

“You will tell Harry everything, won’t you?”

“Je comprends. Vous refusez,” said Blanche, savagely. “I will tell Harry at my own time, when we are married. You will not betray me, will you? You, having a defenceless girl’s secret, will not turn upon her and use it? S’il me plait de le cacher, mon secret; pourquoi le donnerai je? Je l’aime, mon pauvre pere, voyez-vous? I would rather live with that man than with you fades intriguers of the world. I must have emotions — it m’en donne. Il m’écrit. Il écrit tres-bien, voyez-vous — comme un pirate — comme un Bohemien — comme un homme. But for this I would have said to my mother — Ma mere! quittons ce lache mari, cette lache societe — retournons a mon pere.”

“The pirate would have wearied you like the rest,” said Pen.

“Eh! Il me faut des emotions,” said Blanche. Pen had never seen her or known so much about her in all the years of their intimacy as he saw and knew now: though he saw more than existed in reality. For this young lady was not able to carry out any emotion to the full; but had a sham enthusiasm, a sham hatred, a sham love, a sham taste, a sham grief, each of which flared and shone very vehemently for an instant, but subsided and gave place to the next sham emotion.



CHAPTER LXXV

A CHAPTER OF MATCH-MAKING

Upon the platform at Tunbridge, Pen fumed and fretted until the arrival of the evening train to London, a full half-hour — six hours it seemed to him; but even this immense interval was passed, the train arrived, the train sped on, the London lights came in view — a gentleman who forgot his carpet-bag in the train rushed at a cab, and said to the man, “Drive as hard as you can go to Jermyn Street.” The cabman, although a hansom-cabman, said Thank you for the gratuity which was put into his hand, and Pen ran up the stairs of the hotel to Lady Rockminster’s apartments. Laura was alone in the drawing-room, reading, with a pale face, by the lamp. The pale face looked up when Pen opened the door. May we follow him? The great moments of life are but moments like the others. Your doom is spoken in a word or two. A single look from the eyes; a mere pressure of the hand may decide it; or of the lips, though they cannot speak.

When Lady Rockminster, who has had her after-dinner nap, gets up and goes into her sitting-room, we may enter with her ladyship.

“Upon my word, young people!” are the first words she says, and her attendant makes wondering eyes over her shoulder. And well may she say so; and well may the attendant cast wondering eyes; for the young people are in an attitude; and Pen in such a position as every young lady who reads this has heard tell of, or has seen, or hopes, or at any rate deserves to see.

In a word, directly he entered the room, Pen went up to Laura of the pale face, who had not time even to say, What, back so soon? and seizing her outstretched and trembling hand just as she was rising from her chair, fell down on his knees before her, and said quickly, “I have seen her. She has engaged herself to Harry Foker — and — and Now, Laura?”

The hand gives a pressure — the eyes beam a reply — the quivering lips answer, though speechless. Pen’s head sinks down in the girl’s lap, as he sobs out, “Come and bless us, dear mother,” and arms as tender as Helen’s once more enfold him.

In this juncture it is that Lady Rockminster comes in and says, “Upon my word, young people! Beck! leave the room. What do you want poking your nose in here?”

Pen starts up with looks of triumph, still holding Laura’s hand. “She is consoling me for my misfortune, ma’am,” he says.

“What do you mean by kissing her hand? I don’t know what you will be next doing.”

Pen kissed her Ladyship’s. “I have been to Tunbridge,” he says, “and seen Miss Amory; and find on my arrival that — that a villain has transplanted me in her affections,” he says with a tragedy air.

“Is that all? Is that what you were whimpering on your knees about?” says the old lady, growing angry. “You might have kept the news till tomorrow.”

“Yes — another has superseded me,” goes on Pen; “but why call him villain? He is brave, he is constant, he is young, he is wealthy, he is beautiful.”

“What stuff are you talking, sir?” cried the old lady. “What has happened?”

“Miss Amory has jilted me, and accepted Henry Foker, Esq. I found her warbling ditties to him as he lay at her feet; presents had been accepted, vows exchanged, these ten days. Harry was old Mrs. Planter’s rheumatism, which kept dearest Laura out of the house. He is the most constant and generous of men. He has promised the living of Logwood to Lady Ann’s husband, and given her a splendid present on her marriage; and he rushed to fling himself at Blanche’s feet the instant he found he was free.”

“And so, as you can’t get Blanche, you put up with Laura; is that it, sir?” asked the old lady.

“He acted nobly,” Laura said.

“I acted as she bade me,” said Pen. “Never mind how, Lady Rockminster; but to the best of my knowledge and power. And if you mean that I am not worthy of Laura, I know it, and pray Heaven to better me; and if the love and company of the best and purest creature in the world can do so, at least I shall have these to help me.”

"Hm, hm," replied the old lady to this, looking with rather an appeased air at the young people. "It is all very well; but I should have preferred Bluebeard."

And now Pen, to divert the conversation from a theme which was growing painful to some parties present, bethought him of his interview with Huxter in the morning, and of Fanny Bolton's affairs, which he had forgotten under the immediate pressure and excitement of his own. And he told the ladies how Huxter had elevated Fanny to the rank of wife, and what terrors he was in respecting the arrival of his father. He described the scene with considerable humour, taking care to dwell especially upon that part of it which concerned Fanny's coquetry and irrepressible desire of captivating mankind; his meaning being, "You see, Laura, I was not so guilty in that little affair; it was the girl who made love to me, and I who resisted. As I am no longer present, the little siren practises her arts and fascinations upon others. Let that transaction be forgotten in your mind, if you please; or visit me with a very gentle punishment for my error."

Laura understood his meaning under the eagerness of his explanations. "If you did any wrong, you repented, dear Pen," she said; "and you know," she added, with meaning eyes and blushes, "that I have no right to reproach you."

"Hm!" grumbled the old lady; "I should have preferred Bluebeard."

"The past is broken away. The morrow is before us. I will do my best to make your morrow happy, dear Laura," Pen said. His heart was humbled by the prospect of his happiness: it stood awestricken in the contemplation of her sweet goodness and purity. He liked his wife better that she had owned to that passing feeling for Warrington, and laid bare her generous heart to him. And she — very likely she was thinking, "How strange it is that I ever should have cared for another! I am vexed almost to think I care for him so little, am so little sorry that he is gone away. Oh, in these past two months how I have learned to love Arthur! I care about nothing but Arthur: my waking and sleeping thoughts are about him; he is never absent from me. And to think that he is to be mine, mine! and that I am to marry him, and not to be his servant as I expected to be only this morning; for I would have gone down on my knees to Blanche to beg her to let me live with him. And now — Oh, it is too much. Oh, mother! mother, that you were here!" Indeed, she felt as if Helen were there — by her actually, though invisibly. A halo of happiness beamed from her.

She moved with a different step, and bloomed with a new beauty. Arthur saw the change; and the old Lady Rockminster remarked it with her shrewd eyes.

"What a sly demure little wretch you have been," she whispered to Laura — while Pen, in great spirits, was laughing, and telling his story about Huxter — "and how you have kept your secret!"

"How are we to help the young couple?" said Laura. Of course Miss Laura felt an interest in all young couples, as generous lovers always love other lovers.

"We must go and see them," said Pen.

"Of course we must go and see them," said Laura. "I intend to be very fond of Fanny. Let us go this instant. Lady Rockminster, may I have the carriage?"

"Go now! — why, you stupid creature, it is eleven o'clock at night. Mr. and Mrs. Huxter have got their nightcaps on, I dare say. And it is time for you to go now. Good night, Mr. Pendennis."

Arthur and Laura begged for ten minutes more.

"We will go tomorrow morning, then. I will come and fetch you with Martha."

"An earl's coronet," said Pen, who, no doubt, was pleased himself, "will have a great effect in Lamb Court and Smithfield. Stay — Lady Rockminster, will you join us in a little conspiracy?"

"How do you mean conspiracy, young man?"

"Will you please to be a little ill tomorrow; and when old Mr. Huxter arrives, will you let me call him in? If he is put into a good humour at the notion of attending a baronet in the country, what influence won't a countess have on him? When he is softened — when he is quite ripe, we will break the secret upon him; bring in the young people, extort the paternal benediction, and finish the comedy."

"A parcel of stuff," said the old lady. "Take your hat, sir. Come away, miss. There — my head is turned another way. Good night, young people." And who knows but the old lady thought of her own early days as she went away on Laura's arm, nodding her head and humming to herself?

With the early morning came Laura and Martha according to appointment; and the desired sensation was, let us hope,

effected in Lamb Court, whence the three proceeded to wait upon Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Huxter, at their residence in Charterhouse Lane.

The two ladies looked at each other with great interest, and not a little emotion on Fanny's part. She had not seen her "guardian," as she was pleased to call Pen in consequence of his bequest, since the event had occurred which had united her to Mr. Huxter.

"Samuel told me how kind you had been," she said. "You were always very kind, Mr. Pendennis. And — and I hope your friend is better, who was took ill in Shepherd's Inn, ma'am."

"My name is Laura," said the other, with a blush. "I am — that is, I was — that is, I am Arthur's sister; and we shall always love you for being so good to him when he was ill. And when we live in the country, I hope we shall see each other. And I shall be always happy to hear of your happiness, Fanny."

"We are going to do what you and Huxter have done, Fanny. — Where is Huxter? What nice, snug lodgings you've got! What a pretty cat!"

While Fanny is answering these questions in reply to Pen, Laura says to herself — "Well, now really! is this the creature about whom we were all so frightened? What could he see in her? She's a homely little thing, but such manners! Well, she was very kind to him — bless her for that."

Mr. Samuel had gone out to meet his Pa. Mrs. Huxter said that the old gentleman was to arrive that day at the Somerset Coffee-house, in the Strand; and Fanny confessed that she was in a sad tremor about the meeting. "If his parent casts him off, what are we to do?" she said. "I shall never pardon myself for bringing ruin on my 'usband's 'ead. You must intercede for us, Mr. Arthur. If mortal man can, you can bend and influence Mr. Huxter senior." Fanny still regarded Pen in the light of a superior being, that was evident. No doubt Arthur thought of the past, as he marked the solemn little tragedy-airs and looks, the little ways, the little trepidations, vanities, of the little bride. As soon as the interview was over, entered Messrs. Linton and Blades, who came, of course, to visit Huxter, and brought with them a fine fragrance of tobacco. They had watched the carriage at the baker's door, and remarked the coronet with awe. They asked of Fanny who was that uncommonly heavy swell who had just driven off? and pronounced the countess was of the right sort. And when they heard that it was Mr. Pendennis and his sister, they remarked that Pen's father was only a sawbones; and that he gave himself confounded airs; they had been in Huxter's company on the night of his little altercation with Pen in the Back Kitchen.

Returning homewards through Fleet Street, and as Laura was just stating to Pen's infinite amusement that Fanny was very well, but that really there was no beauty in her — there might be, but she could not see it — as they were locked near Temple Bar, they saw young Huxter returning to his bride. "The governor had arrived; was at the Somerset Coffee-house — was in tolerable good-humour — something about the railway: but he had been afraid to speak about — about that business. Would Mr. Pendennis try it on?"

Pen said he would go and call at that moment upon Mr. Huxter, and see what might be done. Huxter junior would lurk outside whilst that awful interview took place. The coronet on the carriage inspired his soul also with wonder; and old Mr. Huxter himself beheld it with delight, as he looked from the coffee-house window on that Strand which it was always a treat to him to survey.

"And I can afford to give myself a lark, sir," said Mr. Huxter, shaking hands with Pen. "Of course you know the news? we have got our bill, sir. We shall have our branch line — our shares are up, sir — and we buy your three fields along the Brawl, and put a pretty penny into your pocket, Mr. Pendennis."

"Indeed! — that was good news." Pen remembered that there was a letter from Mr. Tatham, at Chambers, these three days; but he had not opened the communication, being interested with other affairs.

"I hope you don't intend to grow rich, and give up practice," said Pen. "We can't lose you at Clavering, Mr. Huxter; though I hear very good accounts of your son. My friend, Dr. Goodenough speaks most highly of his talents. It is hard that a man of your eminence, though, should be kept in a country town."

"The metropolis would have been my sphere of action, sir," said Mr. Huxter, surveying the Strand. "But a man takes his business where he finds it; and I succeeded to that of my father."

"It was my father's, too," said Pen. "I sometimes wish I had followed it."

"You, sir, have taken a more lofty career," said the old gentleman. "You aspire to the senate: and to literary honours."

You wield the poet's pen, sir, and move in the circles of fashion. We keep an eye upon you at Clavering. We read your name in the lists of the select parties of the nobility. Why, it was only the other day that my wife was remarking how odd it was that at a party at the Earl of Kidderminster's your name was not mentioned. To what member of the aristocracy may I ask does that equipage belong from which I saw you descend? The Countess Dowager of Rockminster? How is her Ladyship?"

"Her Ladyship is not very well; and when I heard that you were coming to town, I strongly urged her to see you, Mr. Huxter," Pen said. Old Huxter felt, if he had a hundred votes for Clavering, he would give them all to Pen.

"There is an old friend of yours in the carriage — a Clavering lady, too — will you come out and speak to her?" asked Pen. The old surgeon was delighted to speak to a coroneted carriage in the midst of the full Strand: he ran out bowing and smiling. Huxter junior, dodging about the district, beheld the meeting between his father and Laura, saw the latter put out her hand, and presently, after a little colloquy with Pen, beheld his father actually jump into the carriage, and drive away with Miss Bell.

There was no room for Arthur, who came back, laughing, to the young surgeon, and told him whither his parent was bound. During the whole of the journey, that artful Laura coaxed, and wheedled, and cajoled him so adroitly, that the old gentleman would have granted her anything; and Lady Rockminster achieved the victory over him by complimenting him on his skill, and professing her anxiety to consult him. What were her Ladyship's symptoms? Should he meet her Ladyship's usual medical attendant? Mr. Jones was called out of town? He should be delighted to devote his very best energies and experience to her Ladyship's service.

He was so charmed with his patient, that he wrote home about her to his wife and family; he talked of nothing but Lady Rockminster to Samuel, when that youth came to partake of beefsteak and oyster-sauce and accompany his parent to the play. There was a simple grandeur, a polite urbanity, a high-bred grace about her Ladyship, which he had never witnessed in any woman. Her symptoms did not seem alarming; he had prescribed — Spir: Ammon: Aromat: with a little Spir: Menth: Pip: and orange-flower, which would be all that was necessary.

"Miss Bell seemed to be on the most confidential and affectionate footing with her Ladyship. She was about to form a matrimonial connexion. All young people ought to marry. Such were her Ladyship's words; and the Countess condescended to ask respecting my own family, and I mentioned you by name to her Ladyship, Sam, my boy. I shall look in tomorrow, when, if the remedies which I have prescribed for her Ladyship have had the effect which I anticipate, I shall probably follow them up by a little Spir: Lavend: Comp:— and so set my noble patient up. What is the theatre which is most frequented by the — by the higher classes in town, hey, Sam! and to what amusement will you take an old country doctor to-night, hey, sir?"

On the next day, when Mr. Huxter called in Jermyn Street at twelve o'clock, Lady Rockminster had not yet left her room, but Miss Bell and Mr. Pendennis were in waiting to receive him. Lady Rockminster had had a most comfortable night, and was getting on as well as possible. How had Mr. Huxter amused himself? at the theatre? with his son? What a capital piece it was, and how charmingly Mrs. O'Leary looked and sang it! and what a good fellow young Huxter was! liked by everybody, an honour to his profession. He has not his father's manners, I grant you, or that old-world tone which is passing away from us, but a more excellent, sterling fellow never lived. "He ought to practise in the country whatever you do, sir," said Arthur — "he ought to marry — other people are going to do so — and settle."

"The very words that her Ladyship used yesterday, Mr. Pendennis. He ought to marry. Sam should marry, sir."

"The town is full of temptations, sir," continued Pen. The old gentleman thought of that houri, Mrs. O'Leary.

"There is no better safeguard for a young man than an early marriage with an honest affectionate creature."

"No better, sir, no better."

"And love is better than money, isn't it?"

"Indeed it is," said Miss Bell.

"I agree with so fair an authority," said the old gentleman, with a bow.

"And — and suppose, sir," Pen said, "that I had a piece of news to communicate to you."

"God bless my soul, Mr. Pendennis! what do you mean?" asked the old gentleman.

"Suppose I had to tell you that a young man, carried away by an irresistible passion for an admirable and most virtuous young creature — whom everybody falls in love with — had consulted the dictates of reason and his heart, and had

married. Suppose I were to tell you that that man is my friend; that our excellent, our truly noble friend the Countess Dowager of Rockminster is truly interested about him (and you may fancy what a young man can do in life when THAT family is interested for him); suppose I were to tell you that you know him — that he is here — that he is —”

“Sam married! God bless my soul, sir, you don’t mean that!”

“And to such a nice creature, dear Mr. Huxter.”

“Her Ladyship is charmed with her,” said Pen, telling almost the first fib which he has told in the course of this story.

“Married! the rascal, is he?” thought the old gentleman.

“They will do it, sir,” said Pen; and went and opened the door. Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Huxter issued thence, and both came and knelt down before the old gentleman. The kneeling little Fanny found favour in his sight. There must have been some thing attractive about her, in spite of Laura’s opinion.

“Will never do so any more, sir,” said Sam.

“Get up, sir,” said Mr. Huxter. And they got up, and Fanny came a little nearer and a little nearer still, and looked so pretty and pitiful, that somehow Mr. Huxter found himself kissing the little crying-laughing thing, and feeling as if he liked it.

“What’s your name, my dear?” he said, after a minute of this sport.

“Fanny, papa,” said Mrs. Samuel.



CHAPTER LXXVI

EXEUNT OMNES

Our characters are all a month older than they were when the last-described adventures and conversations occurred, and a great number of the personages of our story have chanced to reassemble at the little country town where we were first introduced to them. Frederic Lightfoot, formerly maitre d'hotel in the service of Sir Francis Clavering, of Clavering Park, Bart., has begged leave to inform the nobility and gentry of ——— shire that he has taken that well-known and comfortable hotel, the Clavering Arms, in Clavering, where he hopes for the continued patronage of the gentlemen and families of the county. "This ancient and well-established house," Mr. Lightfoot's manifesto states, "has been repaired and decorated in a style of the greatest comfort. Gentlemen hunting with the Dumplingbeare hounds will find excellent stabling and loose-boxes for horses at the Clavering Arms. A commodious billiard-room has been attached to the hotel, and the cellars have been furnished with the choicest wines and spirits, selected, without regard to expense, by C. L. Commercial gentlemen will find the Clavering Arms a most comfortable place of resort: and the scale of charges has been regulated for all, so as to meet the economical spirit of the present times."

Indeed, there is a considerable air of liveliness about the old inn. The Clavering arms have been splendidly repainted over the gateway. The coffee-room windows are bright and fresh, and decorated with Christmas holly; the magistrates have met in petty sessions in the card-room of the old Assembly. The farmers' ordinary is held as of old, and frequented by increased numbers, who are pleased with Mrs. Lightfoot's cuisine. Her Indian curries and Mulligatawny soup are especially popular: Major Stokes, the respected tenant of Fair Oaks Cottage, Captain Glanders, H.P., and other resident gentry, have pronounced in their favour, and have partaken of them more than once both in private and at the dinner of the Clavering Institute, attendant on the incorporation of the reading-room, and when the chief inhabitants of that flourishing little town met together and did justice to the hostess's excellent cheer. The chair was taken by Sir Francis Clavering, Bart., supported by the esteemed rector, Dr. Portman; the vice chair being ably filled by Barker, Esq. (supported by the Rev. J. Simcoe and the Rev. S. Jowls), the enterprising head of the ribbon factory in Clavering, and chief director of the Clavering and Chatteris Branch of the Great Western Railway, which will be opened in another year, and upon the works of which the engineers and workmen are now busily engaged.

"An interesting event, which is likely to take place in the life of our talented townsman, Arthur Pendennis, Esq., has, we understand, caused him to relinquish the intentions which he had of offering himself as a candidate for our borough: and rumour whispers" (says the Chatteris Champion, Clavering Agriculturist, and Baymouth Fisherman — that independent county paper, so distinguished for its unswerving principles and loyalty to the British oak, and so eligible a medium for advertisements)— rumour states, says the C. C. C. A. and B. F., "that should Sir Francis Clavering's failing health oblige him to relinquish his seat in Parliament, he will vacate it in favour of a young gentleman of colossal fortune and related to the highest aristocracy of the empire, who is about to contract a matrimonial alliance with an accomplished and lovely lady, connected by the nearest ties with the respected family at Clavering Park. Lady Clavering and Miss Amory have arrived at the Park for the Christmas holidays; and we understand that a large number of the aristocracy are expected, and that festivities of a peculiarly interesting nature will take place there at the commencement of the new year."

The ingenious reader will be enabled, by the help of the above announcement, to understand what has taken place during the little break which has occurred in our narrative. Although Lady Rockminster grumbled a little at Laura's preference for Pendennis over Bluebeard, those who are aware of the latter's secret will understand that the young girl could make no other choice, and the kind old lady who had constituted herself Miss Bell's guardian was not ill pleased that she was to fulfil the great purpose in life of young ladies and marry. She informed her maid of the interesting event that very night, and of course Mrs. Beck, who was perfectly aware of every single circumstance, and kept by Martha, of Fair Oaks, in the fullest knowledge of what was passing, was immensely surprised and delighted. "Mr. Pendennis's income is so much; the railroad will give him so much more, he states; Miss Bell has so much, and may probably have a little more one day. For persons in their degree, they will be able to manage very well. And I shall speak to my nephew Pynsent, who I suspect was once rather attached to her — but of course that was out of the question ('Oh! of course, my lady; I should think so indeed!')— not that you know anything whatever about it, or have any business to think at all on the subject — I

shall speak to George Pynsent, who is now chief secretary of the Tape and Sealing Wax Office, and have Mr. Pendennis made something. And, Beck, in the morning you will carry down my compliments to Major Pendennis, and say that I shall pay him a visit at one o'clock."—"Yes," muttered the old lady, "the Major must be reconciled, and he must leave his fortune to Laura's children."

Accordingly, at one o'clock, the Dowager Lady Rockminster appeared at Major Pendennis's, who was delighted, as may be imagined, to receive so noble a visitor. The Major had been prepared, if not for the news which her Ladyship was about to give him, at least with the intelligence that Pen's marriage with Miss Amory was broken off. The young gentleman bethinking him of his uncle, for the first time that day it must be owned, and meeting his new servant in the hall of the hotel, asked after the Major's health from Mr. Frosch; and then went into the coffee-room of the hotel, where he wrote a half-dozen lines to acquaint his guardian with what had occurred. "Dear uncle," he said, "if there has been any question between us, it is over now. I went to Tunbridge Wells yesterday, and found that somebody else had carried off the prize about which we were hesitating. Miss A., without any compunction for me, has bestowed herself upon Harry Foker, with his fifteen thousand a year. I came in suddenly upon their loves, and found and left him in possession."

"And you'll be glad to hear, Tatham writes me, that he has sold three of my fields at Fair Oaks to the Railroad Company, at a great figure. I will tell you this, and more when we meet; and am always your affectionate, — A. P."

"I think I am aware of what you were about to tell me," the Major said, with a most courtly smile and bow to Pen's ambadress. "It was a very great kindness of your Ladyship to think of bringing me the news. How well you look! How very good you are! How very kind you have always been to that young man!"

"It was for the sake of his uncle," said Lady Rockminster, most politely.

"He has informed me of the state of affairs, and written me a nice note, — yes, a nice note," continued the old gentleman; "and I find he has had an increase to his fortune — yes; and, all things considered, I don't much regret that this affair with Miss Amory is manquée, though I wished for it once, in fact, all things considered, I am very glad of it."

"We must console him, Major Pendennis," continued the lady; "we must get him a wife." The truth then came across the Major's mind, and he saw for what purpose Lady Rockminster had chosen to assume the office of ambadress.

It is not necessary to enter into the conversation which ensued, or to tell at any length how her Ladyship concluded a negotiation which, in truth, was tolerably easy. There could be no reason why Pen should not marry according to his own and his mother's wish; and as for Lady Rockminster, she supported the marriage by intimations which had very great weight with the Major, but of which we shall say nothing, as her ladyship (now, of course, much advanced in years) is still alive, and the family might be angry; and, in fine, the old gentleman was quite overcome by the determined graciousness of the lady, and her fondness for Laura. Nothing, indeed, could be more bland and kind than Lady Rockminster's whole demeanour, except for one moment when the Major talked about his boy throwing himself away, at which her ladyship broke out into a little speech, in which she made the Major understand, what poor Pen and his friends acknowledge very humbly, that Laura was a thousand times too good for him. Laura was fit to be the wife of a king — Laura was a paragon of virtue and excellence. And it must be said, that when Major Pendennis found that a lady of the rank of the Countess of Rockminster seriously admired Miss Bell, he instantly began to admire her himself.

So that when Herr Frosch was requested to walk upstairs to Lady Rockminster's apartments, and inform Miss Bell and Mr. Arthur Pendennis that the Major would receive them, and Laura appeared blushing and happy as she hung on Pen's arm, the Major gave a shaky hand to one and the other, with unaffected emotion and cordiality, and then went through another salutation to Laura, which caused her to blush still more. Happy blushes! bright eyes beaming with the light of love! The story-teller turns from this group to his young audience, and hopes that one day their eyes may all shine so.

Pen having retreated in the most friendly manner, and the lovely Blanche having bestowed her young affections upon a blushing bridegroom with fifteen thousand a year, there was such an outbreak of happiness in Lady Clavering's heart and family as the good Begum had not known for many a year, and she and Blanche were on the most delightful terms of cordiality and affection. The ardent Foker pressed onwards the happy day, and was as anxious as might be expected to abridge the period of mourning which had put him in possession of so many charms and amiable qualities, of which he had been only, as it were, the heir-apparent, not the actual owner, until then. The gentle Blanche, everything that her affianced lord could desire, was not averse to gratify the wishes of her fond Henry. Lady Clavering came up from Tunbridge. Milliners and jewellers were set to work and engaged to prepare the delightful paraphernalia of Hymen. Lady Clavering

was in such a good humour, that Sir Francis even benefited by it, and such a reconciliation was effected between this pair, that Sir Francis came to London, sate at the head of his own table once more, and appeared tolerably flush of money at his billiard-rooms and gambling-houses again. One day, when Major Pendennis and Arthur went to dine in Grosvenor Place, they found an old acquaintance established in the quality of major-domo, and the gentleman in black, who, with perfect politeness and gravity, offered them their choice of sweet or dry champagne, was no other than Mr. James Morgan. The Chevalier Strong was one of the party; he was in high spirits and condition, and entertained the company with accounts of his amusements abroad.

"It was my Lady who invited me," said Strong to Arthur, under his voice — "that fellow Morgan looked as black as thunder when I came in. He is about no good here. I will go away first, and wait for you and Major Pendennis at Hyde Park Gate."

Mr. Morgan helped Major Pendennis to his great-coat when he was quitting the house; and muttered something about having accepted a temporary engagement with the Clavering family.

"I have got a paper of yours, Mr. Morgan," said the old gentleman.

"Which you can show, if you please, to Sir Francis, sir, and perfectly welcome," said Mr. Morgan, with downcast eyes. "I'm very much obliged to you, Major Pendennis, and if I can pay you for all your kindness I will."

Arthur overheard the sentence, and saw the look of hatred which accompanied it, suddenly cried out that he had forgotten his handkerchief, and ran upstairs to the drawing-room again. Foker was still there; still lingering about his siren. Pen gave the siren a look full of meaning, and we suppose that the siren understood meaning looks, for when, after finding the veracious handkerchief of which he came in quest, he once more went out, the siren, with a laughing voice, said, "Oh, Arthur — Mr. Pendennis — I want you to tell dear Laura something!" and she came out to the door.

"What is it?" she asked, shutting the door.

"Have you told Harry? Do you know that villain Morgan knows all?"

"I know it," she said.

"Have you told Harry?"

"No, no," she said. "You won't betray me?"

"Morgan will," said Pen.

"No, he won't," said Blanche. "I have promised him — n'importe. Wait until after our marriage — Oh, until after our marriage — Oh, how wretched I am," said the girl, who had been all smiles, and grace, and gaiety during the evening.

Arthur said, "I beg and implore you to tell Harry. Tell him now. It is no fault of yours. He will pardon you anything. Tell him to-night."

"And give her this — *Il est la* — with my love, please; and I beg your pardon for calling you back; and if she will be at Madame Crinoline's at half-past three, and if Lady Rockminster can spare her, I should so like to drive with her in the park;" and she went in, singing and kissing her little hand, as Morgan the velvet-footed came up the carpeted stair.

Pen heard Blanche's piano breaking out into brilliant music as he went down to join his uncle; and they walked away together. Arthur briefly told him what he had done. "What was to be done?" he asked.

"What is to be done, begad?" said the old gentleman. "What is to be done but to leave it alone? Begad, let us be thankful," said the old fellow, with a shudder, "that we are out of the business, and leave it to those it concerns."

"I hope to Heaven she'll tell him," said Pen.

"Begad, she'll take her own course," said the old man. "Miss Amory is a dev'lish wide-awake girl, sir, and must play her own cards; and I'm doosid glad you are out of it — doosid glad, begad. Who's this smoking? Oh, it's Mr. Strong again. He wants to put in his oar, I suppose. I tell you, don't meddle in the business, Arthur."

Strong began once or twice, as if to converse upon the subject, but the Major would not hear a word. He remarked on the moonlight on Apsley House, the weather, the cabstands — anything but that subject. He bowed stiffly to Strong, and clung to his nephew's arm, as he turned down St. James's Street, and again cautioned Pen to leave the affair alone. "It had like to have cost you so much, sir, that you may take my advice," he said.

When Arthur came out of the hotel, Strong's cloak and cigar were visible a few doors off. The jolly Chevalier laughed as they met. "I'm an old soldier, too," he said. "I wanted to talk to you, Pendennis. I have heard of all that has happened, and

all the chops and changes that have taken place during my absence. I congratulate you on your marriage, and I congratulate you on your escape, too — you understand me. It was not my business to speak, but I know this, that a certain party is as arrant a little — well — well, never mind what. You acted like a man and a trump, and are well out of it.”

“I have no reason to complain,” said Pen. “I went back to beg and entreat poor Blanche to tell Foker all: I hope, for her sake, she will; but I fear not. There is but one policy, Strong, there is but one.”

“And lucky he that can stick to it,” said the Chevalier. “That rascal Morgan means mischief. He has been lurking about our chambers for the last two months: he has found out that poor mad devil Amory’s secret. He has been trying to discover where he was: he has been pumping Mr. Bolton, and making old Costigan drunk several times. He bribed the Inn porter to tell him when we came back: and he has got into Clavering’s service on the strength of his information. He will get very good pay for it, mark my words, the villain.”

“Where is Amory?” asked Pen.

“At Boulogne, I believe. I left him there, and warned him not to come back. I have broken with him, after a desperate quarrel, such as one might have expected with such a madman. And I’m glad to think that he is in my debt now, and that I have been the means of keeping him out of more harms than one.”

“He has lost all his winnings, I suppose,” said Pen.

“No: he is rather better than when he went away, or was a fortnight ago. He had extraordinary luck at Baden: broke the bank several nights, and was the fable of the place. He lied himself there with a fellow by the name of Bloundell, who gathered about him a society of all sorts of sharpers, male and female, Russians, Germans, French, English. Amory got so insolent, that I was obliged to thrash him one day within an inch of his life. I couldn’t help myself; the fellow has plenty of pluck, and I had nothing for it but to hit out.”

“And did he call you out?” said Pen.

“You think if I had shot him I should have done nobody any harm? No, sir; I waited for his challenge, but it never came and the next time I met him he begged my pardon, and said, ‘Strong, I beg your pardon; you whopped me and you served me right.’ I shook hands: but I couldn’t live with him after that. I paid him what I owed him the night before,” said Strong with a blush, “I pawned everything to pay him, and then I went with my last ten florins, and had a shy at the roulette. If I had lost, I should have let him shoot me in the morning. I was weary of my life. By Jove, sir, isn’t it a shame that a man like me, who may have had a few bills out, but who never deserted a friend, or did an unfair action, shouldn’t be able to turn his hand to anything to get bread? I made a good night, sir, at roulette, and I’ve done with that. I’m going into the wine business. My wife’s relations live at Cadiz. I intend to bring over Spanish wine and hams; there’s a fortune to be made by it, sir — a fortune — here’s my card. If you want any sherry or hams, recollect Ned Strong is your man.” And the Chevalier pulled out a handsome card, stating that Strong and Company, Shepherd’s Inn, were sole agents of the celebrated Diamond Manzanilla of the Duke of Garbanzos, Grandee of Spain of the First Class; and of the famous Toboso hams, fed on acorns only in the country of Don Quixote. “Come and taste ’em, sir — come and try ’em at my chambers. You see, I’ve an eye to business, and by Jove this time I’ll succeed.”

Pen laughed as he took the card. “I don’t know whether I shall be allowed to go to bachelors’ parties,” he said. “You know I’m going to —”

“But you must have sherry, sir. You must have sherry.”

“I will have it from you, depend on it,” said the other. “And I think you are very well out of your other partnership. That worthy Altamont and his daughter correspond, I hear,” Pen added after a pause.

“Yes; she wrote him the longest rigmarole letters, that I used to read: the sly little devil; and he answered under cover to Mrs. Bonner. He was for carrying her off the first day or two, and nothing would content him but having back his child. But she didn’t want to come, as you may fancy; and he was not very eager about it.” Here the Chevalier burst out in a laugh. “Why, sir, do you know what was the cause of our quarrel and boxing match? There was a certain widow at Baden, a Madame la Baronne de la Cruche-cassee, who was not much better than himself, and whom the scoundrel wanted to marry; and would, but that I told her he was married already. I don’t think that she was much better than he was. I saw her on the pier at Boulogne the day I came to England.”

And now we have brought up our narrative to the point, whither the announcement in the Chatteris Champion had already conducted us.

It wanted but very, very few days before that blissful one when Foker should call Blanche his own; the Clavering folks had all pressed to see the most splendid new carriage in the whole world, which was standing in the coach-house at the Clavering Arms; and shown, in grateful return for drink, commonly, by Mr. Foker's head-coachman. Madame Fribsby was occupied in making some lovely dresses for the tenants' daughters, who were to figure as a sort of bridesmaids' chorus at the breakfast and marriage ceremony. And immense festivities were to take place at the Park upon this delightful occasion.

"Yes, Mr. Huxter, yes; a happy tenantry, its country's pride, will assemble in the baronial hall, where the beards will wag all. The ox shall be slain, and the cup they'll drain; and the bells shall peal quite genteel; and my father-inlaw, with the tear of sensibility bedewing his eye, shall bless us at his baronial porch. That shall be the order of proceedings, I think, Mr. Huxter; and I hope we shall see you and your lovely bride by her husband's side; and what will you please to drink, sir? Mrs. Lightfoot, madam, you will give to my excellent friend and body-surgeon, Mr. Huxter, Mr. Samuel Huxter, M.R.C.S., every refreshment that your hostel affords, and place the festive amount to my account; and Mr. Lightfoot, sir, what will you take? though you've had enough already, I think; yes, ha."

So spoke Harry Foker in the bar of the Clavering Arms. He had apartments at that hotel, and had gathered a circle of friends round him there. He treated all to drink who came. He was hail-fellow with every man. He was so happy! He danced round Madame Fribsby, Mrs. Lightfoot's great ally, as she sate pensive in the bar. He consoled Mrs. Lightfoot, who had already begun to have causes of matrimonial disquiet; for the truth must be told, that young Lightfoot, having now the full command of the cellar, had none over his own unbridled desires, and was tippling and tipsy from morning till night. And a piteous sight it was for his fond wife to behold the big youth reeling about the yard and coffee-room, or drinking with the farmers and tradesmen his own neat wines and carefully selected stock of spirits.

When he could find time, Mr. Morgan the butler came from the Park, and took a glass at the expense of the landlord of the Clavering Arms. He watched poor Lightfoot's tipsy vagaries with savage sneers. Mrs. Lightfoot felt always doubly uncomfortable when her unhappy spouse was under his comrade's eye. But a few months married, and to think he had got to this! Madame Fribsby could feel for her. Madame Fribsby could tell her stories of men every bit as bad. She had had her own woes too, and her sad experience of men. So it is that nobody seems happy altogether; and that there's bitters, as Mr. Foker remarked, in the cup of every man's life. And yet there did not seem to be any in his, the honest young fellow! It was brimming over with happiness and good-humour.

Mr. Morgan was constant in his attentions to Foker. "And yet I don't like him somehow," said the candid young man to Mrs. Lightfoot. "He always seems as if he was measuring me for my coffin somehow. Pa-inlaw's afraid of him; pa-inlaw's," ahem! never mind, but ma-inlaw's a trump, Mrs. Lightfoot."

"Indeed my Lady was," and Mrs. Lightfoot owned, with a sigh, that perhaps it had been better for her had she never left her mistress.

"No, I do not like thee, Dr. Fell; the reason why I cannot tell," continued Mr. Foker; "and he wants to be taken as my head man. Blanche wants me to take him. Why does Miss Amory like him so?"

"Did Miss Blanche like him so?" The notion seemed to disturb Mrs. Lightfoot very much; and there came to this worthy landlady another cause for disturbance. A letter, bearing the Boulogne postmark, was brought to her one morning, and she and her husband were quarrelling over it as Foker passed down the stairs by the bar, on his way to the Park. His custom was to breakfast there, and bask a while in the presence of Armida; then, as the company of Clavering tired him exceedingly, and he did not care for sporting, he would return for an hour or two to billiards and the society of the Clavering Arms; then it would be time to ride with Miss Amory, and, after dining with her, he left her and returned modestly to his inn.

Lightfoot and his wife were quarrelling over the letter. What was that letter from abroad? Why was she always having letters from abroad? Who wrote 'em? — he would know. He didn't believe it was her brother. It was no business of his? It was a business of his; and, with a curse, he seized hold of his wife, and dashed at her pocket for the letter.

The poor woman gave a scream; and said, "Well, take it." Just as her husband seized on the letter, and Mr. Foker entered at the door, she gave another scream at seeing him, and once more tried to seize the paper. Lightfoot opened it, shaking her away, and an enclosure dropped down on the breakfast-table.

"Hands off, man alive!" cried little Harry, springing in. "Don't lay hands on a woman, sir. The man that lays his hand upon a woman, save in the way of kindness, is a — hallo! it's a letter for Miss Amory. What's this, Mrs. Lightfoot?"

Mrs. Lightfoot began, in piteous tones of reproach to her husband — “You unmanly! to treat a woman so who took you off the street. Oh, you coward, to lay your hand upon your wife! Why did I marry you? Why did I leave my Lady for you? Why did I spend eight hundred pound in fitting up this house that you might drink and guzzle?”

“She gets letters, and she won’t tell me who writes letters,” said Mr. Lightfoot, with a muzzy voice; “it’s a family affair, sir. Will you take anything, sir?”

“I will take this letter to Miss Amory, as I am going to the Park,” said Foker, turning very pale; and taking it up from the table, which was arranged for the poor landlady’s breakfast, he went away.

“He’s comin’— dammy, who’s a-comin’? Who’s J. A., Mrs. Lightfoot — curse me, who’s J. A.?” cried the husband.

Mrs. Lightfoot cried out, “Be quiet, you tipsy brute, do,” and running to her bonnet and shawl, threw them on, saw Mr. Foker walking down the street, took the by-lane which skirts it, and ran as quickly as she could to the lodge-gate, Clavering Park. Foker saw a running figure before him, but it was lost when he got to the lodge-gate. He stopped and asked, “Who was that who had just come in? Mrs. Bonner, was it?” He reeled almost in his walk: the trees swam before him. He rested once or twice against the trunks of the naked limes.

Lady Clavering was in the breakfast-room with her son, and her husband yawning over his paper. “Good morning, Harry,” said the Begum. “Here’s letters, lots of letters; Lady Rockminster will be here on Tuesday instead of Monday, and Arthur and the Major come today; and Laura is to go to Dr. Portman’s, and come to church from there: and — what’s the matter, my dear? What makes you so pale, Harry?”

“Where is Blanche!” asked Harry, in a sickening voice — “not down yet?”

“Blanche is always the last,” said the boy, eating muffins; “she’s a regular dawdle, she is. When you’re not here, she lays in bed till lunch-time.”

“Be quiet, Frank,” said the mother.

Blanche came down presently, looking pale, and with rather an eager look towards Foker; then she advanced and kissed her mother, and had a face beaming with her very best smiles on when she greeted Harry.

“How do you do, sir?” she said, and put out both her hands.

“I’m ill,” answered Harry. “I— I’ve brought a letter for you, Blanche.”

“A letter, and from whom is it, pray? Voyons,” she said.

“I don’t know — I should like to know,” said Foker.

“How can I tell until I see it?” asked Blanche.

“Has Mrs. Bonner not told you?” he said, with a shaking voice; — “there’s some secret. You give her the letter, Lady Clavering.”

Lady Clavering, wondering, took the letter from poor Foker’s shaking hand, and looked at the superscription. As she looked at it, she too began to shake in every limb, and with a scared face she dropped the letter, and running up to Frank, clutched the boy to her, and burst out with a sob — “Take that away — it’s impossible, it’s impossible.”

“What is the matter?” cried Blanche, with rather a ghastly smile; “the letter is only from — from a poor pensioner and relative of ours.”

“It’s not true, it’s not true,” screamed Lady Clavering. “No, my Frank — is it, Clavering?”

Blanche had taken up the letter, and was moving with it towards the fire, but Foker ran to her and clutched her arm — “I must see that letter,” he said; “give it me. You shan’t burn it.”

“You — you shall not treat Miss Amory so in my house,” cried the Baronet; “give back the letter, by Jove!”

“Read it — and look at her,” Blanche cried, pointing to her mother; “it — it was for her I kept the secret! Read it, cruel man!”

And Foker opened and read the letter:—

“I have not wrote, my darling Betsy, this three weeks; but this is to give her a father’s blessing, and I shall come down pretty soon as quick as my note, and intend to see the ceremony, and my son-inlaw. I shall put up at Bonner’s. I have had a pleasant autumn, and am staying here at an hotel where there is good company, and which is kep’ in good style. I don’t know whether I quite approve of your throwing over Mr. P. for Mr. F., and don’t think Foker’s such a pretty name, and from your account of him he seems a muff, and not a beauty. But he has got the rowdy, which is the thing. So no more, my

dear little Betsy, till we meet, from your affectionate father, J. Amory Altamont."

"Read it, Lady Clavering; it is too late to keep it from you now," said poor Foker; and the distracted woman, having cast her eyes over it, again broke out into hysterical screams, and convulsively grasped her son.

"They have made an outcast of you, my boy," she said. "They've dishonoured your old mother; but I'm innocent, Frank; before God, I'm innocent. I didn't know this, Mr. Foker; indeed, indeed, I didn't."

"I'm sure you didn't," said Foker, going up and kissing her hand.

"Generous, generous Harry!" cried out Blanche, in an ecstasy. But he withdrew his hand, which was upon her side, and turned from her with a quivering lip. "That's different," he says.

"It was for her sake — for her sake, Harry." Again Miss Amory is in an attitude.

"There was something to be done for mine," said Foker. "I would have taken you, whatever you were. Everything's talked about in London. I knew that your father had come to — to grief. You don't think it was — it was for your connexion I married you? D—— it all! I've loved you with all my heart and soul for two years, and you've been playing with me, and cheating me," broke out the young man, with a cry. "Oh, Blanche, Blanche, it's a hard thing, a hard thing!" and he covered his face with his hands, and sobbed behind them.

Blanche thought, "Why didn't I tell him that night when Arthur warned me?"

"Don't refuse her, Harry," cried out Lady Clavering. "Take her, take everything I have. It's all hers, you know, at my death. This boy's disinherited."—(Master Frank, who had been looking as scared at the strange scene, here burst into a loud cry.) "Take every shilling. Give me just enough to live, and to go and hide my head with this child, and to fly from both. Oh, they've both been bad, bad men. Perhaps he's here now. Don't let me see him. Clavering, you coward, defend me from him."

Clavering started up at this proposal. "You ain't serious, Jemima? You don't mean that?" he said. "You won't throw me and Frank over? I didn't know it, so help me ——. Foker, I'd no more idea of it than the dead — until the fellow came and found me out, the d —— d escaped convict scoundrel."

"The what?" said Foker. Blanche gave a scream.

"Yes," screamed out the Baronet in his turn, "yes, a d —— d runaway convict — a fellow that forged his father-in-law's name — a d —— d attorney, and killed a fellow in Botany Bay, hang him — and ran into the Bush, curse him; I wish he'd died there. And he came to me, a good six years ago, and robbed me; and I've been ruining myself to keep him, the infernal scoundrel! And Pendennis knows it, and Strong knows it, and that d —— d Morgan knows it, and she knows it, ever so long; and I never would tell it, never: and I kept it from my wife."

"And you saw him, and you didn't kill him, Clavering, you coward?" said the wife of Amory. "Come away, Frank; your father's a coward. I am dishonoured, but I'm your old mother, and you'll — you'll love me, won't you?"

Blanche, eploree, went up to her mother; but Lady Clavering shrank from her with a sort of terror. "Don't touch me," she said; "you've no heart; you never had. I see all now. I see why that coward was going to give up his place in Parliament to Arthur; yes, that coward! and why you threatened that you would make me give you half Frank's fortune. And when Arthur offered to marry you without a shilling, because he wouldn't rob my boy, you left him, and you took poor Harry. Have nothing to do with her, Harry. You're good, you are. Don't marry that — that convict's daughter. Come away, Frank, my darling; come to your poor old mother. We'll hide ourselves; but we're honest, yes, we are honest."

All this while a strange feeling of exultation had taken possession of Blanche's mind. That month with poor Harry had been a weary month to her. All his fortune and splendour scarcely sufficed to make the idea of himself supportable. She was wearied of his simple ways, and sick of coaxing and cajoling him.

"Stay, mamma; stay, madam!" she cried out, with a gesture which was always appropriate, though rather theatrical; "I have no heart, have I? I keep the secret of my mother's shame. I give up my rights to my half-brother and my bastard brother, yes, my rights and my fortune. I don't betray my father, and for this I have no heart. I'll have my rights now, and the laws of my country shall give them to me. I appeal to my country's laws — yes, my country's laws! The persecuted one returns this day. I desire to go to my father." And the little lady swept round her hand, and thought that she was a heroine.

"You will, will you?" cried out Clavering, with one of his usual oaths. "I'm a magistrate, and dammy, I'll commit him. Here's a chaise coming; perhaps it's him. Let him come."

A chaise was indeed coming up the avenue; and the two women shrieked each their loudest, expecting at that moment to see Altamont arrive.

The door opened, and Mr. Morgan announced Major Pendennis and Mr. Pendennis, who entered, and found all parties engaged in this fierce quarrel. A large screen fenced the breakfast-room from the hall; and it is probable that, according to his custom, Mr. Morgan had taken advantage of the screen to make himself acquainted with all that occurred.

It had been arranged on the previous day that the young people should ride; and at the appointed hour in the afternoon, Mr. Foker's horses arrived from the Clavering Arms. But Miss Blanche did not accompany him on this occasion. Pen came out and shook hands with him on the door-steps; and Harry Foker rode away, followed by his groom in mourning. The whole transactions which have occupied the most active part of our history were debated by the parties concerned during those two or three hours. Many counsels had been given, stories told, and compromises suggested; and at the end, Harry Foker rode away, with a sad "God bless you!" from Pen. There was a dreary dinner at Clavering Park, at which the lately installed butler did not attend; and the ladies were both absent. After dinner, Pen said, "I will walk down to Clavering and see if he is come." And he walked through the dark avenue, across the bridge and road by his own cottage — the once quiet and familiar fields of which were flaming with the kilns and forges of the artificers employed on the new railroad works; and so he entered the town, and made for the Clavering Arms.

It was past midnight when he returned to Clavering Park. He was exceedingly pale and agitated. "Is Lady Clavering up yet?" he asked. Yes, she was in her own sitting-room. He went up to her, and there found the poor lady in a piteous state of tears and agitation.

"It is I — Arthur," he said, looking in; and entering, he took her hand very affectionately and kissed it. "You were always the kindest of friends to me, dear Lady Clavering," he said. "I love you very much. I have got some news for you."

"Don't call me by that name," she said, pressing his hand. "You were always a good boy, Arthur; and it's kind of you to come now — very kind. You sometimes look very like your ma, my dear."

"Dear good Lady Clavering," Arthur repeated, with particular emphasis, "something very strange has happened."

"Has anything happened to him?" gasped Lady Clavering. "Oh, it's horrid to think I should be glad of it — horrid!"

"He is well. He has been and is gone, my dear lady. Don't alarm yourself; — he is gone, and you are Lady Clavering still."

"Is it true? what he sometimes said to me," she screamed out — "that he —"

"He was married before he married you," said Pen. "He has confessed it to-night. He will never come back." There came another shriek from Lady Clavering, as she flung her arms round Pen, and kissed him, and burst into tears on his shoulder.

What Pen had to tell, through a multiplicity of sobs and interruptions, must be compressed briefly, for behold our prescribed limit is reached, and our tale is coming to its end. With the Branch Coach from the railroad, which had succeeded the old Alacrity and Perseverance, Amory arrived, and was set down at the Clavering Arms. He ordered his dinner at the place under his assumed name of Altamont; and, being of a jovial turn, he welcomed the landlord, who was nothing loth, to a share of his wine. Having extracted from Mr. Lightfoot all the news regarding the family at the Park, and found, from examining his host, that Mrs. Lightfoot, as she said, had kept his counsel, he called for more wine of Mr. Lightfoot; and at the end of this symposium, both, being greatly excited, went into Mrs. Lightfoot's bar.

She was there taking tea with her friend, Madame Fribsby; and Lightfoot was by this time in such a happy state as not to be surprised at anything which might occur, so that, when Altamont shook hands with Mrs. Lightfoot as an old acquaintance, the recognition did not appear to him to be in the least strange, but only a reasonable cause for further drinking. The gentlemen partook then of brandy-and-water, which they offered to the ladies, not heeding the terrified looks of one or the other.

Whilst they were so engaged, at about six o'clock in the evening, Mr. Morgan, Sir Francis Clavering's new man, came in, and was requested to drink. He selected his favourite beverage, and the parties engaged in general conversation.

After a while Mr. Lightfoot began to doze. Mr. Morgan had repeatedly given hints to Mrs. Fribsby to quit the premises; but that lady, strangely fascinated, and terrified it would seem, or persuaded by Mrs. Lightfoot not to go, kept her place. Her persistence occasioned much annoyance to Mr. Morgan, who vented his displeasure in such language as gave pain to Mrs. Lightfoot, and caused Mr. Altamont to say, that he was a rum customer, and not polite to the sex.

The altercation between the two gentlemen became very painful to the women, especially to Mrs. Lightfoot, who did everything to soothe Mr. Morgan; and, under pretence of giving a pipe-light to the stranger, she handed him a paper on which she had privily written the words, "He knows you. Go." There may have been something suspicious in her manner of handing, or in her guest's of reading, the paper; for when he got up a short time afterwards, and said he would go to bed, Morgan rose too, with a laugh, and said it was too early to go to bed.

The stranger then said he would go to his bedroom. Morgan said he would show him the way.

At this the guest said, "Come up. I've got a brace of pistols up there to blow out the brains of any traitor or skulking spy," and glared so fiercely upon Morgan, that the latter, seizing hold of Lightfoot by the collar, and waking him, said, "John Amory, I arrest you in the Queen's name. Stand by me, Lightfoot. This capture is worth a thousand pounds."

He put forward his hand as if to seize his prisoner, but the other, doubling his fist, gave Morgan with his left hand so fierce a blow on the chest, that it knocked him back behind Mr. Lightfoot. That gentleman, who was athletic and courageous, said he would knock his guest's head off, and prepared to do so, as the stranger, tearing off his coat, and cursing both of his opponents, roared to them to come on.

But with a piercing scream Mrs. Lightfoot flung herself before her husband, whilst with another and louder shriek Madame Fribsby ran to the stranger, and calling out "Armstrong, Johnny Armstrong!" seized hold of his naked arm, on which a blue tattooing of a heart and M. F. were visible.

The ejaculation of Madame Fribsby seemed to astound and sober the stranger. He looked down upon her, and cried out, "it's Polly, by Jove."

Mrs. Fribsby continued to exclaim, "This is not Amory. This is Johnny Armstrong, my wicked — wicked husband, married to me in St. Martin's Church, mate on board an Indiaman, and he left me two months after, the wicked wretch. This is John Armstrong — here's the mark on his arm which he made for me."

The stranger said, "I am John Armstrong, sure enough, Polly. I'm John Armstrong, Amory, Altamont — and let 'em all come on, and try what they can do against a British sailor. Hurray, who's for it?"

Morgan still called out, "Arrest him!" But Mrs. Lightfoot said, "Arrest him! arrest you, you mean spy! What! stop the marriage and ruin my lady, and take away the Clavering Arms from us?"

"Did he say he'd take away the Clavering Arms from us?" asked Mr. Lightfoot, turning round. "Hang him, I'll throttle him."

"Keep him, darling, till the coach passes to the up train. It'll be here now directly."

"D—— him, I'll choke him if he stirs," said Lightfoot. And so they kept Morgan until the coach came, and Mr. Amory or Armstrong went away back to London.

Morgan had followed him: but of this event Arthur Pendennis did not inform Lady Clavering, and left her invoking blessings upon him at her son's door, going to kiss him as he was asleep. It had been a busy day.

We have to chronicle the events of but one day more, and that was a day when Mr. Arthur, attired in a new hat, a new blue frock-coat and blue handkerchief, in a new fancy waistcoat, new boots, and new shirt-studs (presented by the Right Honourable the Countess Dowager of Rockminster), made his appearance at a solitary breakfast-table, in Clavering Park, where he could scarce eat a single morsel of food. Two letters were laid by his worship's plate; and he chose to open the first, which was in a round clerk-like hand, in preference to the second more familiar superscription.

Note 1 ran as follows:—

"Garbanzos Wine Company, Shepherd's Inn. — Monday.

"My Dear Pendennis — In congratulating you heartily upon the event which is to make you happy for life, I send my very kindest remembrances to Mrs. Pendennis, whom I hope to know even longer than I have already known her. And when I call her attention to the fact, that one of the most necessary articles to her husband's comfort is pure sherry, I know I shall have her for a customer for your worship's sake.

"But I have to speak to you of other than my own concerns. Yesterday afternoon, a certain J. A. arrived at my chambers from Clavering, which he had left under circumstances of which you are doubtless now aware. In spite of our difference, I could not but give him food and shelter (and he partook freely both of the Garbanzos Amontillado and the Toboso ham), and he told me what had happened to him, and many other surprising adventures. The rascal married at

sixteen, and has repeatedly since performed that ceremony — in Sydney, in New Zealand, in South America, in Newcastle, he says, first, before he knew our poor friend the milliner. He is a perfect Don Juan.

“And it seemed as if the commendatore had at last overtaken him, for, as we were at our meal, there came three heavy knocks at my outer door, which made our friend start. I have sustained a siege or two here, and went to my usual place to reconnoitre. Thank my stars I have not a bill out in the world, and besides, those gentry do not come in that way. I found that it was your uncle’s late valet, Morgan, and a policeman (I think a sham policeman), and they said they had a warrant to take the person of John Armstrong, alias Amory, alias Altamont, a runaway convict, and threatened to break in the oak.

“Now, sir, in my own days of captivity I had discovered a little passage along the gutter into Bows and Costigan’s window, and I sent Jack Alias along this covered way, not without terror of his life, for it had grown very cranky; and then, after a parley, let in Mons. Morgan and friend.

“The rascal had been instructed about that covered way, for he made for the room instantly, telling the policeman to go downstairs and keep the gate; and he charged up my little staircase as if he had known the premises. As he was going out of the window we heard a voice that you know, from Bows’s garret, saying, ‘Who are ye, and hwhat the divvle are ye at? You’d betther leave the gutther; bedad there’s a man killed himself already.’

“And as Morgan, crossing over and looking into the darkness, was trying to see whether this awful news was true, he took a broomstick, and with a vigorous dash broke down the pipe of communication — and told me this morning, with great glee, that he was reminded of that ‘aisy sthratagem by remembering his dorling Emilie, when she acted the pawrt of Cora in the Plee — and by the bridge in Pezawro, bedad.’ I wish that scoundrel Morgan had been on the bridge when the General tried his ‘sthratagem.’

“If I hear more of Jack Alias I will tell you. He has got plenty of money still, and I wanted him to send some to our poor friend the milliner; but the scoundrel laughed, and said he had no more than he wanted, but offered to give anybody a lock of his hair. Farewell — be happy! and believe me always truly yours, E. Strong.”

“And now for the other letter,” said Pen. “Dear old fellow!” and he kissed the seal before he broke it.

“Warrington, Tuesday.

“I must not let the day pass over without saying a God bless you, to both of you. May Heaven make you happy, dear Arthur, and dear Laura. I think, Pen, that you have the best wife in the world; and pray that, as such, you will cherish her and tend her. The chambers will be lonely without you, dear Pen; but if I am tired, I shall have a new home to go to in the house of my brother and sister. I am practising in the nursery here, in order to prepare for the part of Uncle George. Farewell! make your wedding tour, and come back to your affectionate G. W.”

Pendennis and his wife read this letter together after Doctor Portman’s breakfast was over, and the guests were gone; and when the carriage was waiting amidst the crowd at the Doctor’s outer gate. But the wicket led into the churchyard of St. Mary’s, where the bells were pealing with all their might, and it was here, over Helen’s green grass, that Arthur showed his wife George’s letter. For which of those two — for grief was it or for happiness, that Laura’s tears abundantly fell on the paper? And once more, in the presence of the sacred dust, she kissed and blessed her Arthur.

There was only one marriage on that day at Clavering Church; for in spite of Blanche’s sacrifices for her dearest mother, honest Harry Foker could not pardon the woman who had deceived her husband, and justly argued that she would deceive him again. He went to the Pyramids and Syria, and there left his malady behind him, and returned with a fine beard, and a supply of tarbooshes and nargillies, with which he regales all his friends. He lives splendidly, and, through Pen’s mediation, gets his wine from the celebrated vintages of the Duke of Garbanzos.

As for poor Cos, his fate has been mentioned in an early part of this story. No very glorious end could be expected to such a career. Morgan is one of the most respectable men in the parish of St. James’s, and in the present political movement has pronounced himself like a man and a Briton. And Bows — on the demise of Mr. Piper, who played the organ at Clavering, little Mrs. Sam Hunter, who has the entire command of Doctor Portman, brought Bows down from London to contest the organ-loft, and her candidate carried the chair. When Sir Francis Clavering quitted this worthless life, the same little indefatigable canvasser took the borough by storm, and it is now represented by Arthur Pendennis, Esq. Blanche Amory, it is well known, married at Paris, and the saloons of Madame la Comtesse de Montmorenci de Valentinois were amongst the most suivis of that capital. The duel between the Count and the young and fiery Representative of the Mountain, Alcide de Mirobo, arose solely from the latter questioning at the Club the titles borne by the former nobleman.

Madame de Montmorenci de Valentinois travelled after the adventure: and Bungay bought her poems, and published them, with the Countess's coronet emblazoned on the Countess's work.

Major Pendennis became very serious in his last days, and was never so happy as when Laura was reading to him with her sweet voice, or listening to his stories. For this sweet lady is the friend of the young and the old: and her life is always passed in making other lives happy.

"And what sort of a husband would this Pendennis be?" many a reader will ask, doubting the happiness of such a marriage and the fortune of Laura. The querists, if they meet her, are referred to that lady herself, who, seeing his faults and wayward moods — seeing and owning that there are men better than he — loves him always with the most constant affection. His children or their mother have never heard a harsh word from him; and when his fits of moodiness and solitude are over, welcome him back with a never-failing regard and confidence. His friend is his friend still — entirely heart-whole. That malady is never fatal to a sound organ. And George goes through his part of godpapa perfectly, and lives alone. If Mr. Pen's works have procured him more reputation than has been acquired by his abler friend, whom no one knows, George lives contented without the fame. If the best men do not draw the great prizes in life, we know it has been so settled by the Ordainer of the lottery. We own, and see daily, how the false and worthless live and prosper, while the good are called away, and the dear and young perish untimely — we perceive in every man's life the maimed happiness, the frequent falling, the bootless endeavour, the struggle of Right and Wrong, in which the strong often succumb and the swift fail: we see flowers of good blooming in foul places, as, in the most lofty and splendid fortunes, flaws of vice and meanness, and stains of evil; and, knowing how mean the best of us is, let us give a hand of charity to Arthur Pendennis, with all his faults and shortcomings, who does not claim to be a hero, but only a man and a brother.



This web edition published by:
eBooks@Adelaide
The University of Adelaide Library
University of Adelaide
South Australia 5005

https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/t/thackeray/william_makepeace/pendennis/chapter76.html

Last updated Sunday, March 27, 2016 at 12:00

The Newcomes

Memoirs of a most Respectable Family

“Edited by Arthur Pendennis, Esq.”

William Makepeace Thackeray



This web edition published by eBooks@Adelaide.

Last updated Wednesday, December 17, 2014 at 14:24.

To the best of our knowledge, **the text** of this work is in the “**Public Domain**” in Australia.

HOWEVER, copyright law varies in other countries, and the work may still be under copyright in the country from which you are accessing this website. It is your responsibility to check the applicable copyright laws in your country before downloading this work.

eBooks@Adelaide
The University of Adelaide Library
University of Adelaide
South Australia 5005

https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/t/thackeray/william_makepeace/newcomes/index.html

Last updated Sunday, March 27, 2016 at 12:00

CHAPTER I

THE OVERTURE — AFTER WHICH THE CURTAIN RISES UPON A DRINKING CHORUS

A crow, who had flown away with a cheese from a dairy-window, sate perched on a tree looking down at a great big frog in a pool underneath him. The frog's hideous large eyes were goggling out of his head in a manner which appeared quite ridiculous to the old blackamoor, who watched the splay-footed slimy wretch with that peculiar grim humour belonging to crows. Not far from the frog a fat ox was browsing; whilst a few lambs frisked about the meadow, or nibbled the grass and buttercups there.

Who should come in to the farther end of the field but a wolf? He was so cunningly dressed up in sheep's clothing, that the very lambs did not know Master Wolf; nay, one of them, whose dam the wolf had just eaten, after which he had thrown her skin over his shoulders, ran up innocently towards the devouring monster, mistaking him for her mamma.

"He, he!" says a fox, sneaking round the hedge-paling, over which the tree grew, whereupon the crow was perched looking down on the frog, who was staring with his goggle eyes fit to burst with envy, and croaking abuse at the ox. "How absurd those lambs are! Yonder silly little knock-kneed baah-ling does not know the old wolf dressed in the sheep's fleece. He is the same old rogue who gobbled up little Red Riding Hood's grandmother for lunch, and swallowed little Red Riding Hood for supper. *Tirez la bobinette et la chevillette cherra.* He, he!"

An owl that was hidden in the hollow of the tree woke up. "Oho, Master Fox," says she, "I cannot see you, but I smell you! If some folks like lambs, other folks like geese," says the owl.

"And your ladyship is fond of mice," says the fox.

"The Chinese eat them," says the owl, "and I have read that they are very fond of dogs," continued the old lady.

"I wish they would exterminate every cur of them off the face of the earth," said the fox.

"And I have also read, in works of travel, that the French eat frogs," continued the owl. "Aha, my friend Crapaud! are you there? That was a very pretty concert we sang together last night!"

"If the French devour my brethren, the English eat beef," croaked out the frog — "great, big, brutal, bellowing oxen."

"Ho, whoo!" says the owl, "I have heard that the English are toad-eaters too!"

"But who ever heard of them eating an owl or a fox, madam?" says Reynard, "or their sitting down and taking a crow to pick?" adds the polite rogue, with a bow to the old crow who was perched above them with the cheese in his mouth. "We are privileged animals, all of us; at least, we never furnish dishes for the odious orgies of man."

"I am the bird of wisdom," says the owl; "I was the companion of Pallas Minerva: I am frequently represented in the Egyptian monuments."

"I have seen you over the British barn-doors," said the fox, with a grin. "You have a deal of scholarship, Mrs. Owl. I know a thing or two myself; but am, I confess it, no scholar — a mere man of the world — a fellow that lives by his wits — a mere country gentleman."

"You sneer at scholarship," continues the owl, with a sneer on her venerable face. "I read a good deal of a night."

"When I am engaged deciphering the cocks and hens at roost," says the fox.

"It's a pity for all that you can't read; that board nailed over my head would give you some information."

"What does it say?" says the fox.

"I can't spell in the daylight," answered the owl; and, giving a yawn, went back to sleep till evening in the hollow of her tree.

"A fig for her hieroglyphics!" said the fox, looking up at the crow in the tree. "What airs our slow neighbour gives herself! She pretends to all the wisdom; whereas, your reverences, the crows, are endowed with gifts far superior to these benighted old big-wigs of owls, who blink in the darkness, and call their hooting singing. How noble it is to hear a chorus of crows! There are twenty-four brethren of the Order of St. Corvinus, who have builded themselves a convent near a wood which I frequent; what a droning and a chanting they keep up! I protest their reverences' singing is nothing to yours! You sing so deliciously in parts, do for the love of harmony favour me with a solo!"

While this conversation was going on, the ox was thumping the grass; the frog was eyeing him in such a rage at his superior proportions, that he would have spurted venom at him if he could, and that he would have burst, only that is impossible, from sheer envy; the little lambkin was lying unsuspectingly at the side of the wolf in fleecy hosiery, who did not as yet molest her, being replenished with the mutton her mamma. But now the wolf's eyes began to glare, and his sharp white teeth to show, and he rose up with a growl, and began to think he should like lamb for supper.

"What large eyes you have got!" bleated out the lamb, with rather a timid look.

"The better to see you with, my dear."

"What large teeth you have got!"

"The better to —"

At this moment such a terrific yell filled the field, that all its inhabitants started with terror. It was from a donkey, who had somehow got a lion's skin, and now came in at the hedge, pursued by some men and boys with sticks and guns.

When the wolf in sheep's clothing heard the bellow of the ass in the lion's skin, fancying that the monarch of the forest was near, he ran away as fast as his disguise would let him. When the ox heard the noise he dashed round the meadow-ditch, and with one trample of his hoof squashed the frog who had been abusing him. When the crow saw the people with guns coming, he instantly dropped the cheese out of his mouth, and took to wing. When the fox saw the cheese drop, he immediately made a jump at it (for he knew the donkey's voice, and that his asinine bray was not a bit like his royal master's roar), and making for the cheese, fell into a steel trap, which snapped off his tail; without which he was obliged to go into the world, pretending, forsooth, that it was the fashion not to wear tails any more; and that the fox-party were better without 'em.

Meanwhile, a boy with a stick came up, and belaboured Master Donkey until he roared louder than ever. The wolf, with the sheep's clothing dragging about his legs, could not run fast, and was detected and shot by one of the men. The blind old owl, whirring out of the hollow tree, quite amazed at the disturbance, flounced into the face of a ploughboy, who knocked her down with a pitchfork. The butcher came and quietly led off the ox and the lamb; and the farmer, finding the fox's brush in the trap, hung it up over his mantelpiece, and always bragged that he had been in at his death.

"What a farrago of old fables is this! What a dressing up in old clothes!" says the critic. (I think I see such a one — a Solomon that sits in judgment over us authors and chops up our children.) "As sure as I am just and wise, modest, learned, and religious, so surely I have read something very like this stuff and nonsense about jackasses and foxes before. That wolf in sheep's clothing? — do I not know him? That fox discoursing with the crow? — have I not previously heard of him? Yes, in Lafontaine's fables: let us get the Dictionary and the Fable and the Biographie Universelle, article Lafontaine, and confound the impostor."

"Then in what a contemptuous way," may Solomon go on to remark, "does this author speak of human nature! There is scarce one of these characters he represents but is a villain. The fox is a flatterer; the frog is an emblem of impotence and envy; the wolf in sheep's clothing a bloodthirsty hypocrite, wearing the garb of innocence; the ass in the lion's skin a quack trying to terrify, by assuming the appearance of a forest monarch (does the writer, writhing under merited castigation, mean to sneer at critics in this character? We laugh at the impertinent comparison); the ox, a stupid commonplace; the only innocent being in the writer's (stolen) apologue is a fool — the idiotic lamb, who does not know his own mother!" And then the critic, if in a virtuous mood, may indulge in some fine writing regarding the holy beauteousness of maternal affection.

Why not? If authors sneer, it is the critic's business to sneer at them for sneering. He must pretend to be their superior, or who would care about his opinion? And his livelihood is to find fault. Besides, he is right sometimes; and the stories he reads, and the characters drawn in them, are old, sure enough. What stories are new? All types of all characters march through all fables: tremblers and boasters; victims and bullies; dupes and knaves; long-eared Neddies, giving themselves leonine airs; Tartuffes wearing virtuous clothing; lovers and their trials, their blindness, their folly and constancy. With the very first page of the human story do not love and lies too begin? So the tales were told ages before Aesop; and asses under lions' manes roared in Hebrew; and sly foxes flattered in Etruscan; and wolves in sheep's clothing gnashed their teeth in Sanskrit, no doubt. The sun shines today as he did when he first began shining; and the birds in the tree overhead, while I am writing, sing very much the same note they have sung ever since there were finches. Nay, since last he besought good-natured friends to listen once a month to his talking, a friend of the writer has seen the New World,

and found the (featherless) birds there exceedingly like their brethren of Europe. There may be nothing new under and including the sun; but it looks fresh every morning, and we rise with it to toil, hope, scheme, laugh, struggle, love, suffer, until the night comes and quiet. And then will wake Morrow and the eyes that look on it; and so da capo.

This, then, is to be a story, may it please you, in which jackdaws will wear peacocks' feathers, and awaken the just ridicule of the peacocks; in which, while every justice is done to the peacocks themselves, the splendour of their plumage, the gorgeousness of their dazzling necks, and the magnificence of their tails, exception will yet be taken to the absurdity of their rickety strut, and the foolish discord of their pert squeaking; in which lions in love will have their claws pared by sly virgins; in which rogues will sometimes triumph, and honest folks, let us hope, come by their own; in which there will be black crape and white favours; in which there will be tears under orange-flower wreaths, and jokes in mourning-coaches; in which there will be dinners of herbs with contentment and without, and banquets of stalled oxen where there is care and hatred — ay, and kindness and friendship too, along with the feast. It does not follow that all men are honest because they are poor; and I have known some who were friendly and generous, although they had plenty of money. There are some great landlords who do not grind down their tenants; there are actually bishops who are not hypocrites; there are liberal men even among the Whigs, and the Radicals themselves are not all aristocrats at heart. But who ever heard of giving the Moral before the Fable? Children are only led to accept the one after their delectation over the other: let us take care lest our readers skip both; and so let us bring them on quickly — our wolves and lambs, our foxes and lions, our roaring donkeys, our billing ringdoves, our motherly partlets, and crowing chanticleers.

There was once a time when the sun used to shine brighter than it appears to do in this latter half of the nineteenth century; when the zest of life was certainly keener; when tavern wines seemed to be delicious, and tavern dinners the perfection of cookery; when the perusal of novels was productive of immense delight, and the monthly advent of magazine-day was hailed as an exciting holiday; when to know Thompson, who had written a magazine-article, was an honour and a privilege; and to see Brown, the author of the last romance, in the flesh, and actually walking in the Park with his umbrella and Mrs. Brown, was an event remarkable, and to the end of life to be perfectly well remembered; when the women of this world were a thousand times more beautiful than those of the present time; and the houris of the theatres especially so ravishing and angelic, that to see them was to set the heart in motion, and to see them again was to struggle for half an hour previously at the door of the pit; when tailors called at a man's lodgings to dazzle him with cards of fancy waistcoats; when it seemed necessary to purchase a grand silver dressing-case, so as to be ready for the beard which was not yet born (as yearling brides provide lace caps, and work rich clothes, for the expected darling); when to ride in the Park on a ten-shilling hack seemed to be the height of fashionable enjoyment, and to splash your college tutor as you were driving down Regent Street in a hired cab the triumph of satire; when the acme of pleasure seemed to be to meet Jones of Trinity at the Bedford, and to make an arrangement with him, and with King of Corpus (who was staying at the Colonnade), and Martin of Trinity Hall (who was with his family in Bloomsbury Square), to dine at the Piazza, go to the play and see Braham in *Fra Diavolo*, and end the frolic evening by partaking of supper and a song at the "Cave of Harmony." — It was in the days of my own youth, then, that I met one or two of the characters who are to figure in this history, and whom I must ask leave to accompany for a short while, and until, familiarised with the public, they can make their own way. As I recall them the roses bloom again, and the nightingales sing by the calm Bendemeer.

Going to the play, then, and to the pit, as was the fashion in those honest days, with some young fellows of my own age, having listened delighted to the most cheerful and brilliant of operas, and laughed enthusiastically at the farce, we became naturally hungry at twelve o'clock at night, and a desire for welsh-rabbits and good old glee-singing led us to the "Cave of Harmony," then kept by the celebrated Hoskins, among whose friends we were proud to count.

We enjoyed such intimacy with Mr. Hoskins that he never failed to greet us with a kind nod; and John the waiter made room for us near the President of the convivial meeting. We knew the three admirable glee-singers, and many a time they partook of brandy-and-water at our expense. One of us gave his call dinner at Hoskins's, and a merry time we had of it. Where are you, O Hoskins, bird of the night? Do you warble your songs by Acheron, or troll your choruses by the banks of black Avernus?

The goes of stout, the "Chough and Crow," the welsh-rabbit, the "Red-Cross Knight," the hot brandy-and-water (the brown, the strong!), the "Bloom is on the Rye" (the bloom isn't on the rye any more!) — the song and the cup, in a word, passed round merrily; and, I daresay, the songs and bumpers were encored. It happened that there was a very small attendance at the "Cave" that night, and we were all more sociable and friendly because the company was select. The songs

were chiefly of the sentimental class; such ditties were much in vogue at the time of which I speak.

There came into the "Cave" a gentleman with a lean brown face and long black mustachios, dressed in very loose clothes, and evidently a stranger to the place. At least he had not visited it for a long time. He was pointing out changes to a lad who was in his company; and, calling for sherry-and-water, he listened to the music, and twirled his mustachios with great enthusiasm.

At the very first glimpse of me the boy jumped up from the table, bounded across the room, ran to me with his hands out, and, blushing, said, "Don't you know me?"

It was little Newcome, my school-fellow, whom I had not seen for six years, grown a fine tall young stripling now, with the same bright blue eyes which I remembered when he was quite a little boy.

"What the deuce brings you here?" said I.

He laughed and looked roguish. "My father — that's my father — would come. He's just come back from India. He says all the wits used to come here — Mr. Sheridan, Captain Morris, Colonel Hanger, Professor Porson. I told him your name, and that you used to be very kind to me when I first went to Smithfield. I've left now; I'm to have a private tutor. I say, I've got such a jolly pony. It's better fun than old Smile."

Here the whiskered gentleman, Newcome's father, pointing to a waiter to follow him with his glass of sherry-and-water, strode across the room twirling his mustachios, and came up to the table where we sate, making a salutation with his hat in a very stately and polite manner, so that Hoskins himself was, as it were, obliged to bow; the glee-singers murmured among themselves (their eyes rolling over their glasses towards one another as they sucked brandy-and-water), and that mischievous little wag, little Nadab the Improvisatore (who had just come in), began to mimic him, feeling his imaginary whiskers, after the manner of the stranger, and flapping about his pocket-handkerchief in the most ludicrous manner. Hoskins checked this ribaldry by sternly looking towards Nadab, and at the same time called upon the gents to give their orders, the waiter being in the room, and Mr. Bellew about to sing a song.

Newcome's father came up and held out his hand to me. I dare say I blushed, for I had been comparing him to the admirable Harley in the Critic, and had christened him Don Ferolo Whiskerandos.

He spoke in a voice exceedingly soft and pleasant, and with a cordiality so simple and sincere, that my laughter shrank away ashamed, and gave place to a feeling much more respectful and friendly. In youth, you see, one is touched by kindness. A man of the world may, of course, be grateful or not as he chooses.

"I have heard of your kindness, sir," says he, "to my boy. And whoever is kind to him is kind to me. Will you allow me to sit down by you? and may I beg you to try my cheroots?" We were friends in a minute — young Newcome snuggling by my side, his father opposite, to whom, after a minute or two of conversation, I presented my three college friends.

"You have come here, gentlemen, to see the wits," says the Colonel. "Are there any celebrated persons in the room? I have been five-and-thirty years from home, and want to see all that is to be seen."

King of Corpus (who was an incorrigible wag) was on the point of pulling some dreadful long-bow, and pointing out a halfdozen of people in the room, as R. and H. and L., etc., the most celebrated wits of that day; but I cut King's shins under the table, and got the fellow to hold his tongue.

"Maxima debetur pueris," says Jones (a fellow of very kind feeling, who has gone into the Church since), and, writing on his card to Hoskins, hinted to him that a boy was in the room, and a gentleman, who was quite a greenhorn: hence that the songs had better be carefully selected.

And so they were. A ladies' school might have come in, and, but for the smell of the cigars and brandy-and-water, have taken no harm by what happened. Why should it not always be so? If there are any "Caves of Harmony" now, I warrant Messieurs the landlords, their interests would be better consulted by keeping their singers within bounds. The very greatest scamps like pretty songs, and are melted by them; so are honest people. It was worth a guinea to see the simple Colonel, and his delight at the music. He forgot all about the distinguished wits whom he had expected to see in his ravishment over the glees.

"I say, Clive, this is delightful. This is better than your aunt's concert with all the Squallinis, hey? I shall come here often. Landlord, may I venture to ask those gentlemen if they will take any refreshment? What are their names?" (to one of his neighbours). "I was scarcely allowed to hear any singing before I went out, except an oratorio, where I fell asleep; but this, by George, is as fine as Incledon!" He became quite excited over his sherry-and-water—"I'm sorry to see you,

gentlemen, drinking brandy-pawnee,” says he; “it plays the deuce with our young men in India.”) He joined in all the choruses with an exceedingly sweet voice. He laughed at “The Derby Ram” so that it did you good to hear him; and when Hoskins sang (as he did admirably) “The Old English Gentleman,” and described, in measured cadence, the death of that venerable aristocrat, tears trickled down the honest warrior’s cheek, while he held out his hand to Hoskins and said, “Thank you, sir, for that song; it is an honour to human nature.” On which Hoskins began to cry too.

And now young Nadab, having been cautioned, commenced one of those surprising feats of improvisation with which he used to charm audiences. He took us all off, and had rhymes pat about all the principal persons in the room: King’s pins (which he wore very splendid), Martin’s red waistcoat, etc. The Colonel was charmed with each feat, and joined delighted with the chorus — “Ritolderol ritolderol ritolderolderay” (bis). And when, coming to the Colonel himself, he burst out —

“A military gent I see — And while his face I scan,
I think you’ll all agree with me — He came from Hindostan.
And by his side sits laughing free — A youth with curly head,
I think you’ll all agree with me — That he was best in bed.
Ritolderol,” etc.

— the Colonel laughed immensely at this sally, and clapped his son, young Clive, on the shoulder. “Hear what he says of you, sir? Clive, best be off to bed, my boy — ho, ho! No, no. We know a trick worth two of that. ‘We won’t go home till morning, till daylight does appear.’ Why should we? Why shouldn’t my boy have innocent pleasure? I was allowed none when I was a young chap, and the severity was nearly the ruin of me. I must go and speak with that young man — the most astonishing thing I ever heard in my life. What’s his name? Mr. Nadab? Mr. Nadab, sir, you have delighted me. May I make so free as to ask you to come and dine with me tomorrow at six? Colonel Newcome, if you please, Nerot’s Hotel, Clifford Street. I am always proud to make the acquaintance of men of genius, and you are one, or my name is not Newcome!”

“Sir, you do me hhonour,” says Mr. Nadab, pulling up his shirt-collar, “and perhaps the day will come when the world will do me justice — may I put down your hhonoured name for my book of poems?”

“Of course, my dear sir,” says the enthusiastic Colonel; “I’ll send them all over India. Put me down for six copies, and do me the favour to bring them tomorrow when you come to dinner.”

And now Mr. Hoskins asking if any gentleman would volunteer a song, what was our amazement when the simple Colonel offered to sing himself, at which the room applauded vociferously; whilst methought poor Clive Newcome hung down his head, and blushed as red as a peony. I felt for the young lad, and thought what my own sensations would have been if, in that place, my own uncle, Major Pendennis, had suddenly proposed to exert his lyrical powers.

The Colonel selected the ditty of “Wapping Old Stairs” (a ballad so sweet and touching that surely any English poet might be proud to be the father of it), and he sang this quaint and charming old song in an exceedingly pleasant voice, with flourishes and roulades in the old Incledon manner, which has pretty nearly passed away. The singer gave his heart and soul to the simple ballad, and delivered Molly’s gentle appeal so pathetically that even the professional gentlemen hummed and buzzed — a sincere applause; and some wags who were inclined to jeer at the beginning of the performance, clinked their glasses and rapped their sticks with quite a respectful enthusiasm. When the song was over, Clive held up his head too; after the shock of the first verse, looked round with surprise and pleasure in his eyes; and we, I need not say, backed our friend, delighted to see him come out of his queer scrape so triumphantly. The Colonel bowed and smiled with very pleasant good-nature at our plaudits. It was like Dr. Primrose preaching his sermon in the prison. There was something touching in the naivete and kindness of the placid and simple gentleman.

Great Hoskins, placed on high, amidst the tuneful choir, was pleased to signify his approbation, and gave his guest’s health in his usual dignified manner. “I am much obliged to you, sir,” says Mr. Hoskins; “the room ought to be much obliged to you: I drink your ‘ealth and song, sir;” and he bowed to the Colonel politely over his glass of brandy-and-water, of which he absorbed a little in his customer’s honour. “I have not heard that song,” he was kind enough to say, “better performed since Mr. Incledon sung it. He was a great singer, sir, and I may say, in the words of our immortal Shakspeare, that, take him for all in all, we shall not look upon his like again.”

The Colonel blushed in his turn, and turning round to his boy with an arch smile, said, “I learnt it from Incledon. I used to slip out from Grey Friars to hear him, Heaven bless me, forty years ago; and I used to be flogged afterwards, and serve me right too. Lord! Lord! how the time passes!” He drank off his sherry-and-water, and fell back in his chair; we could see he was thinking about his youth — the golden time — the happy, the bright, the unforgetten. I was myself nearly

two-and-twenty years of age at that period, and felt as old as, ay, older than the Colonel.

Whilst he was singing his ballad, there had walked, or rather reeled, into the room, a gentleman in a military frock-coat and duck trousers of dubious hue, with whose name and person some of my readers are perhaps already acquainted. In fact it was my friend Captain Costigan, in his usual condition at this hour of the night.

Holding on by various tables, the Captain had sidled up, without accident to himself or any of the jugs and glasses round about him, to the table where we sat, and had taken his place near the writer, his old acquaintance. He warbled the refrain of the Colonel's song, not inharmoniously; and saluted its pathetic conclusion with a subdued hiccup and a plentiful effusion of tears. "Bedad, it is a beautiful song," says he, "and many a time I heard poor Harry Incledon sing it."

"He's a great character," whispered that unlucky King of Corpus to his neighbour the Colonel; "was a Captain in the army. We call him the General. Captain Costigan, will you take something to drink?"

"Bedad, I will," says the Captain, "and I'll sing ye a song tu."

And, having procured a glass of whisky-and-water from the passing waiter, the poor old man, settling his face into a horrid grin, and leering, as he was wont when he gave what he called one of his prime songs, began his music.

The unlucky wretch, who scarcely knew what he was doing or saying, selected one of the most outrageous performances of his repertoire, fired off a tipsy howl by way of overture, and away he went. At the end of the second verse the Colonel started up, clapping on his hat, seizing his stick, and looking as ferocious as though he had been going to do battle with a Pindaree.

"Silence!" he roared out.

"Hear, hear!" cried certain wags at a farther table. "Go on, Costigan!" said others.

"Go on!" cries the Colonel, in his high voice trembling with anger. "Does any gentleman say 'Go On?' Does any man who has a wife and sisters, or children at home, say 'Go on' to such disgusting ribaldry as this? Do you dare, sir, to call yourself a gentleman, and to say that you hold the King's commission, and to sit down amongst Christians and men of honour, and defile the ears of young boys with this wicked balderdash?"

"Why do you bring young boys here, old boy?" cries a voice of the malcontents.

"Why? Because I thought I was coming to a society of gentlemen," cried out the indignant Colonel. "Because I never could have believed that Englishmen could meet together and allow a man, and an old man, so to disgrace himself. For shame, you old wretch! Go home to your bed, you hoary old sinner! And for my part, I'm not sorry that my son should see, for once in his life, to what shame and degradation and dishonour, drunkenness and whisky may bring a man. Never mind the change, sir! — Curse the change!" says the Colonel, facing the amazed waiter. "Keep it till you see me in this place again; which will be never — by George, never!" And shouldering his stick, and scowling round at the company of scared bacchanalians, the indignant gentleman stalked away, his boy after him.

Clive seemed rather shamefaced; but I fear the rest of the company looked still more foolish.

"Aussi que diable venait — il faire dans cette galere?" says King of Corpus to Jones of Trinity; and Jones gave a shrug of his shoulders, which were smarting, perhaps; for that uplifted cane of the Colonel's had somehow fallen on the back of every man in the room.



CHAPTER II

COLONEL NEWCOME'S WILD OATS

As the young gentleman who has just gone to bed is to be the hero of the following pages, we had best begin our account of him with his family history, which luckily is not very long.

When pigtails still grew on the backs of the British gentry, and their wives wore cushions on their heads, over which they tied their own hair, and disguised it with powder and pomatum: when Ministers went in their stars and orders to the House of Commons, and the orators of the Opposition attacked nightly the noble lord in the blue ribbon: when Mr. Washington was heading the American rebels with a courage, it must be confessed, worthy of a better cause: there came up to London, out of a northern county, Mr. Thomas Newcome, afterwards Thomas Newcome, Esq., and sheriff of London, afterwards Mr. Alderman Newcome, the founder of the family whose name has given the title to this history. It was but in the reign of George III. that Mr. Newcome first made his appearance in Cheapside; having made his entry into London on a waggon, which landed him and some bales of cloth, all his fortune, in Bishopsgate Street; though if it could be proved that the Normans wore pigtails under William the Conqueror, and Mr. Washington fought against the English under King Richard in Palestine, I am sure some of the present Newcomes would pay the Heralds' Office handsomely, living, as they do, amongst the noblest of the land, and giving entertainments to none but the very highest nobility and elite of the fashionable and diplomatic world, as you may read any day in the newspapers. For though these Newcomes have got a pedigree from the College, which is printed in Budge's Landed Aristocracy of Great Britain, and which proves that the Newcome of Cromwell's army, the Newcome who was among the last six who were hanged by Queen Mary for Protestantism, were ancestors of this house; of which a member distinguished himself at Bosworth Field; and the founder, slain by King Harold's side at Hastings, had been surgeon-barber to King Edward the Confessor; yet, between ourselves, I think that Sir Brian Newcome, of Newcome, does not believe a word of the story, any more than the rest of the world does, although a number of his children bear names out of the Saxon Calendar.

Was Thomas Newcome a foundling — a workhouse child out of that village which has now become a great manufacturing town, and which bears his name? Such was the report set about at the last election, when Sir Brian, in the Conservative interest contested the borough; and Mr. Yapp, the out-and-out Liberal candidate, had a picture of the old workhouse placarded over the town as the birthplace of the Newcomes; with placards ironically exciting freemen to vote for Newcome and union — Newcome and the parish interests, etc. Who cares for these local scandals? It matters very little to those who have the good fortune to be invited to Lady Ann Newcome's parties whether her beautiful daughters can trace their pedigrees no higher than to the alderman their grandfather; or whether, through the mythic ancestral barber-surgeon, they hang on to the chin of Edward, Confessor and King.

Thomas Newcome, who had been a weaver in his native village, brought the very best character for honesty, thrift, and ingenuity with him to London, where he was taken into the house of Hobson Brothers, cloth-factors; afterwards Hobson and Newcome. This fact may suffice to indicate Thomas Newcome's story. Like Whittington and many other London apprentices, he began poor and ended by marrying his master's daughter, and becoming sheriff and alderman of the City of London.

But it was only en secondes nocces that he espoused the wealthy, and religious, and eminent (such was the word applied to certain professing Christians in those days) Sophia Alethea Hobson — a woman who, considerably older than Mr. Newcome, had the advantage of surviving him many years. Her mansion at Clapham was long the resort of the most favoured amongst the religious world. The most eloquent expounders; the most gifted missionaries, the most interesting converts from foreign islands, were to be found at her sumptuous table, spread with the produce of her magnificent gardens. Heaven indeed blessed those gardens with plenty, as many reverend gentlemen remarked; there were no finer grapes, peaches, or pineapples in all England. Mr. Whitfield himself christened her; and it was said generally in the City, and by her friends, that Miss Hobson's two Christian names, Sophia and Alethea, were two Greek words, which, being interpreted, meant wisdom and truth. She, her villa and gardens, are now no more; but Sophia Terrace, Upper and Lower Alethea Road, and Hobson's Buildings, Square, etc., show every quarter-day that the ground sacred to her (and freehold) still bears plenteous fruit for the descendants of this eminent woman.

We are, however, advancing matters. When Thomas Newcome had been some time in London, he quitted the house of Hobson, finding an opening, though in a much smaller way, for himself. And no sooner did his business prosper, than he went down into the north, like a man, to a pretty girl whom he had left there, and whom he had promised to marry. What seemed an imprudent match (for his wife had nothing but a pale face, that had grown older and paler with long waiting) turned out a very lucky one for Newcome. The whole countryside was pleased to think of the prosperous London tradesman returning to keep his promise to the penniless girl whom he had loved in the days of his own poverty; the great country clothiers, who knew his prudence and honesty, gave him much of their business when he went back to London. Susan Newcome would have lived to be a rich woman had not fate ended her career within a year after her marriage, when she died giving birth to a son.

Newcome had a nurse for the child, and a cottage at Clapham, hard by Mr. Hobson's house, where he had often walked in the garden of a Sunday, and been invited to sit down to take a glass of wine. Since he had left their service, the house had added a banking business, which was greatly helped by the Quakers and their religious connection; and Newcome, keeping his account there, and gradually increasing his business, was held in very good esteem by his former employers, and invited sometimes to tea at the Hermitage; for which entertainments he did not, in truth, much care at first, being a City man, a good deal tired with his business during the day, and apt to go to sleep over the sermons, expoundings, and hymns, with which the gifted preachers, missionaries, etc., who were always at the Hermitage, used to wind up the evening, before supper. Nor was he a supping man (in which case he would have found the parties pleasanter, for in Egypt itself there were not more savoury fleshpots than at Clapham); he was very moderate in his meals, of a bilious temperament, and, besides, obliged to be in town early in the morning, always setting off to walk an hour before the first coach.

But when his poor Susan died, Miss Hobson, by her father's demise, having now become a partner in the house, as well as heiress to the pious and childless Zachariah Hobson, her uncle Mr. Newcome, with his little boy in his hand, met Miss Hobson as she was coming out of meeting one Sunday; and the child looked so pretty (Mr. N. was a very personable, fresh-coloured man himself; he wore powder to the end, and top-boots and brass buttons, in his later days, after he had been sheriff indeed, one of the finest specimens of the old London merchant); Miss Hobson, I say, invited him and little Tommy into the grounds of the Hermitage; did not quarrel with the innocent child for frisking about in the hay on the lawn, which lay basking in the Sabbath sunshine, and at the end of the visit gave him a large piece of pound-cake, a quantity of the finest hothouse grapes, and a tract in one syllable. Tommy was ill the next day; but on the next Sunday his father was at meeting.

He became very soon after this an awakened man; and the tittling and tattling, and the sneering and gossiping, all over Clapham, and the talk on 'Change, and the pokes in the waistcoat administered by the wags to Newcome — "Newcome, give you joy, my boy;" "Newcome, new partner in Hobson's;" "Newcome, just take in this paper to Hobson's, they'll do it, I warrant," etc. etc.; and the groans of the Rev. Gideon Bawls, of the Rev. Athanasius O'Grady, that eminent convert from Popery, who, quarrelling with each other, yea, striving one against another, had yet two sentiments in common, their love for Miss Hobson, their dread, their hatred of the worldly Newcome; all these squabbles and jokes, and pribbles and prabbles, look you, may be omitted. As gallantly as he had married a woman without a penny, as gallantly as he had conquered his poverty and achieved his own independence, so bravely he went in and won the great City prize with a fortune of a quarter of a million. And every one of his old friends, and every honest-hearted fellow who likes to see shrewdness, and honesty, and courage succeed, was glad of his good fortune, and said, "Newcome, my boy" (or "Newcome, my buck," if they were old City cronies, and very familiar), "I give you joy."

Of course Mr. Newcome might have gone into Parliament: of course before the close of his life he might have been made a baronet: but he eschewed honours senatorial or blood-red hands. "It wouldn't do," with his good sense he said; "the Quaker connection wouldn't like it." His wife never cared about being called Lady Newcome. To manage the great house of Hobson Brothers and Newcome; to attend to the interests of the enslaved negro; to awaken the benighted Hottentot to a sense of the truth; to convert Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Papists; to arouse the indifferent and often blasphemous mariner; to guide the washerwoman in the right way; to head all the public charities of her sect, and do a thousand secret kindnesses that none knew of; to answer myriads of letters, pension endless ministers, and supply their teeming wives with continuous baby-linen; to hear preachers daily bawling for hours, and listen untired on her knees after a long day's labour, while florid rhapsodists belaboured cushions above her with wearisome benedictions; all these things had this woman to do, and for near fourscore years she fought her fight womanfully: imperious but deserving to rule, hard

but doing her duty, severe but charitable, and untiring in generosity as in labour; unforgiving in one instance — in that of her husband's eldest son, Thomas Newcome; the little boy who had played on the hay, and whom at first she had loved very sternly and fondly.

Mr. Thomas Newcome, the father of his wife's twin boys, the junior partner of the house of Hobson Brothers and Co., lived several years after winning the great prize about which all his friends so congratulated him. But he was, after all, only the junior partner of the house. His wife was manager in Threadneedle Street and at home — when the clerical gentlemen prayed they importuned Heaven for that sainted woman a long time before they thought of asking any favour for her husband. The gardeners touched their hats, the clerks at the bank brought him the books, but they took their orders from her, not from him. I think he grew weary of the prayer-meetings, he yawned over the sufferings of the negroes, and wished the converted Jews at Jericho. About the time the French Emperor was meeting with his Russian reverses Mr. Newcome died: his mausoleum is in Clapham Churchyard, near the modest grave where his first wife reposes.

When his father married, Mr. Thomas Newcome, jun., and Sarah his nurse were transported from the cottage where they had lived in great comfort to the palace hard by, surrounded by lawns and gardens, pineries, graperies, aviaries, luxuries of all kinds. This paradise, five miles from the Standard at Cornhill, was separated from the outer world by a thick hedge of tall trees, and an ivy-covered porter's-gate, through which they who travelled to London on the top of the Clapham coach could only get a glimpse of the bliss within. It was a serious paradise. As you entered at the gate, gravity fell on you; and decorum wrapped you in a garment of starch. The butcher-boy who galloped his horse and cart madly about the adjoining lanes and common, whistled wild melodies (caught up in abominable playhouse galleries), and joked with a hundred cook-maids, on passing that lodge fell into an undertaker's pace, and delivered his joints and sweetbreads silently at the servants' entrance. The rooks in the elms cawed sermons at morning and evening; the peacocks walked demurely on the terraces; the guinea-fowls looked more Quaker-like than those savoury birds usually do. The lodge-keeper was serious, and a clerk at a neighbouring chapel. The pastors who entered at the gate, and greeted his comely wife and children, fed the little lambkins with tracts. The head-gardener was a Scotch Calvinist, after the strictest order, only occupying himself with the melons and pines provisionally, and until the end of the world, which event, he could prove by infallible calculations, was to come off in two or three years at farthest. Wherefore, he asked, should the butler brew strong ale to be drunken three years hence; or the housekeeper (a follower of Joanna Southcote) make provisions of fine linen and lay up stores of jams? On a Sunday (which good old Saxon word was scarcely known at the Hermitage) the household marched away in separate couples or groups to at least half a dozen of religious edifices, each to sit under his or her favourite minister, the only man who went to church being Thomas Newcome, accompanied by Tommy his little son, and Sarah his nurse, who was, I believe, also his aunt, or at least his mother's first cousin. Tommy was taught hymns, very soon after he could speak, appropriate to his tender age, pointing out to him the inevitable fate of wicked children, and giving him the earliest possible warning and description of the punishment of little sinners. He repeated these poems to his stepmother after dinner, before a great shining mahogany table, covered with grapes, pineapples, plum-cake, port wine, and Madeira, and surrounded by stout men in black, with baggy white neckcloths, who took the little man between their knees, and questioned him as to his right understanding of the place whither naughty boys were bound. They patted his head with their fat hands if he said well, or rebuked him if he was bold, as he often was.

Nurse Sarah or Aunt Sarah would have died had she remained many years in that stifling garden of Eden. She could not bear to part from the child whom her mistress and kinswoman had confided to her (the women had worked in the same room at Newcome's, and loved each other always, when Susan became a merchant's lady, and Sarah her servant). She was nobody in the pompous new household but Master Tommy's nurse. The honest soul never mentioned her relationship to the boy's mother, nor indeed did Mr. Newcome acquaint his new family with that circumstance. The housekeeper called her an Erastian: Mrs. Newcome's own serious maid informed against her for telling Tommy stories of Lancashire witches, and believing in the same. The black footman (madam's maid and the butler were of course privately united) persecuted her with his addresses, and was even encouraged by his mistress, who thought of sending him as a missionary to the Niger. No little love, and fidelity, and constancy did honest Sarah show and use during the years she passed at the Hermitage, and until Tommy went to school. Her master, with many private prayers and entreaties, in which he passionately recalled his former wife's memory and affection, implored his friend to stay with him; and Tommy's fondness for her and artless caresses, and the scrapes he got into, and the howls he uttered over the hymns and catechisms which he was bidden to learn (by Rev. T. Clack,, of Highbury College, his daily tutor, who was commissioned to spare not

the rod, neither to spoil the child), all these causes induced Sarah to remain with her young master until such time as he was sent to school.

Meanwhile an event of prodigious importance, a wonderment, a blessing and a delight, had happened at the Hermitage. About two years after Mrs. Newcome's marriage, the lady being then forty-three years of age, no less than two little cherubs appeared in the Clapham Paradise — the twins, Hobson Newcome and Brian Newcome, called after their uncle and late grandfather, whose name and rank they were destined to perpetuate. And now there was no reason why young Newcome should not go to school. Old Mr. Hobson and his brother had been educated at that school of Grey Friars, of which mention has been made in former works and to Grey Friars Thomas Newcome was accordingly sent, exchanging — O ye Gods! with what delight! — the splendour of Clapham for the rough, plentiful fare of the place, blacking his master's shoes with perfect readiness, till he rose in the school, and the time came when he should have a fag of his own: tibbing out and receiving the penalty therefore: bartering a black eye, per bearer, against a bloody nose drawn at sight, with a schoolfellow, and shaking hands the next day; playing at cricket, hockey, prisoners' base, and football, according to the season; and gorging himself and friends with tarts when he had money (and of this he had plenty) to spend. I have seen his name carved upon the Gown Boys' arch: but he was at school long before my time; his son showed me the name when we were boys together, in some year when George the Fourth was king.

The pleasures of this school-life were such to Tommy Newcome, that he did not care to go home for a holiday: and indeed, by insubordination and boisterousness; by playing tricks and breaking windows; by marauding upon the gardener's peaches and the housekeeper's jam; by upsetting his two little brothers in a go-cart (of which wanton and careless injury the present Baronet's nose bears marks to this very day); by going to sleep during the sermons, and treating reverend gentlemen with levity, he drew down on himself the merited wrath of his stepmother; and many punishments in this present life, besides those of a future and much more durable kind, which the good lady did not fail to point out that he must undoubtedly inherit. His father, at Mrs. Newcome's instigation, certainly whipped Tommy for upsetting his little brothers in the go-cart; but upon being pressed to repeat the whipping for some other peccadillo performed soon after, Mr. Newcome refused at once, using a wicked, worldly expression, which well might shock any serious lady; saying, in fact, that he would be deed if he beat the boy any more, and that he got flogging enough at school, in which opinion Master Tommy fully coincided.

The undaunted woman, his stepmother, was not to be made to forgo her plans for the boy's reform by any such vulgar ribaldries; and Mr. Newcome being absent in the City on his business, and Tommy refractory as usual, she summoned the serious butler and the black footman (for the lashings of whose brethren she felt an unaffected pity) to operate together in the chastisement of this young criminal. But he dashed so furiously against the butler's shins as to draw blood from his comely limbs, and to cause that serious and overfed menial to limp and suffer for many days after; and, seizing the decanter, he swore he would demolish blacky's ugly face with it: nay, he threatened to discharge it at Mrs. Newcome's own head before he would submit to the coercion which she desired her agents to administer.

High words took place between Mr. and Mrs. Newcome that night on the gentleman's return home from the City, and on his learning the events of the morning. It is to be feared he made use of further oaths, which hasty ejaculations need not be set down in this place; at any rate, he behaved with spirit and manliness as master of the house, vowed that if any servant laid a hand on the child, he would thrash him first and then discharge him; and I dare say expressed himself with bitterness and regret that he had married a wife who would not be obedient to her husband, and had entered a house of which he was not suffered to be the master. Friends were called in-the interference, the supplications, of the Clapham clergy, some of whom dined constantly at the Hermitage, prevailed to allay this domestic quarrel; and no doubt the good sense of Mrs. Newcome — who, though imperious, was yet not unkind; and who, excellent as she was, yet could be brought to own that she was sometimes in fault — induced her to make at least a temporary submission to the man whom she had placed at the head of her house, and whom it must be confessed she had vowed to love and honour. When Tommy fell ill of the scarlet fever, which afflicting event occurred presently after the above dispute, his own nurse, Sarah, could not have been more tender, watchful, and affectionate than his stepmother showed herself to be. She nursed him through his illness; allowed his food and medicine to be administered by no other hand; sat up with the boy through a night of his fever, and uttered not one single reproach to her husband (who watched with her) when the twins took the disease (from which we need not say they happily recovered); and though young Tommy, in his temporary delirium, mistaking her for Nurse Sarah, addressed her as his dear Fat Sally — whereas no whipping-post to which she ever would have tied him could

have been leaner than Mrs. Newcome — and, under this feverish delusion, actually abused her to her face; calling her an old cat, an old Methodist, and, jumping up in his little bed, forgetful of his previous fancy, vowing that he would put on his clothes and run away to Sally. Sally was at her northern home by this time, with a liberal pension which Mr. Newcome gave her, and which his son and his son's son after him, through all their difficulties and distresses, always found means to pay.

What the boy threatened in his delirium he had thought of, no doubt, more than once in his solitary and unhappy holidays. A year after he actually ran away, not from school, but from home; and appeared one morning, gaunt and hungry, at Sarah's cottage two hundred miles away from Clapham, who housed the poor prodigal, and killed her calf for him — washed him, with many tears and kisses, and put him to bed and to sleep; from which slumber he was aroused by the appearance of his father, whose sure instinct, backed by Mrs. Newcome's own quick intelligence, had made him at once aware whither the young runaway had fled. The poor father came horsewhip in hand — he knew of no other law or means to maintain his authority; many and many a time had his own father, the old weaver, whose memory he loved and honoured, strapped and beaten him. Seeing this instrument in the parent's hand, as Mr. Newcome thrust out the weeping trembling Sarah and closed the door upon her, Tommy, scared out of a sweet sleep and a delightful dream of cricket, knew his fate; and, getting up out of bed, received his punishment without a word. Very likely the father suffered more than the child; for when the punishment was over, the little man, yet trembling and quivering with the pain, held out his little bleeding hand and said, "I can — I can take it from you, sir;" saying which his face flushed, and his eyes filled, for the first time; whereupon the father burst into a passion of tears, and embraced the boy and kissed him, besought and prayed him to be rebellious no more — flung the whip away from him and swore, come what would, he would never strike him again. The quarrel was the means of a great and happy reconciliation. The three dined together in Sarah's cottage. Perhaps the father would have liked to walk that evening in the lanes and fields where he had wandered as a young fellow: where he had first courted and first kissed the young girl he loved — poor child — who had waited for him so faithfully and fondly, who had passed so many a day of patient want and meek expectance, to be repaid by such a scant holiday and brief fruition.

Mrs. Newcome never made the slightest allusion to Tom's absence after his return, but was quite gentle and affectionate with him, and that night read the parable of the Prodigal in a very low and quiet voice.

This, however, was only a temporary truce. War very soon broke out again between the impetuous lad and his rigid domineering mother-in-law. It was not that he was very bad, or she perhaps more stern than other ladies, but the two could not agree. The boy sulked and was miserable at home. He fell to drinking with the grooms in the stables. I think he went to Epsom races, and was discovered after that act of rebellion. Driving from a most interesting breakfast at Roehampton (where a delightful Hebrew convert had spoken, oh! so graciously!), Mrs. Newcome — in her state-carriage, with her bay horses — met Tom, her son-in-law, in a tax-cart, excited by drink, and accompanied by all sorts of friends, male and female. John the black man was bidden to descend from the carriage and bring him to Mrs. Newcome. He came; his voice was thick with drink. He laughed wildly: he described a fight at which he had been present. It was not possible that such a castaway as this should continue in a house where her two little cherubs were growing up in innocence and grace.

The boy had a great fancy for India; and Orme's History, containing the exploits of Clive and Lawrence, was his favourite book of all in his father's library. Being offered a writership, he scouted the idea of a civil appointment, and would be contented with nothing but a uniform. A cavalry cadetship was procured for Thomas Newcome; and the young man's future career being thus determined, and his stepmother's unwilling consent procured, Mr. Newcome thought fit to send his son to a tutor for military instruction, and removed him from the London school, where in truth he had made but very little progress in the humaner letters. The lad was placed with a professor who prepared young men for the army, and received rather a better professional education than fell to the lot of most young soldiers of his day. He cultivated the mathematics and fortification with more assiduity than he had ever bestowed on Greek and Latin, and especially made such a progress in the French tongue as was very uncommon among the British youth his contemporaries.

In the study of this agreeable language, over which young Newcome spent a great deal of his time, he unluckily had some instructors who were destined to bring the poor lad into yet further trouble at home. His tutor, an easy gentleman, lived at Blackheath, and, not far from thence, on the road to Woolwich, dwelt the little Chevalier de Blois, at whose house the young man much preferred to take his French lessons rather than to receive them under his tutor's own roof.

For the fact was that the little Chevalier de Blois had two pretty young daughters, with whom he had fled from his country along with thousands of French gentlemen at the period of revolution and emigration. He was a cadet of a very

ancient family, and his brother, the Marquis de Blois, was a fugitive like himself, but with the army of the princes on the Rhine, or with his exiled sovereign at Mittau. The Chevalier had seen the wars of the great Frederick: what man could be found better to teach young Newcome the French language and the art military? It was surprising with what assiduity he pursued his studies. Mademoiselle Leonore, the Chevalier's daughter, would carry on her little industry very undisturbedly in the same parlour with her father and his pupil. She painted card-racks: laboured at embroidery; was ready to employ her quick little brain or fingers in any way by which she could find means to add a few shillings to the scanty store on which this exiled family supported themselves in their day of misfortune. I suppose the Chevalier was not in the least unquiet about her, because she was promised in marriage to the Comte de Florac, also of the emigration — a distinguished officer like the Chevalier, than whom he was a year older — and, at the time of which we speak, engaged in London in giving private lessons on the fiddle. Sometimes on a Sunday he would walk to Blackheath with that instrument in his hand, and pay his court to his young fiancée, and talk over happier days with his old companion-inarms. Tom Newcome took no French lessons on a Sunday. He passed that day at Clapham generally, where, strange to say, he never said a word about Mademoiselle de Blois.

What happens when two young folks of eighteen, handsome and ardent, generous and impetuous, alone in the world, or without strong affections to bind them elsewhere — what happens when they meet daily over French dictionaries, embroidery frames, or indeed upon any business whatever? No doubt Mademoiselle Leonore was a young lady perfectly bien élevée, and ready, as every well-elevated young Frenchwoman should be, to accept a husband of her parents' choosing; but while the elderly M. de Florac was fiddling in London, there was that handsome young Tom Newcome ever present at Blackheath. To make a long matter short, Tom declared his passion, and was for marrying Leonore off hand, if she would but come with him to the little Catholic chapel at Woolwich. Why should they not go out to India together and be happy ever after?

The innocent little amour may have been several months in transaction, and was discovered by Mrs. Newcome, whose keen spectacles nothing could escape. It chanced that she drove to Blackheath to Tom's tutor's. Tom was absent taking his French and drawing lesson of M. de Blois. Thither Tom's stepmother followed him, and found the young man sure enough with his instructor over his books and plans of fortification. Mademoiselle and her card-screens were in the room, but behind those screens she could not hide her blushes and confusion from Mrs. Newcome's sharp glances. In one moment the banker's wife saw the whole affair — the whole mystery which had been passing for months under poor M. de Blois' nose, without his having the least notion of the truth.

Mrs. Newcome said she wanted her son to return home with her upon private affairs; and before they had reached the Hermitage a fine battle had ensued between them. His mother had charged him with being a wretch and a monster, and he had replied fiercely, denying the accusation with scorn, and announcing his wish instantly to marry the most virtuous, the most beautiful of her sex. To marry a Papist! This was all that was wanted to make poor Tom's cup of bitterness run over. Mr. Newcome was called in, and the two elders passed a great part of the night in an assault upon the lad. He was grown too tall for the cane; but Mrs. Newcome thronged him with the lash of her indignation for many an hour that evening.

He was forbidden to enter, M. de Blois' house, a prohibition at which the spirited young fellow snapped his fingers, and laughed in scorn. Nothing, he swore, but death should part him from the young lady. On the next day his father came to him alone and plied him with entreaties, but he was as obdurate as before. He would have her; nothing should prevent him. He cocked his hat and walked out of the lodge-gate, as his father, quite beaten by the young man's obstinacy, with haggard face and tearful eyes, went his own way into town. He was not very angry himself: in the course of their talk overnight the boy had spoken bravely and honestly, and Newcome could remember how, in his own early life, he too had courted and loved a young lass. It was Mrs. Newcome the father was afraid of. Who shall depict her wrath at the idea that a child of her house was about to marry a Popish girl?

So young Newcome went his way to Blackheath, bent upon falling straightway down upon his knees before Leonore, and having the Chevalier's blessing. That old fiddler in London scarcely seemed to him to be an obstacle: it seemed monstrous that a young creature should be given away to a man older than her own father. He did not know the law of honour, as it obtained amongst French gentlemen of those days, or how religiously their daughters were bound by it.

But Mrs. Newcome had been beforehand with him, and had visited the Chevalier de Blois almost at cockcrow. She charged him insolently with being privy to the attachment between the young people; pursued him with vulgar rebukes about beggary, Popery, and French adventurers. Her husband had to make a very contrite apology afterwards for the

language which his wife had thought fit to employ. "You forbid me," said the Chevalier, "you forbid Mademoiselle de Blois to marry your son, Mr. Thomas! No, madam, she comes of a race which is not accustomed to ally itself with persons of your class; and is promised to a gentleman whose ancestors were dukes and peers when Mr. Newcome's were blacking shoes!" Instead of finding his pretty blushing girl on arriving at Woolwich, poor Tom only found his French master, livid with rage and quivering under his ailes de pigeon. We pass over the scenes that followed; the young man's passionate entreaties, and fury and despair. In his own defence, and to prove his honour to the world, M. de Blois determined that his daughter should instantly marry the Count. The poor girl yielded without a word, as became her; and it was with this marriage effected almost before his eyes, and frantic with wrath and despair, that young Newcome embarked for India, and quitted the parents whom he was never more to see.

Tom's name was no more mentioned at Clapham. His letters to his father were written to the City; very pleasant they were, and comforting to the father's heart. He sent Tom liberal private remittances to India, until the boy wrote to say that he wanted no more. Mr. Newcome would have liked to leave Tom all his private fortune, for the twins were only too well cared for; but he dared not on account of his terror of Sophia Alethea, his wife; and he died, and poor Tom was only secretly forgiven.



CHAPTER III

COLONEL NEWCOME'S LETTER-BOX

I

“With the most heartfelt joy, my dear Major, I take up my pen to announce to you the happy arrival of the Ramchunder, and the dearest and handsomest little boy who, I am sure, ever came from India. Little Clive is in perfect health. He speaks English wonderfully well. He cried when he parted from Mr. Sneid, the supercargo, who most kindly brought him from Southampton in a postchaise, but these tears in childhood are of very brief duration! The voyage, Mr. Sneid states, was most favourable, occupying only four months and eleven days. How different from that more lengthened and dangerous passage of eight months, and almost perpetual sea-sickness, in which my poor dear sister Emma went to Bengal, to become the wife of the best of husbands and the mother of the dearest of little boys, and to enjoy these inestimable blessings for so brief an interval! She has quitted this wicked and wretched world for one where all is peace. The misery and ill-treatment which she endured from Captain Case her first odious husband, were, I am sure, amply repaid, my dear Colonel, by your subsequent affection. If the most sumptuous dresses which London, even Paris, could supply, jewellery the most costly, and elegant lace, and everything lovely and fashionable, could content a woman, these, I am sure, during the last four years of her life, the poor girl had. Of what avail are they when this scene of vanity is closed?

“Mr. Sneid announces that the passage was most favourable. They stayed a week at the Cape, and three days at St. Helena, where they visited Bonaparte's tomb (another instance of the vanity of all things!), and their voyage was enlivened off Ascension by the taking of some delicious turtle!

“You may be sure that the most liberal sum which you have placed to my credit with the Messrs. Hobson and Co. shall be faithfully expended on my dear little charge. Mrs. Newcome can scarcely be called his grandmamma, I suppose; and I daresay her Methodistical ladyship will not care to see the daughter and grandson of a clergyman of the Church of England! My brother Charles took leave to wait upon her when he presented your last most generous bill at the bank. She received him most rudely, and said a fool and his money are soon parted; and when Charles said, ‘Madam, I am the brother of the late Mrs. Major Newcome,’ ‘Sir,’ says she, ‘I judge nobody; but from all accounts, you are the brother of a very vain, idle, thoughtless, extravagant woman; and Thomas Newcome was as foolish about his wife as about his money.’ Of course, unless Mrs. N. writes to invite dear Clive, I shall not think of sending him to Clapham.

“It is such hot weather that I cannot wear the beautiful shawl you have sent me, and shall keep it in lavender till next winter! My brother, who thanks you for your continuous bounty, will write next month, and report progress as to his dear pupil. Clive will add a postscript of his own, and I am, my dear Major, with a thousand thanks for your kindness to me, — Your grateful and affectionate Martha Honeyman.”

In a round hand and on lines ruled with pencil:—

“Dearest Papa i am very well i hope you are Very Well. M Sneed brought me in a postchaise i like Mr. Sneed very much. i like Aunt Martha i like Hannah. There are no ships here i am your affectionate son Clive Newcome.”

II

Rue St. Dominique, St. Germain, Paris,

Nov. 15, 1820,

“Long separated from the country which was the home of my youth, I carried from her tender recollections, and bear her always a lively gratitude. The Heaven has placed me in a position very different from that in which I knew you. I have been the mother of many children. My husband has recovered a portion of the property which the Revolution tore from us; and France, in returning to its legitimate sovereign, received once more the nobility which accompanied his august house into exile. We, however, preceded His Majesty, more happy than many of our companions. Believing further resistance to

be useless; dazzled, perhaps, by the brilliancy of that genius which restored order, submitted Europe, and governed France; M. de Florac, in the first days, was reconciled to the Conqueror of Marengo and Austerlitz, and held a position in his Imperial Court. This submission, at first attributed to infidelity, has subsequently been pardoned to my husband. His sufferings during the Hundred Days made to pardon his adhesion to him who was Emperor. My husband is now an old man. He was of the disastrous campaign of Moscow, as one of the chamberlains of Napoleon. Withdrawn from the world, he gives his time to his feeble health — to his family — to Heaven.

“I have not forgotten a time before those days, when, according to promises given by my father, I became the wife of M. de Florac. Sometimes I have heard of your career. One of my parents, M. de F., who took service in the English India, has entertained me of you; he informed me how yet a young man you won laurels at Argom and Bhartpour; how you escaped to death at Laswari. I have followed them, sir, on the map. I have taken part in your victories and your glory. Ah! I am not so cold, but my heart has trembled for your dangers; not so aged, but I remember the young man who learned from the pupil of Frederick the first rudiments of war. Your great heart, your love of truth, your courage were your own. None had to teach you those qualities, of which a good God had endowed you, My good father is dead since many years. He, too, was permitted to see France before to die.

“I have read in the English journals not only that you are married, but that you have a son. Permit me to send to your wife, to your child, these accompanying tokens of an old friendship. I have seen that Mistress Newcome was widow, and am not sorry of it. My friend, I hope there was not that difference of age between your wife and you that I have known in other unions. I pray the good God to bless yours. I hold you always in my memory. As I write, the past comes back to me. I see a noble young man, who has a soft voice, and brown eyes. I see the Thames, and the smiling plains of Blackheath. I listen and pray at my chamber-door as my father talks to you in our little cabinet of studies. I look from my window, and see you depart.

“My son’s are men: one follows the profession of arms, one has embraced the ecclesiastical state; my daughter is herself a mother. I remember this was your birthday; I have made myself a little fete in celebrating it, after how many years of absence, of silence! Comtesse De Florac.

(Nee L. de Blois.)”

III

“My Dear Thomas — Mr. Sneid, supercargo of the Ramchunder, East Indiaman, handed over to us yesterday your letter, and, today, I have purchased three thousand three hundred and twenty-three pounds 6 and 8d. three per cent Consols, in our joint names (H. and B. Newcome), held for your little boy. Mr. S. gives a very favourable account of the little man, and left him in perfect health two days since, at the house of his aunt, Miss Honeyman. We have placed 200 pounds to that lady’s credit, at your desire.

“Lady Anne is charmed with the present which she received yesterday, and says the white shawl is a great deal too handsome. My mother is also greatly pleased with hers, and has forwarded, by the coach to Brighton, today, a packet of books, tracts, etc., suited for his tender age, for your little boy. She heard of you lately from the Rev. T. Sweatenham on his return from India. He spoke of your kindness — and of the hospitable manner in which you had received him at your house, and alluded to you in a very handsome way in the course of the thanksgiving that evening. I dare say my mother will ask your little boy to the Hermitage; and when we have a house of our own, I am sure Anne and I will be very happy to see him. Yours affectionately, Major Newcome. B. Newcome.”

IV

“My Dear Colonel — Did I not know the generosity of your heart, and the bountiful means which Heaven has put at your disposal in order to gratify that noble disposition; were I not certain that the small sum I required will permanently place me beyond the reach of the difficulties of life, and will infallibly be repaid before six months are over, believe me I never would have ventured upon that bold step which our friendship (carried on epistolarily as it has been), our relationship, and

your admirable disposition, have induced me to venture to take.

“That elegant and commodious chapel, known as Lady Whittlesea’s, Denmark Street, Mayfair, being for sale, I have determined on venturing my all in its acquisition, and in laying, as I hope, the foundation of a competence for myself and excellent sister. What is a lodging-house at Brighton but an uncertain maintenance? The mariner on the sea before those cliffs is no more sure of wind and wave, or of fish to his laborious net, than the Brighton house-owner (bred in affluence she may have been, and used to unremitting plenty) to the support of the casual travellers who visit the city. On one day they come in shoals, it is true, but where are they on the next? For many months my poor sister’s first floor was a desert, until occupied by your noble little boy, my nephew and pupil. Clive is everything that a father’s, an uncle’s (who loves him as a father), a pastor’s, a teacher’s affections could desire. He is not one of those premature geniuses whose much-vaunted infantine talents disappear along with adolescence; he is not, I frankly own, more advanced in his classical and mathematical studies than some children even younger than himself; but he has acquired the rudiments of health; he has laid in a store of honesty and good-humour, which are not less likely to advance him in life than mere science and language, than the as in praesenti, or the pons asinorum.

“But I forget, in thinking of my dear little friend and pupil, the subject of this letter — namely, the acquisition of the proprietary chapel to which I have alluded, and the hopes, nay, certainty of a fortune, if aught below is certain, which that acquisition holds out. What is a curacy, but a synonym for starvation? If we accuse the Eremites of old of wasting their lives in unprofitable wildernesses, what shall we say to many a hermit of Protestant, and so-called civilised times, who hides his head in a solitude in Yorkshire, and buries his probably fine talents in a Lincolnshire fen? Have I genius? Am I blessed with gifts of eloquence to thrill and soothe, to arouse the sluggish, to terrify the sinful, to cheer and convince the timid, to lead the blind groping in darkness, and to trample the audacious sceptic in the dust? My own conscience, besides a hundred testimonials from places of popular, most popular worship, from reverend prelates, from distinguished clergy, tells me I have these gifts. A voice within me cries, ‘Go forth, Charles Honeyman, fight the good fight; wipe the tears of the repentant sinner; sing of hope to the agonised criminal; whisper courage, brother, courage, at the ghastly deathbed, and strike down the infidel with the lance of evidence and the shield of reason!’ In a pecuniary point of view I am confident, nay, the calculations may be established as irresistibly as an algebraic equation, that I can realise, as incumbent of Lady Whittlesea’s chapel, the sum of not less than one thousand pounds per annum. Such a sum, with economy (and without it what sum were sufficient?), will enable me to provide amply for my wants, to discharge my obligations to you, to my sister, and some other creditors, very, very unlike you, and to place Miss Honeyman in a home more worthy of her than that which she now occupies, only to vacate it at the beck of every passing stranger!

“My sister does not disapprove of my plan, into which enter some modifications which I have not, as yet, submitted to her, being anxious at first that they should be sanctioned by you. From the income of the Whittlesea chapel I propose to allow Miss Honeyman the sum of two hundred pounds per annum, paid quarterly. This, with her private property, which she has kept more thriftily than her unfortunate and confiding brother guarded his (for whenever I had a guinea a tale of distress would melt it into half a sovereign), will enable Miss Honeyman to live in a way becoming my father’s daughter.

“Comforted with this provision as my sister will be, I would suggest that our dearest young Clive should be transferred from her petticoat government, and given up to the care of his affectionate uncle and tutor. His present allowance will most liberally suffice for his expenses, board, lodging, and education while under my roof, and I shall be able to exert a paternal, a pastoral influence over his studies, his conduct, and his highest welfare, which I cannot so conveniently exercise at Brighton, where I am but Miss Honeyman’s stipendiary, and where I often have to submit in cases where I know, for dearest Clive’s own welfare, it is I, and not my sister, should be paramount.

“I have given then to a friend, the Rev. Marcus Flather a draft for two hundred and fifty pounds sterling, drawn upon you at your agent’s in Calcutta, which sum will go in liquidation of dear Clive’s first year’s board with me, or, upon my word of honour as a gentleman and clergyman, shall be paid back at three months after sight, if you will draw upon me. As I never — no, were it my last penny in the world — would dishonour your draft, I implore you, my dear Colonel, not to refuse mine. My credit in this city, where credit is everything, and the awful future so little thought of, my engagements to Mr. Flather, my own prospects in life, and the comfort of my dear sister’s declining years, all — all depend upon this bold, this eventful measure. My ruin or my earthly happiness lies entirely in your hands. Can I doubt which way your kind heart will lead you, and that that you will come to the aid of your affectionate brother-in-law? Charles Honeyman.”

“Our little Clive has been to London on a visit to his uncles and to the Hermitage, Clapham, to pay his duty to his step-

grandmother, the wealthy Mrs. Newcome. I pass over words disparaging of myself which the child in his artless prattles subsequently narrated. She was very gracious to him, and presented him with a five-pound note, a copy of Kirk White's Poems, and a work called Little Henry and his Bearer, relating to India, and the excellent Catechism of our Church. Clive is full of humour, and I enclose you a rude scrap representing the Bishopess of Clapham, as she is called — the other figure is a rude though entertaining sketch of some other droll personage.

“Lieutenant-Colonel Newcome, etc.”

V

“My Dear Colonel; — The Rev. Marcus Flather has just written me a letter at which I am greatly shocked and perplexed, informing me that my brother Charles has given him a draft upon you for two hundred and fifty pounds, when goodness knows it is not you but we who are many, many hundred pounds debtors to you. Charles has explained that he drew the bill at your desire, that you wrote to say you would be glad to serve him in any way, and that the money is wanted to make his fortune. Yet I don't know — poor Charles is always going to make his fortune and has never done it. That school which he bought, and for which you and me between us paid the purchase-money, turned out no good, and the only pupils left at the end of the first half-year were two woolly-headed poor little mulattos, whose father was in gaol at St. Kitt's, and whom I kept actually in my own second-floor back room whilst the lawyers were settling things, and Charles was away in France, and until my dearest little Clive came to live with me.

“Then, as he was too small for a great school, I thought Clive could not do better than stay with his old aunt and have his Uncle Charles for a tutor, who is one of the finest scholars in the world. I wish you could hear him in the pulpit. His delivery is grander and more impressive than any divine now in England. His sermons you have subscribed for, and likewise his book of elegant poems, which are pronounced to be very fine.

“When he returned from Calais, and those horrid lawyers had left off worrying him, I thought as his frame was much shattered and he was too weak to take a curacy, that he could not do better than become Clive's tutor, and agreed to pay him out of your handsome donation of 250 pounds for Clive, a sum of one hundred pounds per year, so that, when the board of the two and Clive's clothing are taken into consideration, I think you will see that no great profit is left to Miss Martha Honeyman.

“Charles talks to me of his new church in London, and of making me some grand allowance. The poor boy is very affectionate, and always building castles in the air, and of having Clive to live with him in London. Now this mustn't be, and I won't hear of it. Charles is too kind to be a schoolmaster, and Master Clive laughs at him. It was only the other day, after his return from his grandmamma's, regarding which I wrote you, per Burrampooter, the 23rd ult., that I found a picture of Mrs. Newcome and Charles too, and of both their spectacles, quite like. I put it away, but some rogue, I suppose, has stolen it. He has done me and Hannah too. Mr. Speck, the artist, laughed and took it home, and says he is a wonder at drawing.

“Instead, then, of allowing Clive to go with Charles to London next month, where my brother is bent on going, I shall send Clivey to Dr. Timpany's school, Marine Parade, of which I hear the best account, but I hope you will think of soon sending him to a great school. My father always said it was the best place for boys, and I have a brother to whom my poor mother spared the rod, and who, I fear, has turned out but a spoilt child.

“I am, dear Colonel, your most faithful servant, Martha Honeyman.”

“Lieutenant-Colonel Newcome, C. B.”

VI

“My Dear Brother — I hasten to inform you of a calamity which, though it might be looked for in the course of nature, has occasioned deep grief not only in our family but in this city. This morning, at half-past four o'clock, our beloved and respected mother, Sophia Alethea Newcome, expired, at the advanced age of eighty-three years. On the night of Tuesday-Wednesday, the 12-13th, having been engaged reading and writing in her library until a late hour, and having dismissed

the servants, whom she never would allow to sit up for her, as well as my brother and his wife, who always are in the habit of retiring early, Mrs. Newcome extinguished the lamps, took a bedchamber candle to return to her room, and must have fallen on the landing, where she was discovered by the maids, sitting with her head reclining against the balustrades, and endeavouring to staunch a wound in her forehead, which was bleeding profusely, having struck in a fall against the stone step of the stair.

“When Mrs. Newcome was found she was speechless, but still sensible, and medical aid being sent for, she was carried to bed. Mr. Newcome and Lady Anne both hurried to her apartment, and she knew them, and took the hands of each, but paralysis had probably ensued in consequence of the shock of the fall; nor was her voice ever heard, except in inarticulate moanings, since the hour on the previous evening when she gave them her blessing and bade them good-night. Thus perished this good and excellent woman, the truest Christian, the most charitable friend to the poor and needful, the head of this great house of business, the best and most affectionate of mothers.

“The contents of her will have long been known to us, and that document was dated one month after our lamented father’s death. Mr. Thomas Newcome’s property being divided equally amongst his three sons, the property of his second wife naturally devolves upon her own issue, my brother Brian and myself. There are very heavy legacies to servants and to charitable and religious institutions, of which, in life, she was the munificent patroness; and I regret, my dear brother, that no memorial to you should have been left by my mother, because she often spoke of you latterly in terms of affection, and on the very day on which she died, commenced a letter to your little boy, which was left unfinished on the library table. My brother said that on that same day, at breakfast, she pointed to a volume of Orme’s Hindostan, the book, she said, which set poor dear Tom wild to go to India, I know you will be pleased to hear of these proofs of returning goodwill and affection in one who often spoke latterly of her early regard for you. I have no more time, under the weight of business which this present affliction entails, than to say that I am yours, dear brother, very sincerely, H. Newcome.”

“Lieutenant-Colonel Newcome, etc.”



CHAPTER IV

IN WHICH THE AUTHOR AND THE HERO RESUME THEIR ACQUAINTANCE

If we are to narrate the youthful history not only of the hero of this tale, but of the hero's father, we shall never have done with nursery biography. A gentleman's grandmother may delight in fond recapitulation of her darling's boyish frolics and early genius; but shall we weary our kind readers by this infantile prattle, and set down the revered British public for an old woman? Only to two or three persons in all the world are the reminiscences of a man's early youth interesting: to the parent who nursed him; to the fond wife or child mayhap afterwards who loves him; to himself always and supremely — whatever may be his actual prosperity or ill-fortune, his present age, illness, difficulties, renown, or disappointments, the dawn of his life still shines brightly for him, the early griefs and delights and attachments remain with him ever faithful and dear. I shall ask leave to say, regarding the juvenile biography of Mr. Clive Newcome, of whose history I am the chronicler, only so much as is sufficient to account for some peculiarities of his character, and for his subsequent career in the world.

Although we were schoolfellows, my acquaintance with young Newcome at the seat of learning where we first met was very brief and casual. He had the advantage of being six years the junior of his present biographer, and such a difference of age between lads at a public school puts intimacy out of the question — a junior ensign being no more familiar with the Commander-in-Chief at the Horse Guards, or a barrister on his first circuit with my Lord Chief Justice on the bench, than the newly breeched infant in the Petties with a senior boy in a tailed coat. As we "knew each other at home," as our school phrase was, and our families being somewhat acquainted, Newcome's maternal uncle, the Rev. Charles Honeyman (the highly gifted preacher, and incumbent of Lady Whittlesea's Chapel, Denmark Street, Mayfair), when he brought the child, after the Christmas vacation of 182-, to the Grey Friars' school, recommended him in a neat complimentary speech to my superintendence and protection. My uncle, Major Pendennis, had for a while a seat in the chapel of this sweet and popular preacher, and professed, as a great number of persons of fashion did, a great admiration for him — an admiration which I shared in my early youth, but which has been modified by maturer judgment.

Mr. Honeyman told me, with an air of deep respect, that his young nephew's father, Colonel Thomas Newcome, C.B., was a most gallant and distinguished officer in the Bengal establishment of the Honourable East India Company; — and that his uncles, the Colonel's half-brothers, were the eminent bankers, heads of the firm of Hobson Brothers and Newcome, Hobson Newcome, Esquire, Bryanstone Square, and Marblehead, Sussex, and Sir Brian Newcome, of Newcome and Park Lane, "whom to name," says Mr. Honeyman, with the fluent eloquence with which he decorated the commonest circumstances of life, "is to designate two of the merchant princes of the wealthiest city the world has ever known; and one, if not two, of the leaders of that aristocracy which rallies round the throne of the most elegant and refined of European sovereigns." I promised Mr. Honeyman to do what I could for the boy; and he proceeded to take leave of his little nephew in my presence in terms equally eloquent, pulling out a long and very slender green purse, from which he extracted the sum of two-and-sixpence, which he presented to the child, who received the money with rather a queer twinkle in his blue eyes.

After that day's school, I met my little protege in the neighbourhood of the pastrycook's, regaling himself with raspberry-tarts. "You must not spend all that money, sir, which your uncle gave you," said I (having perhaps even at that early age a slightly satirical turn), "in tarts and ginger-beer."

The urchin rubbed the raspberry-jam off his mouth, and said, "It don't matter, sir, for I've got lots more."

"How much?" says the Grand Inquisitor: for the formula of interrogation used to be, when a new boy came to the school, "What's your name? Who's your father? and how much money have you got?"

The little fellow pulled such a handful of sovereigns out of his pocket as might have made the tallest scholar feel a pang of envy. "Uncle Hobson," says he, "gave me two; Aunt Hobson gave me one — no, Aunt Hobson gave me thirty shillings; Uncle Newcome gave me three pound; and Aunt Anne gave me one pound five; and Aunt Honeyman sent me ten shillings in a letter. And Ethel wanted to give me a pound, only I wouldn't have it, you know; because Ethel's younger than me, and I have plenty."

"And who is Ethel?" asks the senior boy, smiling at the artless youth's confessions.

"Ethel is my cousin," replies little Newcome; "Aunt Anne's daughter. There's Ethel and Alice, and Aunt Anne wanted the baby to be called Boadicea, only uncle wouldn't; and there's Barnes and Egbert and little Alfred; only he don't count, he's quite a baby you know. Egbert and me was at school at Timpany's; he's going to Eton next half. He's older than me, but I can lick him."

"And how old is Egbert?" asks the smiling senior.

"Egbert's ten, and I'm nine, and Ethel's seven," replies the little chubby-faced hero, digging his hands deep into his trousers' pockets, and jingling all the sovereigns there. I advised him to let me be his banker; and, keeping one out of his many gold pieces, he handed over the others, on which he drew with great liberality till his whole stock was expended. The school hours of the upper and under boys were different at that time; the little fellows coming out of their hall half an hour before the Fifth and Sixth Forms; and many a time I used to find my little blue jacket in waiting, with his honest square face, and white hair, and bright blue eyes, and I knew that he was come to draw on his bank. Ere long one of the pretty blue eyes was shut up, and a fine black one substituted in its place. He had been engaged, it appeared, in a pugilistic encounter with a giant of his own Form, whom he had worsted in the combat. "Didn't I pitch into him, that's all?" says he in the elation of victory; and when I asked whence the quarrel arose, he stoutly informed me that "Wolf minor, his opponent, had been bullying a little boy, and that he (the gigantic Newcome) wouldn't stand it."

So, being called away from the school, I said farewell and God bless you to the brave little man, who remained a while at the Grey Friars, where his career and troubles had only just begun.

Nor did we meet again until I was myself a young man occupying chambers in the Temple, when our rencontre took place in the manner already described.

Poor Costigan's outrageous behaviour had caused my meeting with my schoolfellow of early days to terminate so abruptly and unpleasantly, that I scarce expected to see Clive again, or at any rate to renew my acquaintance with the indignant East Indian warrior who had quitted our company in such a huff. Breakfast, however, was scarcely over in my chambers the next morning, when there came a knock at the outer door, and my clerk introduced "Colonel Newcome and Mr. Newcome."

Perhaps the (joint) occupant of the chambers in Lamb Court, Temple, felt a little pang of shame at hearing the name of the visitors; for, if the truth must be told, I was engaged pretty much as I had been occupied on the night previous, and was smoking a cigar over the Times newspaper. How many young men in the Temple smoke a cigar after breakfast as they read the Times? My friend and companion of those days, and all days, Mr. George Warrington, was employed with his short pipe, and was not in the least disconcerted at the appearance of the visitors, as he would not have been had the Archbishop of Canterbury stepped in.

Little Clive looked curiously about our queer premises, while the Colonel shook me cordially by the hand. No traces of yesterday's wrath were visible on his face, but a friendly smile lighted his bronzed countenance, as he too looked round the old room with its dingy curtains and prints and bookcases, its litter of proof-sheets, blotted manuscripts, and books for review, empty soda-water bottles, cigar-boxes, and what not.

"I went off in a flame of fire last night," says the Colonel, "and being cooled this morning, thought it but my duty to call on Mr. Pendennis and apologise for my abrupt behaviour. The conduct of that tipsy old Captain — what is his name? — was so abominable, that I could not bear that Clive should be any longer in the same room with him, and I went off without saying a word of thanks or good-night to my son's old friend. I owe you a shake of the hand for last night, Mr. Pendennis." And, so saying, he was kind enough to give me his hand a second time.

"And this is the abode of the Muses, is it, sir?" our guest went on. "I know your writings very well. Clive here used to send me the Pall Mall Gazette every month."

"We took it at Smiffle, regular," says Clive. "Always patronise Grey Friars men." "Smiffle," it must be explained, is a fond abbreviation for Smithfield, near to which great mart of mutton and oxen our school is situated, and old Cistercians often playfully designate their place of education by the name of the neighbouring market.

"Clive sent me the Gazette every month; and I read your romance of Walter Lorraine in my boat as I was coming down the river to Calcutta."

"Have Pen's immortal productions made their appearance on board Bengalee budgerows; and are their leaves floating

on the yellow banks of Jumna?" asks Warrington, that sceptic, who respects no work of modern genius.

"I gave your book to Mrs. Timmins, at Calcutta," says the Colonel simply. "I daresay you have heard of her. She is one of the most dashing women in all India. She was delighted with your work; and I can tell you it is not with every man's writing that Mrs. Timmins is pleased," he added, with a knowing air.

"It's capital," broke in Clive. "I say, that part, you know, where Walter runs away with Neera, and the General can't pursue them, though he has got the postchaise at the door, because Tim O'Toole has hidden his wooden leg! By Jove, it's capital! — All the funny part — I don't like the sentimental stuff, and suicide, and that; and as for poetry, I hate poetry."

"Pen's is not first chop," says Warrington. "I am obliged to take the young man down from time to time, Colonel Newcome. Otherwise he would grow so conceited there would be no bearing him."

"I say," says Clive.

"What were you about to remark?" asks Mr. Warrington, with an air of great interest.

"I say, Pendennis," continued the artless youth, "I thought you were a great swell. When we used to read about the grand parties in the Pall Mall Gazette, the fellows used to say you were at every one of them, and you see, I thought you must have chambers in the Albany, and lots of horses to ride, and a valet and a groom, and a cab at the very least."

"Sir," says the Colonel, "I hope it is not your practice to measure and estimate gentlemen by such paltry standards as those. A man of letters follows the noblest calling which any man can pursue. I would rather be the author of a work of genius, than be Governor-General of India. I admire genius. I salute it wherever I meet it. I like my own profession better than any in the world, but then it is because I am suited to it. I couldn't write four lines in verse, no, not to save me from being shot. A man cannot have all the advantages of life. Who would not be poor if he could be sure of possessing genius, and winning fame and immortality, sir? Think of Dr. Johnson, what a genius he had, and where did he live? In apartments that, I daresay, were no better than these, which, I am sure, gentlemen, are most cheerful and pleasant," says the Colonel, thinking he had offended us. "One of the great pleasures and delights which I had proposed to myself on coming home was to be allowed to have the honour of meeting with men of learning and genius, with wits, poets, and historians, if I may be so fortunate; and of benefiting by their conversation. I left England too young to have that privilege. In my father's house money was thought of, I fear, rather than intellect; neither he nor I had the opportunities which I wish you to have; and I am surprised you should think of reflecting upon Mr. Pendennis's poverty, or of feeling any sentiment but respect and admiration when you enter the apartments of the poet and the literary man. I have never been in the rooms of a literary man before," the Colonel said, turning away from his son to us: "excuse me, is that — that paper really a proof-sheet?" We handed over to him that curiosity, smiling at the enthusiasm of the honest gentleman who could admire what to us was as unpalatable as a tart to a pastrycook.

Being with men of letters, he thought proper to make his conversation entirely literary; and in the course of my subsequent more intimate acquaintance with him, though I knew he had distinguished himself in twenty actions, he never could be brought to talk of his military feats or experience, but passed them by, as if they were subjects utterly unworthy of notice.

I found he believed Dr. Johnson to be the greatest of men: the Doctor's words were constantly in his mouth; and he never travelled without Boswell's Life. Besides these, he read Caesar and Tacitus, "with translations, sir, with translations — I'm thankful that I kept some of my Latin from Grey Friars;" and he quoted sentences from the Latin Grammar, apropos of a hundred events of common life, and with perfect simplicity and satisfaction to himself. Besides the above-named books, the Spectator, Don Quixote, and Sir Charles Grandison formed a part of his travelling library. "I read these, sir," he used to say, "because I like to be in the company of gentlemen; and Sir Roger de Coverley, and Sir Charles Grandison, and Don Quixote are the finest gentlemen in the world." And when we asked him his opinion of Fielding —

"Tom Jones, sir; Joseph Andrews, sir!" he cried, twirling his mustachios. "I read them when I was a boy, when I kept other bad company, and did other low and disgraceful things, of which I'm ashamed now. Sir, in my father's library I happened to fall in with those books; and I read them in secret, just as I used to go in private and drink beer, and fight cocks, and smoke pipes with Jack and Tom, the grooms in the stables. Mrs. Newcome found me, I recollect, with one of those books; and thinking it might be by Mrs. Hannah More, or some of that sort, for it was a grave-looking volume: and though I wouldn't lie about that or anything else — never did, sir; never, before heaven, have I told more than three lies in my life — I kept my own counsel; I say, she took it herself to read one evening; and read on gravely — for she had no more

idea of a joke than I have of Hebrew — until she came to the part about Lady B—— and Joseph Andrews; and then she shut the book, sir; and you should have seen the look she gave me! I own I burst out a-laughing, for I was a wild young rebel, sir. But she was in the right, sir, and I was in the wrong. A book, sir, that tells the story of a parcel of servants, of a pack of footmen and ladies'-maids fuddling in alehouses! Do you suppose I want to know what my kitmutgars and cousomahs are doing? I am as little proud as any man in the world: but there must be distinction, sir; and as it is my lot and Clive's lot to be a gentleman, I won't sit in the kitchen and boose in the servants'-hall. As for that Tom Jones — that fellow that sells himself, sir — by heavens, my blood boils when I think of him! I wouldn't sit down in the same room with such a fellow, sir. If he came in at that door, I would say, 'How dare you, you hireling ruffian, to sully with your presence an apartment where my young friend and I are conversing together? where two gentlemen, I say, are taking their wine after dinner? How dare you, you degraded villain?' I don't mean you, sir. I— I— I beg your pardon."

The Colonel was striding about the room in his loose garments, puffing his cigar fiercely anon, and then waving his yellow bandana; and it was by the arrival of Larkins, my clerk, that his apostrophe to Tom Jones was interrupted; he, Larkins, taking care not to show his amazement, having been schooled not to show or feel surprise at anything he might see or hear in our chambers.

"What is it, Larkins?" said I. Larkins' other master had taken his leave some time before, having business which called him away, and leaving me with the honest Colonel, quite happy with his talk and cigar.

"It's Brett's man," says Larkins.

I confounded Brett's man, and told the boy to bid him call again. Young Larkins came grinning back in a moment, and said:

"Please, sir, he says his orders is not to go away without the money."

"Confound him again," I cried. "Tell him I have no money in the house. He must come tomorrow."

As I spoke, Clive was looking in wonder, and the Colonel's countenance assumed an appearance of the most dolorous sympathy. Nevertheless, as with a great effort, he fell to talking about Tom Jones again, and continued:

"No, sir, I have no words to express my indignation against such a fellow as Tom Jones. But I forgot that I need not speak. The great and good Dr. Johnson has settled that question. You remember what he said to Mr. Boswell about Fielding?"

"And yet Gibbon praises him, Colonel," said the Colonel's interlocutor, "and that is no small praise. He says that Mr. Fielding was of the family that drew its origin from the Counts of Hapsburg; but —"

"Gibbon! Gibbon was an infidel, and I would not give the end of this cigar for such a man's opinion. If Mr. Fielding was a gentleman by birth, he ought to have known better; and so much the worse for him that he did not. But what am I talking of, wasting your valuable time? No more smoke, thank you. I must away into the City, but would not pass the Temple without calling on you, and thanking my boy's old protector. You will have the kindness to come and dine with us — tomorrow, the next day, your own day? Your friend is going out of town? I hope, on his return, to have the pleasure of making his further acquaintance. Come, Clive."

Clive, who had been deep in a volume of Hogarth's engravings during the above discussion, or rather oration of his father's, started up and took leave, beseeching me, at the same time, to come soon and see his pony; and so, with renewed greetings, we parted.

I was scarcely returned to my newspaper again, when the knocker of our door was again agitated, and the Colonel ran back, looking very much agitated and confused.

"I beg pardon," says he; "I think I left my — my —" Larkins had quitted the room by this time, and then he began more unreservedly. "My dear young friend," says he, "a thousand pardons for what I am going to say, but, as Clive's friend, I know I may take that liberty. I have left the boy in the court. I know the fate of men of letters and genius: when we were here just now, there came a single knock — a demand — that, that you did not seem to be momentarily able to meet. Now do, do pardon the liberty, and let me be your banker. You said you were engaged in a new work: it will be a masterpiece, I am sure, if it's like the last. Put me down for twenty copies, and allow me to settle with you in advance. I may be off, you know. I'm a bird of passage — a restless old soldier."

"My dear Colonel," said I, quite touched and pleased by this extreme kindness, "my dun was but the washerwoman's boy, and Mrs. Brett is in my debt, if I am not mistaken. Besides, I already have a banker in your family."

“In my family, my dear Sir?”

“Messrs. Newcome, in Threadneedle Street, are good enough to keep my money for me when I have any, and I am happy to say they have some of mine in hand now. I am almost sorry that I am not in want, in order that I might have the pleasure of receiving a kindness from you.” And we shook hands for the fourth time that morning, and the kind gentleman left me to rejoin his son.



CHAPTER V

CLIVE'S UNCLES

The dinner so hospitably offered by the Colonel was gladly accepted, and followed by many more entertainments at the cost of that good-natured friend. He and an Indian chum of his lived at this time at Nerot's Hotel, in Clifford Street, where Mr. Clive, too, found the good cheer a great deal more to his taste than the homely, though plentiful, fare at Grey Friars, at which, of course, when boys, we all turned up our noses, though many a poor fellow, in the struggles of after-life, has looked back with regret very likely to that well-spread youthful table. Thus my intimacy with the father and the son grew to be considerable, and a great deal more to my liking than my relations with Clive's City uncles, which have been mentioned in the last chapter, and which were, in truth, exceedingly distant and awful.

If all the private accounts kept by those worthy bankers were like mine, where would have been Newcome Hall and Park Lane, Marblehead and Bryanstone Square? I used, by strong efforts of self-denial, to maintain a balance of two or three guineas untouched at the bank, so that my account might still remain open; and fancied the clerks and cashiers grinned when I went to draw for money. Rather than face that awful counter, I would send Larkins, the clerk, or Mrs. Flanagan, the laundress. As for entering the private parlour at the back, wherein behind the glazed partition I could see the bald heads of Newcome Brothers engaged with other capitalists or peering over the newspaper, I would as soon have thought of walking into the Doctor's own library at Grey Friars, or of volunteering to take an armchair in a dentist's studio, and have a tooth out, as of entering into that awful precinct. My good uncle, on the other hand, the late Major Pendennis, who kept naturally but a very small account with Hobsons', would walk into the parlour and salute the two magnates who governed there with the ease and gravity of a Rothschild. "My good fellow," the kind old gentleman would say to his nephew and pupil, "il faut se faire valoir. I tell you, sir, your bankers like to keep every gentleman's account. And it's a mistake to suppose they are only civil to their great moneyed clients. Look at me. I go in to them and talk to them whenever I am in the City. I hear the news of 'Change, and carry it to our end of the town. It looks well, sir, to be well with your banker; and at our end of London, perhaps, I can do a good turn for the Newcomes."

It is certain that in his own kingdom of Mayfair and St. James's my revered uncle was at least the bankers' equal. On my coming to London, he was kind enough to procure me invitations to some of Lady Anne Newcome's evening parties in Park Lane, as likewise to Mrs. Newcome's entertainments in Bryanstone Square; though, I confess, of these latter, after a while, I was a lax and negligent attendant. "Between ourselves, my good fellow," the shrewd old Mentor of those days would say, "Mrs. Newcome's parties are not altogether select; nor is she a lady of the very highest breeding; but it gives a man a good air to be seen at his banker's house. I recommend you to go for a few minutes whenever you are asked." And go I accordingly did sometimes, though I always fancied, rightly or wrongly, from Mrs. Newcome's manner to me, that she knew I had but thirty shillings left at the bank. Once and again, in two or three years, Mr. Hobson Newcome would meet me, and ask me to fill a vacant place that day or the next evening at his table; which invitation I might accept or otherwise. But one does not eat a man's salt, as it were, at these dinners. There is nothing sacred in this kind of London hospitality. Your white waistcoat fills a gap in a man's table, and retires filled for its service of the evening. "Gad," the dear old Major used to say, "if we were not to talk freely of those we dine with, how mum London would be! Some of the pleasantest evenings I have ever spent have been when we have sate after a great dinner, en petit comite, and abused the people who are gone. You have your turn, mon cher; but why not? Do you suppose I fancy my friends haven't found out my little faults and peculiarities? And as I can't help it, I let myself be executed, and offer up my oddities de bonne grace. Entre nous, Brother Hobson Newcome is a good fellow, but a vulgar fellow; and his wife — his wife exactly suits him."

Once a year Lady Anne Newcome (about whom my Mentor was much more circumspect; for I somehow used to remark that as the rank of persons grew higher, Major Pendennis spoke of them with more caution and respect)— once or twice in a year Lady Anne Newcome opened her saloons for a concert and a ball, at both of which the whole street was crowded with carriages, and all the great world, and some of the small, were present. Mrs. Newcome had her ball too, and her concert of English music, in opposition to the Italian singers of her sister-inlaw. The music of her country, Mrs. N. said, was good enough for her.

The truth must be told, that there was no love lost between the two ladies. Bryanstone Square could not forget the

superiority of Park Lane's rank; and the catalogue of grandees at dear Anne's parties filled dear Maria's heart with envy. There are people upon whom rank and worldly goods make such an impression, that they naturally fall down on their knees and worship the owners; there are others to whom the sight of Prosperity is offensive, and who never see Dives' chariot but to growl and hoot at it. Mrs. Newcome, as far as my humble experience would lead me to suppose, is not only envious, but proud of her envy. She mistakes it for honesty and public spirit. She will not bow down to kiss the hand of a haughty aristocracy. She is a merchant's wife and an attorney's daughter. There is no pride about her. Her brother-in-law, poor dear Brian — considering everybody knows everything in London, was there ever such a delusion as his? — was welcome, after banking-hours, to forsake his own friends for his wife's fine relations, and to dangle after lords and ladies in Mayfair. She had no such absurd vanity — not she. She imparted these opinions pretty liberally to all her acquaintances in almost all her conversations. It was clear that the two ladies were best apart. There are some folks who will see insolence in persons of rank, as there are others who will insist; that all clergymen are hypocrites, all reformers villains, all placemen plunderers, and so forth; and Mrs. Newcome never, I am sure, imagined that she had a prejudice, or that she was other than an honest, independent, high-spirited woman. Both of the ladies had command over their husbands, who were of soft natures easily led by woman, as, in truth, are all the males of this family. Accordingly, when Sir Brian Newcome voted for the Tory candidate in the City, Mr. Hobson Newcome plumped for the Reformer. While Brian, in the House of Commons, sat among the mild Conservatives, Hobson unmasked traitors and thundered at aristocratic corruption, so as to make the Marylebone Vestry thrill with enthusiasm. When Lady Anne, her husband, and her flock of children fasted in Lent, and declared for the High Church doctrines, Mrs. Hobson had paroxysms of alarm regarding the progress of Popery, and shuddered out of the chapel where she had a pew, because the clergyman there, for a very brief season, appeared to preach in a surplice.

Poor bewildered Honeyman! it was a sad day for you, when you appeared in your neat pulpit with your fragrant pocket-handkerchief (and your sermon likewise all millefleurs), in a trim, prim, freshly mangled surplice, which you thought became you! How did you look aghast, and pass your jewelled hand through your curls, as you saw Mrs. Newcome, who had been as good as five-and-twenty pounds a year to you, look up from her pew, seize hold of Mr. Newcome, fling open the pew-door, drive out with her parasol her little flock of children, bewildered but not ill-pleased to get away from the sermon, and summon John from the back seats to bring away the bag of prayer-books! Many a good dinner did Charles Honeyman lose by assuming that unlucky ephod. Why did the high-priest of his diocese order him to put it on? It was delightful to view him afterwards, and the airs of martyrdom which he assumed. Had they been going to tear him to pieces with wild beasts next day, he could scarcely have looked more meek, or resigned himself more pathetically to the persecutors. But I am advancing matters. At this early time of which I write, a period not twenty years since, surplices were not even thought of in conjunction with sermons: clerical gentlemen have appeared in them, and under the heavy hand of persecution have sunk down in their pulpits again, as Jack pops back into his box. Charles Honeyman's elegant discourses were at this time preached in a rich silk Master of Arts' gown, presented to him, along with a teapot full of sovereigns, by his affectionate congregation at Leatherhead.

But that I may not be accused of prejudice in describing Mrs. Newcome and her family, and lest the reader should suppose that some slight offered to the writer by this wealthy and virtuous banker's lady was the secret reason for this unfavourable sketch of her character, let me be allowed to report, as accurately as I can remember them, the words of a kinsman of her own, — Giles, Esquire, whom I had the honour of meeting at her table, and who, as we walked away from Bryanstone Square, was kind enough to discourse very freely about the relatives whom he had just left.

"That was a good dinner, sir," said Mr. Giles, puffing the cigar which I offered to him, and disposed to be very social and communicative. "Hobson Newcome's table is about as good a one as any I ever put my legs under. You didn't have twice of turtle, sir, I remarked that — I always do, at that house especially, for I know where Newcome gets it. We belong to the same livery in the City, Hobson and I, the Oystermongers' Company, sir, and we like our turtle good, I can tell you — good, and a great deal of it, you say. Hay, hay, not so bad!

"I suppose you're a young barrister, sucking lawyer, or that sort of thing. Because you was put at the end of the table and nobody took notice of you. That's my place too; I'm a relative and Newcome asks me if he has got a place to spare. He met me in the City today, and says, 'Tom,' says he, 'there's some dinner in the Square at half-past seven: I wish you would go and fetch Louisa, whom we haven't seen this ever so long.' Louisa is my wife, sir — Maria's sister — Newcome married that gal from my house. 'No, no,' says I, 'Hobson; Louisa's engaged nursing number eight' — that's our number, sir. The

truth is, between you and me, sir, my missis won't come any more at no price. She can't stand it; Mrs. Newcome's dam patronising airs is enough to choke off anybody. 'Well, Hobson, my boy,' says I, 'a good dinner's a good dinner; and I'll come though Louisa won't, that is, can't.'"

While Mr. Giles, who was considerably enlivened by claret, was discoursing thus candidly, his companion was thinking how he, Mr. Arthur Pendennis, had been met that very afternoon on the steps of the Megatherium Club by Mr. Newcome, and had accepted that dinner which Mrs. Giles, with more spirit, had declined. Giles continued talking — "I'm an old stager, I am. I don't mind the rows between the women. I believe Mrs. Newcome and Lady Newcome's just as bad too; I know Maria is always driving at her one way or the other, and calling her proud and aristocratic, and that; and yet my wife says Maria, who pretends to be such a Radical, never asks us to meet the Baronet and his lady. 'And why should she, Loo, my dear?' says I. 'I don't want to meet Lady Newcome, nor Lord Kew, nor any of 'em.' Lord Kew, ain't it an odd name? Tearing young swell, that Lord Kew: tremendous wild fellow."

"I was a clerk in that house, sir, as a young man; I was there in the old woman's time, and Mr. Newcome's — the father of these young men — as good a man as ever stood on 'Change." And then Mr. Giles, warming with his subject, enters at large into the history of the house. "You see, sir," says he, "the banking-house of Hobson Brothers, or Newcome Brothers, as the partners of the firm really are, is not one of the leading banking firms of the City of London, but a most respectable house of many years' standing, and doing a most respectable business, especially in the Dissenting connection." After the business came into the hands of the Newcome Brothers, Hobson Newcome, Esq., and Sir Brian Newcome, Bart., M.P., Mr. Giles shows how a considerable West End connection was likewise established, chiefly through the aristocratic friends and connections of the above-named Bart.

But the best man of business, according to Mr. Giles, whom the firm of Hobson Brothers ever knew, better than her father and uncle, better than her husband Sir T. Newcome, better than her sons and successors above mentioned, was the famous Sophia Alethea Hobson, afterwards Newcome — of whom might be said what Frederick the Great said of his sister, that she was *sexu foemina, vir ingenio* — in sex a woman, and in mind a man. Nor was she, my informant told me, without even manly personal characteristics: she had a very deep and gruff voice, and in her old age a beard which many a young man might envy; and as she came into the bank out of her carriage from Clapham, in her dark green pelisse with fur trimmings, in her grey beaver hat, beaver gloves, and great gold spectacles, not a clerk in that house did not tremble before her, and it was said she only wanted a pipe in her mouth considerably to resemble the late Field-Marshal Prince Blucher.

Her funeral was one of the most imposing sights ever witnessed in Clapham. There was such a crowd you might have thought it was a Derby-day. The carriages of some of the greatest City firms, and the wealthiest Dissenting houses; several coaches full of ministers of all denominations, including the Established Church; the carriage of the Right Honourable the Earl of Kew, and that of his daughter, Lady Anne Newcome, attended that revered lady's remains to their final resting-place. No less than nine sermons were preached at various places of public worship regarding her end. She fell upstairs at a very advanced age, going from the library to the bedroom, after all the household was gone to rest, and was found by the maids in the morning, inarticulate, but still alive, her head being cut frightfully with the bedroom candle with which she was retiring to her apartment. "And," said Mr. Giles with great energy, "besides the empty carriages at that funeral, and the parson in black, and the mutes and feathers and that, there were hundreds and hundreds of people who wore no black, and who weren't present; and who wept for their benefactress, I can tell you. She had her faults, and many of 'em; but the amount of that woman's charities are unheard of, sir — unheard of — and they are put to the credit side of her account up yonder.

"The old lady had a will of her own," my companion continued. "She would try and know about everybody's business out of business hours: got to know from the young clerks what chapels they went to, and from the clergymen whether they attended regular; kept her sons, years after they were grown men, as if they were boys at school — and what was the consequence? They had a quarrel with Sir Thomas Newcome's own son, a harum-scarum lad, who ran away, and then was sent to India; and, between ourselves, Mr. Hobson and Mr. Brian both, the present Baronet, though at home they were as mum as Quakers at a meeting, used to go out on the sly, sir, and be off to the play, sir, and sowed their wild oats like any other young men, sir, like any other young men. Law bless me, once, as I was going away from the Haymarket, if I didn't see Mr. Hobson coming out of the Opera, in tights and an opera-hat, sir, like 'Froggy would wooing go,' of a Saturday-night, too, when his ma thought him safe in bed in the City! I warrant he hadn't his opera-hat on when he went to chapel with her ladyship the next morning — that very morning, as sure as my name's John Giles.

“When the old lady was gone, Mr. Hobson had no need of any more humbugging, but took his pleasure freely. Fighting, tandems, four-in-hand, anything. He and his brother — his elder brother by a quarter of an hour — were always very good friends; but after Mr. Brian married, and there was only court-cards at his table, Mr. Hobson couldn’t stand it. They weren’t of his suit, he said; and for some time he said he wasn’t a marrying man — quite the contrary; but we all come to our fate, you know, and his time came as mine did. You know we married sisters? It was thought a fine match for Polly Smith, when she married the great Mr. Newcome; but I doubt whether my old woman at home hasn’t had the best of it, after all; and if ever you come Bernard Street way on a Sunday, about six o’clock, and would like a slice of beef and a glass of port, I hope you’ll come and see us.”

Do not let us be too angry with Colonel Newcome’s two most respectable brothers, if for some years they neglected their Indian relative, or held him in slight esteem. Their mother never pardoned him, or at least by any actual words admitted his restoration to favour. For many years, as far as they knew, poor Tom was an unrepentant prodigal, wallowing in bad company, and cut off from all respectable sympathy. Their father had never had the courage to acquaint them with his more true, and kind, and charitable version of Tom’s story. So he passed at home for no better than a black sheep; his marriage with a penniless young lady did not tend to raise him in the esteem of his relatives at Clapham; it was not until he was a widower, until he had been mentioned several times in the Gazette for distinguished military service, until they began to speak very well of him in Leadenhall Street, where the representatives of Hobson Brothers were of course East India proprietors, and until he remitted considerable sums of money to England, that the bankers his brethren began to be reconciled to him.

I say, do not let us be hard upon them. No people are so ready to give a man a bad name as his own kinsfolk; and having made him that present, they are ever most unwilling to take it back again. If they give him nothing else in the days of his difficulty, he may be sure of their pity, and that he is held up as an example to his young cousins to avoid. If he loses his money they call him poor fellow, and point morals out of him. If he falls among thieves, the respectable Pharisees of his race turn their heads aside and leave him penniless and bleeding. They clap him on the back kindly enough when he returns, after shipwreck, with money in his pocket. How naturally Joseph’s brothers made salaams to him, and admired him, and did him honour, when they found the poor outcast a prime minister, and worth ever so much money! Surely human nature is not much altered since the days of those primeval Jews. We would not thrust brother Joseph down a well and sell him bodily, but — but if he has scrambled out of a well of his own digging, and got out of his early bondage into renown and credit, at least we applaud him and respect him, and are proud of Joseph as a member of the family.

Little Clive was the innocent and lucky object upon whom the increasing affection of the Newcomes for their Indian brother was exhibited. When he was first brought home a sickly child, consigned to his maternal aunt, the kind old maiden lady at Brighton, Hobson Brothers scarce took any notice of the little man, but left him to the entire superintendence of his own family. Then there came a large remittance from his father, and the child was asked by Uncle Newcome at Christmas. Then his father’s name was mentioned in general orders, and Uncle Hobson asked little Clive at Midsummer. Then Lord H., a late Governor-General, coming home, and meeting the brothers at a grand dinner at the Albion, given by the Court of Directors to his late Excellency, spoke to the bankers about that most distinguished officer their relative; and Mrs. Hobson drove over to see his aunt, where the boy was; gave him a sovereign out of her purse, and advised strongly that he should be sent to Timpany’s along with her own boy. Then Clive went from one uncle’s house to another; and was liked at both; and much preferred ponies to ride, going out after rabbits with the keeper, money in his pocket (charge to the debit of Lieut.-Col. T. Newcome), and clothes from the London tailor, to the homely quarters and conversation of poor kind old Aunt Honeyman at Brighton. Clive’s uncles were not unkind; they liked each other; their wives, who hated each other, united in liking Clive when they knew him, and petting the wayward handsome boy: they were only pursuing the way of the world, which huzzas all prosperity, and turns away from misfortune as from some contagious disease. Indeed, how can we see a man’s brilliant qualities if he is what we call in the shade?

The gentlemen, Clive’s uncles, who had their affairs to mind during the day, society and the family to occupy them of evenings and holidays, treated their young kinsman, the Indian Colonel’s son, as other wealthy British uncles treat other young kinsmen. They received him in his vacations kindly enough. They tipped him when he went to school; when he had the hooping-cough, a confidential young clerk went round by way of Grey Friars Square to ask after him; the sea being recommended to him, Mrs. Newcome gave him change of air in Sussex, and transferred him to his maternal aunt at Brighton. Then it was bonjour. As the lodge-gates closed upon him, Mrs. Newcome’s heart shut up too and confined itself

within the firs, laurels, and palings which bound the home precincts. Had not she her own children and affairs? her brood of fowls, her Sunday-school, her melon-beds, her rose-garden, her quarrel with the parson, etc., to attend to? Mr. Newcome, arriving on a Saturday night; hears he is gone, says "Oh!" and begins to ask about the new gravel-walk along the cliff, and whether it is completed, and if the China pig fattens kindly upon the new feed.

Clive, in the avuncular gig, is driven over the downs to Brighton to his maternal aunt there; and there he is a king. He has the best bedroom, Uncle Honeyman turning out for him sweetbreads for dinner; no end of jam for breakfast; excuses from church on the plea of delicate health; his aunt's maid to see him to bed; his aunt to come smiling in when he rings his bell of a morning. He is made much of, and coaxed, and dandled and fondled, as if he were a young duke. So he is to Miss Honeyman. He is the son of Colonel Newcome, C.B., who sends her shawls, ivory chessmen, scented sandalwood workboxes and kincob scarfs; who, as she tells Martha the maid, has fifty servants in India; at which Martha constantly exclaims, "Lor', mum, what can he do with 'em, mum?" who, when in consequence of her misfortunes she resolved on taking a house at Brighton, and letting part of the same furnished, sent her an order for a hundred pounds towards the expenses thereof; who gave Mr. Honeyman, her brother, a much larger sum of money at the period of his calamity. Is it gratitude for past favours? is it desire for more? is it vanity of relationship? is it love for the dead sister — or tender regard for her offspring which makes Mrs. Martha Honeyman so fond of her nephew? I never could count how many causes went to produce any given effect or action in a person's life, and have been for my own part many a time quite misled in my own case, fancying some grand, some magnanimous, some virtuous reason, for an act of which I was proud, when lo! some pert little satirical monitor springs up inwardly, upsetting the fond humbug which I was cherishing — the peacock's tail wherein my absurd vanity had clad itself — and says, "Away with this boasting! I am the cause of your virtue, my lad. You are pleased that yesterday at dinner you refrained from the dry champagne? My name is Worldly Prudence, not Self-denial, and I caused you to refrain. You are pleased because you gave a guinea to Diddler? I am Laziness, not Generosity, which inspired you. You hug yourself because you resisted other temptation? Coward! it was because you dared not run the risk of the wrong. Out with your peacock's plumage! walk off in the feathers which Nature gave you, and thank Heaven they are not altogether black." In a word, Aunt Honeyman was a kind soul, and such was the splendour of Clive's father, of his gifts, his generosity, his military services, and companionship of the battles, that the lad did really appear a young duke to her. And Mrs. Newcome was not unkind: and if Clive had been really a young duke, I am sure he would have had the best bedroom at Marble Hill, and not one of the far-off little rooms in the boys' wing; I am sure he would have had jellies and Charlottes Russes, instead of mere broth, chicken, and batter-pudding, as fell to his lot; and when he was gone (in the carriage, mind you, not in the gig driven by a groom), I am sure Mrs. Newcome would have written a letter that night to Her Grace the Duchess Dowager his mamma, full of praise of the dear child, his graciousness, his beauty, and his wit, and declaring that she must love him henceforth and for ever after as a son of her own. You toss down the page with scorn, and say, "It is not true. Human nature is not so bad as this cynic would have it to be. You would make no difference between the rich and the poor." Be it so. You would not. But own that your next-door neighbour would. Nor is this, dear madam, addressed to you; no, no, we are not so rude as to talk about you to your face; but if we may not speak of the lady who has just left the room, what is to become of conversation and society?

We forbear to describe the meeting between the Colonel and his son — the pretty boy from whom he had parted more than seven years before with such pangs of heart; and of whom he had thought ever since with such a constant longing affection. Half an hour after the father left the boy, and in his grief and loneliness was rowing back to shore, Clive was at play with a dozen of other children on the sunny deck of the ship. When two bells rang for their dinner, they were all hurrying to the cuddy table, and busy over their meal. What a sad repast their parents had that day! How their hearts followed the careless young ones home across the great ocean! Mothers' prayers go with them. Strong men, alone on their knees, with streaming eyes and broken accents, implore Heaven for those little ones, who were prattling at their sides but a few hours since. Long after they are gone, careless and happy, recollections of the sweet past rise up and smite those who remain: the flowers they had planted in their little gardens, the toys they played with, the little vacant cribs they slept in as fathers' eyes looked blessings down on them. Most of us who have passed a couple of score of years in the world, have had such sights as these to move us. And those who have will think none the worse of my worthy Colonel for his tender and faithful heart.

With that fidelity which was an instinct of his nature, this brave man thought ever of his absent child, and longed after him. He never forsook the native servants and nurses who had had charge of the child, but endowed them with money

sufficient (and indeed little was wanted by people of that frugal race) to make all their future lives comfortable. No friends went to Europe, nor ship departed, but Newcome sent presents and remembrances to the boy, and costly tokens of his love and thanks to all who were kind to his son. What a strange pathos seems to me to accompany all our Indian story! Besides that official history which fills Gazettes, and embroiders banners with names of victory; which gives moralists and enemies cause to cry out at English rapine; and enables patriots to boast of invincible British valour — besides the splendour and conquest, the wealth and glory, the crowned ambition, the conquered danger, the vast prize, and the blood freely shed in winning it — should not one remember the tears, too? Besides the lives of myriads of British men, conquering on a hundred fields, from Plassey to Meanee, and bathing them *cruore nostro*: think of the women, and the tribute which they perforce must pay to those victorious achievements. Scarce a soldier goes to yonder shores but leaves a home and grief in it behind him. The lords of the subject province find wives there; but their children cannot live on the soil. The parents bring their children to the shore, and part from them. The family must be broken up — keep the flowers of your home beyond a certain time, and the sickening buds wither and die. In America it is from the breast of a poor slave that a child is taken. In India it is from the wife, and from under the palace, of a splendid proconsul.

The experience of this grief made Newcome's naturally kind heart only the more tender, and hence he had a weakness for children which made him the laughing-stock of old maids, old bachelors, and sensible persons; but the darling of all nurseries, to whose little inhabitants he was uniformly kind: were they the collectors' progeny in their palanquins, or the sergeants' children tumbling about the cantonment, or the dusky little heathens in the huts of his servants round his gate.

It is known that there is no part of the world where ladies are more fascinating than in British India. Perhaps the warmth of the sun kindles flames in the hearts of both sexes, which would probably beat quite coolly in their native air: else why should Miss Brown be engaged ten days after her landing at Calcutta? or why should Miss Smith have half a dozen proposals before she has been a week at the station? And it is not only bachelors on whom the young ladies confer their affections; they will take widowers without any difficulty; and a man so generally liked as Major Newcome, with such a good character, with a private fortune of his own, so chivalrous, generous, good-looking, eligible in a word, you may be sure would have found a wife easily enough, had he any mind for replacing the late Mrs. Casey.

The Colonel, as has been stated, had an Indian chum or companion, with whom he shared his lodgings; and from many jocular remarks of this latter gentleman (who loved good jokes, and uttered not a few) I could gather that the honest widower Colonel Newcome had been often tempted to alter his condition, and that the Indian ladies had tried numberless attacks upon his bereaved heart, and devised endless schemes of carrying it by assault, treason, or other mode of capture. Mrs. Casey (his defunct wife) had overcome it by sheer pity and helplessness. He had found her so friendless, that he took her into the vacant place, and installed her there as he would have received a traveller into his bungalow. He divided his meal with her, and made her welcome to his best. "I believe Tom Newcome married her," sly Mr. Binnie used to say, "in order that he might have permission to pay her milliner's bills;" and in this way he was amply gratified until the day of her death. A feeble miniature of the lady, with yellow ringlets and a guitar, hung over the mantelpiece of the Colonel's bedchamber, where I have often seen that work of art; and subsequently, when he and Mr. Binnie took a house, there was hung up in the spare bedroom a companion portrait to the miniature — that of the Colonel's predecessor, Jack Casey, who in life used to fling plates at his Emma's head, and who perished from a fatal attachment to the bottle. I am inclined to think that Colonel Newcome was not much cast down by the loss of his wife, and that they lived but indifferently together. Clive used to say in his artless way that his father scarcely ever mentioned his mother's name; and no doubt the union was not happy, although Newcome continued piously to acknowledge it, long after death had brought it to a termination, by constant benefactions and remembrances to the departed lady's kindred.

Those widows or virgins who endeavoured to fill Emma's place found the door of Newcombe's heart fast and barred, and assailed it in vain. Miss Billing sat down before it with her piano, and, as the Colonel was a practitioner on the flute, hoped to make all life one harmonious duet with him; but she played her most brilliant sonatas and variations in vain; and, as everybody knows, subsequently carried her grand piano to Lieutenant and Adjutant Hodgkin's house, whose name she now bears. The lovely widow Wilkins, with two darling little children, stopped at Newcome's hospitable house, on her way to Calcutta; and it was thought she might never leave it; but her kind host, as was his wont, crammed her children with presents and good things, consoled and entertained the fair widow, and one morning, after she had remained three months at the station, the Colonel's palanquins and bearers made their appearance, and Elvira Wilkins went away weeping as a widow should. Why did she abuse Newcome ever after at Calcutta, Bath, Cheltenham, and wherever she went, calling him

selfish, pompous, Quixotic, and a Bahawder? I could mention half a dozen other names of ladies of most respectable families connected with Leadenhall Street, who, according to Colonel Newcome's chum — that wicked Mr. Binnie — had all conspired more or less to give Clive Newcome a stepmother.

But he had had an unlucky experience in his own case; and thought within himself, "No, I won't give Clive a stepmother. As Heaven has taken his own mother from him, why, I must try to be father and mother too to the lad." He kept the child as long as ever the climate would allow of his remaining, and then sent him home. Then his aim was to save money for the youngster. He was of a nature so uncontrollably generous, that to be sure he spent five rupees where another would save them, and make a fine show besides; but it is not a man's gifts or hospitalities that generally injure his fortune. It is on themselves that prodigals spend most. And as Newcome had no personal extravagances, and the smallest selfish wants; could live almost as frugally as a Hindoo; kept his horses not to race but to ride; wore his old clothes and uniforms until they were the laughter of his regiment; did not care for show, and had no longer an extravagant wife; he managed to lay by considerably out of his liberal allowances, and to find himself and Clive growing richer every year.

"When Clive has had five or six years at school" — that was his scheme — "he will be a fine scholar, and have at least as much classical learning as a gentleman in the world need possess. Then I will go to England, and we will pass three or four years together, in which he will learn to be intimate with me, and, I hope, to like me. I shall be his pupil for Latin and Greek, and try and make up for lost time. I know there is nothing like a knowledge of the classics to give a man good breeding — *Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes emollunt mores, nec sinuisse feros*. I shall be able to help him with my knowledge of the world, and to keep him out of the way of sharpers and a pack of rogues who commonly infest young men. I will make myself his companion, and pretend to no superiority; for, indeed, isn't he my superior? Of course he is, with his advantages. He hasn't been an idle young scamp as I was. And we will travel together, first through England, Scotland, and Ireland, for every man should know his own country, and then we will make the grand tour. Then, by the time he is eighteen, he will be able to choose his profession. He can go into the army, and emulate the glorious man after whom I named him; or if he prefers the church, or the law, they are open to him; and when he goes to the university, by which time I shall be in all probability a major-general, I can come back to India for a few years, and return by the time he has a wife and a home for his old father; or if I die I shall have done the best for him, and my boy will be left with the best education, a tolerable small fortune, and the blessing of his old father."

Such were the plans of our kind schemer. How fondly he dwelt on them, how affectionately he wrote of them to his boy! How he read books of travels and looked over the maps of Europe! and said, "Rome, sir, glorious Rome; it won't be very long, Major, before my boy and I see the Colosseum, and kiss the Pope's toe. We shall go up the Rhine to Switzerland, and over the Simplon, the work of the great Napoleon. By Jove, sir, think of the Turks before Vienna, and Sobieski clearing eighty thousand of 'em off the face of the earth! How my boy will rejoice in the picture-galleries there, and in Prince Eugene's prints! You know, I suppose, that Prince Eugene, one of the greatest generals in the world, was also one of the greatest lovers of the fine arts. *Ingenuas didicisse*, hey, Doctor! you know the rest — *emollunt mores nec* —"

"*Emollunt mores*! Colonel," says Doctor McTaggart, who perhaps was too canny to correct the commanding officer's Latin. "Don't ye noo that Prence Eugene was about as savage a Turrk as iver was? Have ye niver rad the mimores of the Prants de Leen?"

"Well, he was a great cavalry officer," answers the Colonel, "and he left a great collection of prints — that you know. How Clive will delight in them! The boy's talent for drawing is wonderful, sir, wonderful. He sent me a picture of our old school — the very actual thing, sir; the cloisters, the school, the head gown-boy going in with the rods, and the Doctor himself. It would make you die of laughing!"

He regaled the ladies of the regiment with Clive's letters, and those of Miss Honeyman, which contained an account of the boy. He even bored some of his bearers with this prattle; and sporting young men would give or take odds that the Colonel would mention Clive's name, once before five minutes, three times in ten minutes, twenty-five times in the course of dinner, and so on. But they who laughed at the Colonel laughed very kindly; and everybody who knew him, loved him; everybody, that is, who loved modesty, and generosity, and honour.

At last the happy time came for which the kind father had been longing more passionately than any prisoner for liberty, or schoolboy for holiday. Colonel Newcome has taken leave of his regiment, leaving Major Tomkinson, nothing loth, in command. He has travelled to Calcutta; and the Commander-in-Chief, in general orders, has announced that in giving to Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Newcome, C.B., of the Bengal Cavalry, leave for the first time, after no less than

thirty-four years' absence from home, "he (Sir George Hustler) cannot refrain from expressing his sense of the great and meritorious services of this most distinguished officer, who has left his regiment in a state of the highest discipline and efficiency." And now the ship has sailed, the voyage is over, and once more, after so many long years, the honest soldier's foot is on his native shore.



CHAPTER VI

NEWCOME BROTHERS

Besides his own boy, whom he worshipped, this kind Colonel had a score, at least, of adopted children, to whom he chose to stand in the light of a father. He was for ever whirling away in postchaises to this school and that, to see Jack Brown's boys, of the Cavalry; or Mrs. Smith's girls, of the Civil Service; or poor Tom Hicks's orphan, who had nobody to look after him now that the cholera had carried off Tom, and his wife too. On board the ship in which he returned from Calcutta were a dozen of little children, of both sexes, some of whom he actually escorted to their friends before he visited his own; and though his heart was longing for his boy at Grey Friars. The children at the schools seen, and largely rewarded out of his bounty (his loose white trousers had great pockets, always heavy with gold and silver, which he jingled when he was not pulling his mustachios — to see the way in which he tipped children made one almost long to be a boy again); and when he had visited Miss Pinkerton's establishment, or Doctor Ramshorn's adjoining academy at Chiswick, and seen little Tom Davis or little Fanny Holmes the honest fellow would come home and write off straightway a long letter to Tom's or Fanny's parents, far away in the Indian country, whose hearts he made happy by his accounts of their children, as he had delighted the children themselves by his affection and bounty. All the apple — and orange-women (especially such as had babies as well as lollipops at their stalls), all the street-sweepers on the road between Nerot's and the Oriental, knew him, and were his pensioners. His brothers in Threadneedle Street cast up their eyes at the cheques which he drew.

One of the little people of whom the kind Newcome had taken charge luckily dwelt near Portsmouth; and when the faithful Colonel consigned Miss Fipps to her grandmother, Mrs. Admiral Fipps, at Southampton, Miss Fipps clung to her guardian, and with tears and howls was torn away from him. Not until her maiden aunts had consoled her with strawberries, which she never before had tasted, was the little Indian comforted for the departure of her dear Colonel. Master Cox, Tom Cox's boy, of the Native Infantry, had to be carried asleep from the "George" to the mail that night. Master Cox woke up at the dawn wondering, as the coach passed through the pleasant green roads of Bromley. The good gentleman consigned the little chap to his uncle, Dr. Cox, Bloomsbury Square, before he went to his own quarters, and then on the errand on which his fond heart was bent.

He had written to his brothers from Portsmouth, announcing his arrival, and three words to Clive, conveying the same intelligence. The letter was served to the boy along with one bowl of tea and one buttered roll, of eighty such which were distributed to fourscore other boys, boarders of the same house with our young friend. How the lad's face must have flushed, and his eyes brightened, when he read the news! When the master of the house, the Rev. Mr. Popkinson, came into the long-room, with a good-natured face, and said, "Newcome, you're wanted," he knows who is come. He does not heed that notorious bruiser, Old Hodge, who roars out, "Confound you, Newcome: I'll give it you for upsetting your tea over my new trousers." He runs to the room where the stranger is waiting for him. We will shut the door, if you please, upon that scene.

If Clive had not been as fine and handsome a young lad as any in that school or country, no doubt his fond father would have been just as well pleased, and endowed him with a hundred fanciful graces; but in truth, in looks and manners he was every thing which his parent could desire; and I hope the artist who illustrates this work will take care to do justice to his portrait. Mr. Clive himself, let that painter be assured, will not be too well pleased if his countenance and figure do not receive proper attention. He is not yet endowed with those splendid mustachios and whiskers which he has himself subsequently depicted, but he is the picture of health, strength, activity, and good-humour. He has a good forehead, shaded with a quantity of waving light hair; a complexion which ladies might envy; a mouth which seems accustomed to laughing; and a pair of blue eyes that sparkle with intelligence and frank kindness. No wonder the pleased father cannot refrain from looking at him. He is, in a word, just such a youth as has a right to be the hero of a novel.

The bell rings for second school, and Mr. Popkinson, arrayed in cap and gown, comes in to shake Colonel Newcome by the hand, and to say he supposes it's to be a holiday for Newcome that day. He does not say a word about Clive's scrape of the day before, and that awful row in the bedrooms, where the lad and three others were discovered making a supper off a pork-pie and two bottles of prime old port from the Red Cow public-house in Grey Friars Lane. When the bell has done

ringing, and all these busy little bees have swarmed into their hive, there is a solitude in the place. The Colonel and his son walked the playground together, that gravelly flat, as destitute of herbage as the Arabian desert, but, nevertheless, in the language of the place called the green. They walk the green, and they pace the cloisters, and Clive shows his father his own name of Thomas Newcome carved upon one of the arches forty years ago. As they talk, the boy gives sidelong glances at his new friend, and wonders at the Colonel's loose trousers, long mustachios, and yellow face. He looks very odd, Clive thinks, very odd and very kind, and he looks like a gentleman, every inch of him:— not like Martin's father, who came to see his son lately in high-lows, and a shocking bad hat, and actually flung coppers amongst the boys for a scramble. He bursts out a-laughing at the exquisitely ludicrous idea of a gentleman of his fashion scrambling for coppers.

And now, enjoining the boy to be ready against his return (and you may be sure Mr. Clive was on the look-out long before his sire appeared), the Colonel whirled away in his cab to the City to shake hands with his brothers, whom he had not seen since they were demure little men in blue jackets, under charge of a serious tutor.

He rushed through the clerks and the banking-house, he broke into the parlour where the lords of the establishment were seated. He astonished those trim quiet gentlemen by the warmth of his greeting, by the vigour of his hand-shake, and the loud high tones of his voice, which penetrated the glass walls of the parlour, and might actually be heard by the busy clerks in the hall without. He knew Brian from Hobson at once — that unlucky little accident in the go-cart having left its mark for ever on the nose of Sir Brian Newcome, the elder of the twins. Sir Brian had a bald head and light hair, a short whisker cut to his cheek, a buff waistcoat, very neat boots and hands. He looked like the "Portrait of a Gentleman" at the Exhibition, as the worthy is represented: dignified in attitude, bland, smiling, and statesmanlike, sitting at a table unsealing letters, with a despatch-box and a silver inkstand before him, a column and a scarlet curtain behind, and a park in the distance, with a great thunderstorm lowering in the sky. Such a portrait, in fact, hangs over the great sideboard at Newcome to this day, and above the three great silver waiters, which the gratitude of as many Companies has presented to their respected director and chairman.

In face, Hobson Newcome, Esq., was like his elder brother, but was more portly in person. He allowed his red whiskers to grow wherever nature had planted them, on his cheeks and under his chin. He wore thick shoes with nails in them, or natty round-toed boots, with tight trousers and a single strap. He affected the country gentleman in his appearance. His hat had a broad brim, and the ample pockets of his cut-away coat were never destitute of agricultural produce, samples of beans or corn, which he used to bite and chew even on 'Change, or a whip-lash, or balls for horses: in fine, he was a good old country gentleman. If it was fine in Threadneedle Street, he would say it was good weather for the hay; if it rained, the country wanted rain; if it was frosty, "No hunting today, Tomkins, my boy," and so forth. As he rode from Bryanstone Square to the City you would take him — and he was pleased to be so taken — for a jolly country squire. He was a better man of business than his more solemn and stately brother, at whom he laughed in his jocular way; and he said rightly, that a gentleman must get up very early in the morning who wanted to take him in.

The Colonel breaks into the sanctum of these worthy gentlemen; and each receives him in a manner consonant with his peculiar nature. Sir Brian regretted that Lady Anne was away from London, being at Brighton with the children, who were all ill of the measles. Hobson said, "Maria can't treat you to such good company as my lady could give you, but when will you take a day and come and dine with us? Let's see, today's Wednesday; tomorrow we've a party. No, we're engaged." He meant that his table was full, and that he did not care to crowd it; but there was no use in imparting this circumstance to the Colonel. "Friday, we dine at Judge Budge's — queer name, Judge Budge, ain't it? Saturday, I'm going down to Marblehead, to look after the hay. Come on Monday, Tom, and I'll introduce you to the missus and the young 'uns."

"I will bring Clive," says Colonel Newcome, rather disturbed at this reception. "After his illness my sister-in-law was very kind to him."

"No, hang it, don't bring boys; there's no good in boys; they stop the talk downstairs, and the ladies don't want 'em in the drawing-room. Send him to dine with the children on Sunday, if you like, and come along down with me to Marblehead, and I'll show you such a crop of hay as will make your eyes open. Are you fond of farming?"

"I have not seen my boy for years," says the Colonel; "I had rather pass Saturday and Sunday with him, if you please, and some day we will go to Marblehead together."

"Well, an offer's an offer. I don't know any pleasanter thing than getting out of this confounded City and smelling the hedges, and looking at the crops coming up, and passing the Sunday in quiet." And his own tastes being thus agricultural,

the honest gentleman thought that everybody else must delight in the same recreation.

"In the winter, I hope we shall see you at Newcome," says the elder brother, blandly smiling. "I can't give you any tiger-shooting, but I'll promise you that you shall find plenty of pheasants in our jungle," and he laughed very gently at this mild sally.

The Colonel gave him a queer look. "I shall be at Newcome before the winter. I shall be there, please God, before many days are over."

"Indeed!" says the Baronet, with an air of great surprise. "You are going down to look at the cradle of our race. I believe the Newcomes were there before the Conqueror. It was but a village in our grandfather's time, and it is an immense flourishing town now, for which I hope to get — I expect to get — a charter."

"Do you?" says the Colonel. "I am going down there to see a relation."

"A relation! What relatives have we there?" cries the Baronet. "My children, with the exception of Barnes. Barnes, this is your uncle Colonel Thomas Newcome. I have great pleasure, brother, in introducing you to my eldest son."

A fair-haired young gentleman, languid and pale, and arrayed in the very height of fashion, made his appearance at this juncture in the parlour, and returned Colonel Newcome's greeting with a smiling acknowledgment of his own. "Very happy to see you, I'm sure," said the young man. "You find London very much changed since you were here? Very good time to come — the very full of the season."

Poor Thomas Newcome was quite abashed by this strange reception. Here was a man, hungry for affection, and one relation asked him to dinner next Monday, and another invited him to shoot pheasants at Christmas. Here was a beardless young sprig, who patronised him, and vouchsafed to ask him whether he found London was changed.

"I don't know whether it's changed," says the Colonel, biting his nails; "I know it's not what I expected to find it."

"To-day it's really as hot as I should think it must be in India," says young Mr. Barnes Newcome.

"Hot!" says the Colonel, with a grin. "It seems to me you are all cool enough here."

"Just what Sir Thomas de Boots said, sir," says Barnes, turning round to his father. "Don't you remember when he came home from Bombay? I recollect his saying, at Lady Featherstone's, one dooced hot night, as it seemed to us; I recollect his saying that he felt quite cold. Did you know him in India, Colonel Newcome? He's liked at the Horse Guards, but he's hated in his regiment."

Colonel Newcome here growled a wish regarding the ultimate fate of Sir Thomas de Boots, which we trust may never be realised by that distinguished cavalry officer.

"My brother says he's going to Newcome, Barnes, next week," said the Baronet, wishing to make the conversation more interesting to the newly arrived Colonel. "He was saying so just when you came in, and I was asking him what took him there?"

"Did you ever hear of Sarah Mason?" says the Colonel.

"Really, I never did," the Baronet answered.

"Sarah Mason? No, upon my word, I don't think I ever did," said the young man.

"Well, that's a pity too," the Colonel said, with a sneer. "Mrs. Mason is a relation of yours — at least by marriage. She is my aunt or cousin — I used to call her aunt, and she and my father and mother all worked in the same mill at Newcome together."

"I remember — God bless my soul — I remember now!" cried the Baronet. "We pay her forty pound a year on your account — don't you know, brother? Look to Colonel Newcome's account — I recollect the name quite well. But I thought she had been your nurse, and — and an old servant of my father's."

"So she was my nurse, and an old servant of my father's," answered the Colonel. "But she was my mother's cousin too and very lucky was my mother to have such a servant, or to have a servant at all. There is not in the whole world a more faithful creature or a better woman."

Mr. Hobson rather enjoyed his brother's perplexity, and to see when the Baronet rode the high horse, how he came down sometimes, "I am sure it does you very great credit," gasped the courtly head of the firm, "to remember a — a humble friend and connexion of our father's so well."

"I think, brother, you might have recollected her too," the Colonel growled out. His face was blushing; he was quite

angry and hurt at what seemed to him Sir Brian's hardness of heart.

"Pardon me if I don't see the necessity," said Sir Brian. "I have no relationship with Mrs. Mason, and do not remember ever having seen her. Can I do anything for you, brother? Can I be useful to you in any way? Pray command me and Barnes here, who after City hours will be delighted if he can be serviceable to you — I am nailed to this counter all the morning, and to the House of Commons all night; — I will be with you in one moment, Mr. Quilter. Good-bye, my dear Colonel. How well India has agreed with you! how young you look! the hot winds are nothing to what we endure in Parliament. — Hobson," in a low voice, "you saw about that h'm, that power of attorney — and h'm and h'm will call here at twelve about that h'm. — I am sorry I must say good-bye — it seems so hard after not meeting for so many years."

"Very," says the Colonel.

"Mind and send for me whenever you want me, now."

"Oh, of course," said the elder brother, and thought when will that ever be!

"Lady Anne will be too delighted at hearing of your arrival. Give my love to Clive — a remarkable fine boy, Clive — good morning:" and the Baronet was gone, and his bald head might presently be seen alongside of Mr. Quilter's confidential grey poll, both of their faces turned into an immense ledger.

Mr. Hobson accompanied the Colonel to the door, and shook him cordially by the hand as he got into his cab. The man asked whither he should drive? and poor Newcome hardly knew where he was or whither he should go. "Drive! a — oh — ah — damme, drive me anywhere away from this place!" was all he could say; and very likely the cabman thought he was a disappointed debtor who had asked in vain to renew a bill. In fact, Thomas Newcome had overdrawn his little account. There was no such balance of affection in that bank of his brothers, as the simple creature had expected to find there.

When he was gone, Sir Brian went back to his parlour, where sate young Barnes perusing the paper. "My revered uncle seems to have brought back a quantity of cayenne pepper from India, sir," he said to his father.

"He seems a very kind-hearted simple man," the Baronet said "eccentric, but he has been more than thirty years away from home. Of course you will call upon him tomorrow morning. Do everything you can to make him comfortable. Whom would he like to meet at dinner? I will ask some of the Direction. Ask him, Barnes, for next Wednesday or Saturday — no; Saturday I dine with the Speaker. But see that every attention is paid him."

"Does he intend to have our relation up to town, sir? I should like to meet Mrs. Mason of all things. A venerable washerwoman, I daresay, or perhaps keeps a public-house," simpered out young Barnes.

"Silence, Barnes; you jest at everything, you young men do — you do. Colonel Newcome's affection for his old nurse does him the greatest honour," said the Baronet, who really meant what he said.

"And I hope my mother will have her to stay a good deal at Newcome. I'm sure she must have been a washerwoman, and mangled my uncle in early life. His costume struck me with respectful astonishment. He disdains the use of straps to his trousers, and is seemingly unacquainted with gloves. If he had died in India, would my late aunt have had to perish on a funeral pile?" Here Mr. Quilter, entering with a heap of bills, put an end to these sarcastic remarks, and young Newcome, applying himself to his business (of which he was a perfect master), forgot about his uncle till after City hours, when he entertained some young gentlemen of Bays's Club with an account of his newly arrived relative.

Towards the City, whither he wended his way whatever had been the ball or the dissipation of the night before, young Barnes Newcome might be seen walking every morning, resolutely and swiftly, with his neat umbrella. As he passed Charing Cross on his way westwards, his little boots trailed slowly over the pavement, his head hung languid (bending lower still, and smiling with faded sweetness as he doffed his hat and saluted a passing carriage), his umbrella trailed after him. Not a dandy on all the Pall Mall pavement seemed to have less to do than he.

Heavyside, a large young officer of the household troops — old Sir Thomas de Boots — and Horace Fogey, whom every one knows — are in the window of Bays's, yawning as widely as that window itself. Horses under the charge of men in red jackets are pacing up and down St. James's Street. Cabmen on the stand are regaling with beer. Gentlemen with grooms behind them pass towards the Park. Great dowager barouches roll along emblazoned with coronets, and driven by coachmen in silvery wigs. Wistful provincials gaze in at the clubs. Foreigners chatter and show their teeth, and look at the ladies in the carriages, and smoke and spit refreshingly round about. Policeman X slouches along the pavement. It is five o'clock, the noon in Pall Mall.

"Here's little Newcome coming," says Mr. Horace Fogey. "He and the muffin-man generally make their appearance in

public together.”

“Dashed little prig,” says Sir Thomas de Boots, “why the dash did they ever let him in here? If I hadn’t been in India, by dash — he should have been blackballed twenty times over, by dash.” Only Sir Thomas used words far more terrific than dash, for this distinguished cavalry officer swore very freely.

“He amuses me; he’s such a mischievous little devil,” says good-natured Charley Heavyside.

“It takes very little to amuse you,” remarks Fogey.

“You don’t, Fogey,” answers Charley. “I know every one of your demd old stories, that are as old as my grandmother. How-dy-do, Barney?” (Enter Barnes Newcome.) “How are the Three per Cents, you little beggar? I wish you’d do me a bit of stiff; and just tell your father, if I may overdraw my account I’ll vote with him — hanged if I don’t.”

Barnes orders absinthe-and-water, and drinks: Heavyside resuming his elegant raillery. “I say, Barney, your name’s Barney, and you’re a banker. You must be a little Jew, hey? Vell, how mosh vill you to my little pill for?”

“Do hee-haw in the House of Commons, Heavyside,” says the young man with a languid air. “That’s your place: you’re returned for it.” (Captain the Honourable Charles Heavyside is a member of the legislature, and eminent in the House for asinine imitations which delight his own, and confuse the other party.) “Don’t bray here. I hate the shop out of shop hours.”

“Dash the little puppy,” growls Sir de Boots, swelling in his waistband.

“What do they say about the Russians in the City?” says Horace Fogey, who has been in the diplomatic service. “Has the fleet left Cronstadt, or has it not?”

“How should I know?” asks Barney. “Ain’t it all in the evening paper?”

“That is very uncomfortable news from India, General,” resumes Fogey — “there’s Lady Doddington’s carriage, how well she looks — that movement of Runjeet-Singh on Peshawur: that fleet on the Irrawaddy. It looks doocid queer, let me tell you, and Penguin is not the man to be Governor-General of India in a time of difficulty.”

“And Hustler’s not the man to be Commander-inChief: dashder old fool never lived: a dashed old psalm-singing, blundering old woman,” says Sir Thomas, who wanted the command himself.

“You ain’t in the psalm-singing line, Sir Thomas,” says Mr. Barnes; “quite the contrary.” In fact, Sir de Boots in his youth used to sing with the Duke of York, and even against Captain Costigan, but was beaten by that superior bacchanalian artist.

Sir Thomas looks as if to ask what the dash is that to you? but wanting still to go to India again, and knowing how strong the Newcomes are in Leadenhall Street, he thinks it necessary to be civil to the young cub, and swallows his wrath once more into his waistband.

“I’ve got an uncle come home from India — upon my word I have,” says Barnes Newcome. “That is why I am so exhausted. I am going to buy him a pair of gloves, number fourteen — and I want a tailor for him — not a young man’s tailor. Fogey’s tailor rather. I’d take my father’s; but he has all his things made in the country — all — in the borough, you know — he’s a public man.”

“Is Colonel Newcome, of the Bengal Cavalry, your uncle?” asks Sir Thomas de Boots.

“Yes; will you come and meet him at dinner next Wednesday week, Sir Thomas? and, Fogey, you come; you know you like a good dinner. You don’t know anything against my uncle, do you, Sir Thomas? Have I any Brahminical cousins? Need we be ashamed of him?”

“I tell you what, young man, if you were more like him it wouldn’t hurt you. He’s an odd man; they call him Don Quixote in India; I suppose you’ve read Don Quixote?”

“Never heard of it, upon my word; and why do you wish I should be more like him? I don’t wish to be like him at all, thank you.”

“Why, because he is one of the bravest officers that ever lived,” roared out the old soldier. “Because he’s one of the kindest fellows; because he gives himself no dashed airs, although he has reason to be proud if he chose. That’s why, Mr. Newcome.”

“A topper for you, Barney, my boy,” remarks Charles Heavyside, as the indignant General walks away gobbling and red. Barney calmly drinks the remains of his absinthe.

“I don’t know what that old muff means,” he says innocently, when he has finished his bitter draught. “He’s always flying out at me, the old turkey-cock. He quarrels with my play at whist, the old idiot, and can no more play than an old baby. He pretends to teach me billiards, and I’ll give him fifteen in twenty and beat his old head off. Why do they let such fellows into clubs? Let’s have a game at piquet till dinner, Heavyside. Hallo! That’s my uncle, that tall man with the mustachios and the short trousers, walking with that boy of his. I dare say they are going to dine in Covent Garden, and going to the play. How-dy-do, Nunky?”— and so the worthy pair went up to the card-room, where they sate at piquet until the hour of sunset and dinner arrived.



CHAPTER VII

IN WHICH MR. CLIVE'S SCHOOL-DAYS ARE OVER

Our good Colonel had luckily to look forward to a more pleasant meeting with his son, than that unfortunate interview with his other near relatives. He dismissed his cab at Ludgate Hill, and walked thence by the dismal precincts of Newgate, and across the muddy pavement of Smithfield, on his way back to the old school where his son was, a way which he had trodden many a time in his own early days. There was Cistercian Street, and the Red Cow of his youth: there was the quaint old Grey Friars Square, with its blackened trees and garden, surrounded by ancient houses of the build of the last century, now slumbering like pensioners in the sunshine.

Under the great archway of the hospital he could look at the old Gothic building; and a black-gowned pensioner or two crawling over the quiet square, or passing from one dark arch to another. The boarding-houses of the school were situated in the square, hard by the more ancient buildings of the hospital. A great noise of shouting, crying, clapping forms and cupboards, treble voices, bass voices, poured out of the schoolboys' windows: their life, bustle, and gaiety contrasted strangely with the quiet of those old men creeping along in their black gowns under the ancient arches yonder, whose struggle of life was over, whose hope and noise and bustle had sunk into that grey calm. There was Thomas Newcome arrived at the middle of life, standing between the shouting boys and the tottering seniors, and in a situation to moralise upon both, had not his son Clive, who has espied him from within Mr. Hopkinson's, or let us say at once Hopkey's house, come jumping down the steps to greet his sire. Clive was dressed in his very best; not one of those four hundred young gentlemen had a better figure, a better tailor, or a neater boot. Schoolfellows, grinning through the bars, envied him as he walked away; senior boys made remarks on Colonel Newcome's loose clothes and long mustachios, his brown hands and unbrushed hat. The Colonel was smoking a cheroot as he walked; and the gigantic Smith, the cock of the school, who happened to be looking majestically out of window, was pleased to say that he thought Newcome's governor was a fine manly-looking fellow.

"Tell me about your uncles, Clive," said the Colonel, as they walked on arm in arm.

"What about them, sir?" asks the boy. "I don't think I know much."

"You have been to stay with them. You wrote about them. Were they kind to you?"

"Oh, yes, I suppose they are very kind. They always tipped me: only you know when I go there I scarcely ever see them. Mr. Newcome asks me the oftenest — two or three times a quarter when he's in town, and gives me a sovereign regular."

"Well, he must see you to give you the sovereign," says Clive's father, laughing.

The boy blushed rather.

"Yes. When it's time to go back to Smithfield on a Sunday night, I go into the dining-room to shake hands, and he gives it me; but he don't speak to me much, you know, and I don't care about going to Bryanstone Square, except for the tip, of course that's important, because I am made to dine with the children, and they are quite little ones; and a great cross French governess, who is always crying and shrieking after them, and finding fault with them. My uncle generally has his dinner-parties on Saturday, or goes out; and aunt gives me ten shillings and sends me to the play; that's better fun than a dinner-party." Here the lad blushed again. "I used," says he, "when I was younger, to stand on the stairs and prig things out of the dishes when they came out from dinner, but I'm past that now. Maria (that's my cousin) used to take the sweet things and give 'em to the governess. Fancy! she used to put lumps of sugar into her pocket and eat them in the schoolroom! Uncle Hobson don't live in such good society as Uncle Newcome. You see, Aunt Hobson, she's very kind, you know, and all that, but I don't think she's what you call *comme il faut*."

"Why, how are you to judge?" asks the father, amused at the lad's candid prattle, "and where does the difference lie?"

"I can't tell you what it is, or how it is," the boy answered, "only one can't help seeing the difference. It isn't rank and that; only somehow there are some men gentlemen and some not, and some women ladies and some not. There's Jones now, the fifth form master, every man sees he's a gentleman, though he wears ever so old clothes; and there's Mr. Brown, who oils his hair, and wears rings, and white chokers — my eyes! such white chokers! — and yet we call him the handsome snob! And so about Aunt Maria, she's very handsome and she's very finely dressed, only somehow she's not — she's not the

ticket, you see.”

“Oh, she’s not the ticket,” says the Colonel, much amused.

“Well, what I mean is — but never mind,” says the boy. “I can’t tell you what I mean. I don’t like to make fun of her, you know, for after all, she is very kind to me; but Aunt Anne is different, and it seems as if what she says is more natural; and though she has funny ways of her own too, yet somehow she looks grander,” — and here the lad laughed again. “And do you know, I often think that as good a lady as Aunt Anne herself, is old Aunt Honeyman at Brighton — that is, in all essentials, you know. For she is not proud, and she is not vain, and she never says an unkind word behind anybody’s back, and she does a deal of kindness to the poor without appearing to crow over them, you know; and she is not a bit ashamed of letting lodgings, or being poor herself, as sometimes I think some of our family —”

“I thought we were going to speak no ill of them?” says the Colonel, smiling.

“Well, it only slipped out unawares,” says Clive, laughing; “but at Newcome when they go on about the Newcomes, and that great ass, Barnes Newcome, gives himself his airs, it makes me die of laughing. That time I went down to Newcome, I went to see old Aunt Sarah, and she told me everything, and showed me the room where my grandfather — you know; and do you know I was a little hurt at first, for I thought we were swells till then. And when I came back to school, where perhaps I had been giving myself airs, and bragging about Newcome, why, you know, I thought it was right to tell the fellows.”

“That’s a man,” said the Colonel, with delight; though had he said, “That’s a boy,” he had spoken more correctly. Indeed, how many men do we know in the world without caring to know who their fathers were? and how many more who wisely do not care to tell us? “That’s a man,” cries the Colonel; “never be ashamed of your father, Clive.”

“Ashamed of my father!” says Clive, looking up to him, and walking on as proud as a peacock. “I say,” the lad resumed, after a pause —

“Say what you say,” said the father.

“Is that all true what’s in the Peerage — in the Baronetage, about Uncle Newcome and Newcome; about the Newcome who was burned at Smithfield; about the one that was at the battle of Bosworth; and the old old Newcome who was bar — that is, who was surgeon to Edward the Confessor, and was killed at Hastings? I am afraid it isn’t; and yet I should like it to be true.”

“I think every man would like to come of an ancient and honourable race,” said the Colonel, in his honest way. “As you like your father to be an honourable man, why not your grandfather, and his ancestors before him? But if we can’t inherit a good name, at least we can do our best to leave one, my boy; and that is an ambition which, please God, you and I will both hold by.”

With this simple talk the old and young gentleman beguiled their way, until they came into the western quarter of the town, where the junior member of the firm of Newcome Brothers had his house — a handsome and roomy mansion in Bryanstone Square. Colonel Newcome was bent on paying a visit to his sister-inlaw, and as he knocked at the door, where the pair were kept waiting some little time, he could remark through the opened windows of the dining-room, that a great table was laid and every preparation made for a feast.

“My brother said he was engaged to dinner today,” said the Colonel. “Does Mrs. Newcome give parties when he is away?”

“She invites all the company,” answered Clive. “My uncle never asks any one without aunt’s leave.”

The Colonel’s countenance fell. He has a great dinner, and does not ask his own brother! Newcome thought. Why, if he had come to me in India with all his family, he might have stayed for a year, and I should have been offended if he had gone elsewhere.

A hot menial, in a red waistcoat, came and opened the door; and without waiting for preparatory queries, said, “Not at home.”

“It’s my father, John,” said Clive; “my aunt will see Colonel Newcome.”

“Missis not at home,” said the man. “Missis is gone in carriage — Not at this door!-Take them things down the area steps, young man!” bawls out the domestic. This latter speech was addressed to a pastrycook’s boy, with a large sugar temple and many conical papers containing delicacies for dessert. “Mind the hiccies are here in time; or there’ll be a blow-up

with your governor," — and John struggled back, closing the door on the astonished Colonel.

"Upon my life, they actually shut the door in our faces," said the poor gentleman.

"The man is very busy, sir. There's a great dinner. I'm sure my aunt would not refuse you," Clive interposed. "She is very kind. I suppose it's different here to what it is in India. here are the children in the square — those are the girls in blue — that's the French governess, the one with the mustachios and the yellow parasol. How d'ye do, Mary? How d'ye do, Fanny? This is my father — this is your uncle."

"Mesdemoiselles! Je vous ddffends de parler a qui que ce soit hors du squar!" screams out the lady of the mustachios; and she strode forward to call back her young charges.

The Colonel addressed her in very good French. "I hope you will permit me to make acquaintance with my nieces," he said, "and with their instructress, of whom my son has given me such a favourable account."

"Hem!" said Mademoiselle Lebrun, remembering the last fight she and Clive had had together, and a portrait of herself (with enormous whiskers) which the young scapegrace had drawn. "Monsieur is very good. But one cannot too early inculcate retenue and decorum to young ladies in a country where demoiselles seem for ever to forget that they are young ladies of condition. I am forced to keep the eyes of lynx upon these young persons, otherwise heaven knows what would come to them. Only yesterday, my back is turned for a moment, I cast my eyes on a book, having but little time for literature, monsieur — for literature, which I adore — when a cry makes itself to hear. I turn myself, and what do I see? Mesdemoiselles, your nieces, playing at criquette, with the Messieurs Smees — sons of Doctor Smees — young galopins, monsieur!" All this was shrieked with immense volubility and many actions of the hand and parasol across the square-railings to the amused Colonel, at whom the little girls peered through the bars.

"Well, my dears, I should like to have a game at cricket with you, too," says the kind gentleman, reaching them each a brown hand.

"You, monsieur, c'est different — a man of your age! Salute monsieur, your uncle, mesdemoiselles. You conceive, monsieur, that I also must be cautious when I speak to a man so distinguished in a public squar." And she cast down her great eyes and hid those radiant orbs from the Colonel.

Meanwhile, Colonel Newcome, indifferent to the direction which Miss Lebrun's eyes took, whether towards his hat or his boots, was surveying his little nieces with that kind expression which his face always wore when it was turned towards children. "Have you heard of your uncle in India?" he asked them.

"No," says Maria.

"Yes," says Fanny. "You know mademoiselle said" (mademoiselle at this moment was twittering her fingers, and, as it were, kissing them in the direction of a grand barouche that was advancing along the Square)—"you know mademoiselle said that if we were mechantes we should be sent to our uncle in India. I think I should like to go with you."

"O you silly child!" cries Maria.

"Yes I should, if Clive went too," says little Fanny.

"Behold madam, who arrives from her promenade!" Miss Lebrun exclaimed; and, turning round, Colonel Newcome had the satisfaction of beholding, for the first time, his sister-inlaw.

A stout lady, with fair hair and a fine bonnet and pelisse (who knows what were the fine bonnets and pelisses of the year 183-?), was reclining in the barouche, the scarlet-plush integuments of her domestics blazing before and behind her. A pretty little foot was on the cushion opposite to her; feathers waved in her bonnet; a book was in her lap; an oval portrait of a gentleman reposed on her voluminous bosom. She wore another picture of two darling heads, with pink cheeks and golden hair, on one of her wrists, with many more chains, bracelets, bangles, and knick-knacks. A pair of dirty gloves marred the splendour of this appearance; a heap of books from the library strewed the back seat of the carriage, and showed that her habits were literary. Springing down from his station behind his mistress, the youth clad in the nether garments of red sammit discharged thunderclaps on the door of Mrs. Newcome's house, announcing to the whole Square that his mistress had returned to her abode. Since the fort saluted the Governor-General at — — Colonel Newcome had never heard such a cannonading.

Clive, with a queer twinkle of his eyes, ran towards his aunt.

She bent over the carriage languidly towards him. She liked him. "What, you, Clive?" she said. "How come you away

from school of a Thursday, sir?"

"It is a holiday," says he. "My father is come; and he is come to see you."

She bowed her head with an expression of affable surprise and majestic satisfaction. "Indeed, Clive!" she was good enough to exclaim and with an air which seemed to say, "Let him come up and be presented to me." The honest gentleman stepped forward and took off his hat and bowed, and stood bareheaded. She surveyed him blandly, and with infinite grace put forward one of the pudgy little hands in one of the dirty gloves. Can you fancy a twopenny-halfpenny baroness of King Francis's time patronising Bayard? Can you imagine Queen Guinever's lady's-maid's lady's maid being affable to Sir Lancelot? I protest there is nothing like the virtue of English women.

"You have only arrived today, and you came to see me? That was very kind. N'est-ce pas que c'etoit bong de Mouser le Collonel, mademoiselle? Madamaselle Lebrun, le Collonel Newcome, mong frere." (In a whisper, "My children's governess and my friend, a most superior woman.") "Was it not kind of Colonel Newcome to come to see me? Have you had a pleasant voyage? Did you come by St. Helena? Oh, how I envy you seeing the tomb of that great man! Nous parlons de Napoleong, mademoiselle, dong voter pere a ete le General favvory."

"O Dieu! que n'ai je pu le voir," interjaculates mademoiselle. "Lui dont parle l'univers, dont mon pere m'a si souvent parle!" but this remark passes quite unnoticed by mademoiselle's friend, who continues:

"Clive, donnez-moi voter bras. These are two of my girls. My boys are at school. I shall be so glad to introduce them to their uncle. This naughty boy might never have seen you, but that we took him home to Marblehead, after the scarlet fever, and made him well, didn't we, Clive? And we are all very fond of him, and you must not be jealous of his love for his aunt. We feel that we quite know you through him, and we know that you know us, and we hope you will like us. Do you think your pa will like us, Clive? Or perhaps you will like Lady Anne best? Yes; you have been to her first, of course? Not been? Oh! because she is not in town." Leaning fondly on the arm of Clive, mademoiselle standing grouped with the children hard by while John, with his hat off, stood at the opened door, Mr Newcome slowly uttered the above remarkable remarks to the Colonel, on the threshold of her house, which she never asked him to pass.

"If you will come in to us at about ten this evening," she then said, "you will find some men, not undistinguished, who honour me of an evening. Perhaps they will be interesting to you, Colonel Newcome, as you are newly arrived in Europe. Not men of worldly rank, necessarily, although some of them are amongst the noblest of Europe. But my maxim is, that genius is an illustration, and merit is better than any pedigree. You have heard of Professor Bodgers? Count Poski? Doctor McGuffog, who is called in his native country the Ezekiel of Clackmannan? Mr. Shaloon, the great Irish patriot? our papers have told you of him. These and some more I have been good enough to promise me a visit to-night. A stranger coming to London could scarcely have a better opportunity of seeing some of our great illustrations of science and literature. And you will meet our own family — not Sir Brian's, who — who have other society and amusements — but mine. I hope Mr. Newcome and myself will never forget them. We have a few friends at dinner, and now I must go in and consult with Mrs. Hubbard, my housekeeper. Good-bye for the present. Mind, not later than ten, as Mr. Newcome must be up betimes in the morning, and our parties break up early. When Clive is a little older, I dare say we shall see him, too. Good-bye!" And again the Colonel was favoured with a shake of the glove, and the lady and her suite sailed up the stair, and passed in at the door.

She had not the faintest idea but that the hospitality which she was offering to her kinsman was of the most cordial and pleasant kind. She fancied everything she did was perfectly right and graceful. She invited her husband's clerks to come through the rain at ten o'clock from Kentish Town; she asked artists to bring their sketch-books from Kensington, or luckless pianists to trudge with their music from Brompton. She rewarded them with a smile and a cup of tea, and thought they were made happy by her condescension. If, after two or three of these delightful evenings, they ceased to attend her receptions, she shook her little flaxen head, and sadly intimated that Mr. A. was getting into bad courses, or feared that Mr. B. found merely intellectual parties too quiet for him. Else, what young man in his senses could refuse such entertainment and instruction?



CHAPTER VIII

MRS. NEWCOME AT HOME (A SMALL EARLY PARTY)

To push on in the crowd, every male or female struggler must use his shoulders. If a better place than yours presents itself just beyond your neighbour, elbow him and take it. Look how a steadily purposed man or woman at court, at a ball, or exhibition, wherever there is a competition and a squeeze, gets the best place; the nearest the sovereign, if bent on kissing the royal hand; the closest to the grand stand, if minded to go to Ascot; the best view and hearing of the Rev. Mr. Thumpington, when all the town is rushing to hear that exciting divine; the largest quantity of ice, champagne, and seltzer, cold pate, or other his or her favourite flesh-pot, if gluttonously minded, at a supper whence hundreds of people come empty away. A woman of the world will marry her daughter and have done with her; get her carriage and be at home and asleep in bed; whilst a timid mamma has still her girl in the nursery, or is beseeching the servants in the cloakroom to look for her shawls, with which some one else has whisked away an hour ago. What a man has to do in society is to assert himself. Is there a good place at table? Take it. At the Treasury or the Home Office? Ask for it. Do you want to go to a party to which you are not invited? Ask to be asked. Ask A., ask B., ask Mrs. C., ask everybody you know: you will be thought a bore; but you will have your way. What matters if you are considered obtrusive, provided that you obtrude? By pushing steadily, nine hundred and ninety-nine people in a thousand will yield to you. Only command persons, and you may be pretty sure that a good number will obey. How well your money will have been laid out, O gentle reader, who purchase this; and, taking the maxim to heart, follow it through life! You may be sure of success. If your neighbour's foot obstructs you, stamp on it; and do you suppose he won't take it away?

The proofs of the correctness of the above remarks I show in various members of the Newcome family. Here was a vulgar little woman, not clever nor pretty, especially; meeting Mr. Newcome casually, she ordered him to marry her, and he obeyed; as he obeyed her in everything else which she chose to order through life. Meeting Colonel Newcome on the steps of her house, she orders him to come to her evening party; and though he has not been to an evening party for five-and-thirty years — though he has not been to bed the night before — though he has no mufti-coat except one sent him out by Messrs. Stultz to India in the year 1821 — he never once thinks of disobeying Mrs. Newcome's order, but is actually at her door at five minutes past ten, having arrayed himself to the wonderment of Clive, and left the boy to talk with his friend and fellow-passenger, Mr. Binnie, who has just arrived from Portsmouth, who has dined with him, and who, by previous arrangement, has taken up his quarters at the same hotel.

This Stultz coat, a blue swallow-tail, with yellow buttons, now wearing a tinge of their native copper, a very high velvet collar on a level with the tips of the Captain's ears, with a high waist, indicated by two lapelles, and a pair of buttons high up in the wearer's back, a white waistcoat and scarlet under-waistcoat, and a pair of the never-failing duck trousers, complete Thomas Newcome's costume, along with the white hat in which we have seen him in the morning, and which was one of two dozen purchased by him some years since at public outcry, Burrumtollah. We have called him Captain purposely, while speaking of his coat, for he held that rank when the garment came out to him; and having been in the habit of considering it a splendid coat for twelve years past, he has not the least idea of changing his opinion.

The Doctor McGuffog, Professor Bodgers, Count Poski, and all the lions present at Mrs. Newcome's reunion that evening, were completely eclipsed by Colonel Newcome. The worthy soul, who cared not the least about adorning himself, had a handsome diamond brooch of the year 1801 — given him by poor Jack Cutler, who was knocked over by his side at Argaum — and wore this ornament in his desk for a thousand days and nights at a time; in his shirt-frill, on such parade evenings as he considered Mrs. Newcome's to be. The splendour of this jewel, and of his flashing buttons, caused all eyes to turn to him. There were many pairs of mustachios present, those of Professor Schnurr, a very corpulent martyr, just escaped from Spandau, and of Maximilien Tranchard, French exile and apostle of liberty, were the only whiskers in the room capable of vying in interest with Colonel Newcome's. Polish chieftains were at this time so common in London, that nobody (except one noble Member for Marylebone, once a year, the Lord Mayor) took any interest in them. The general opinion was, that the stranger was the Wallachian Boyar, whose arrival at Mivart's the Morning Post had just announced. Mrs. Miles, whose delicious every other Wednesdays in Montague Square are supposed by some to be rival entertainments to Mrs. Newcome's alternate Thursdays in Bryanstone Square, pinched her daughter Mira, engaged in a polyglot

conversation with Herr Schnurr, nor Carabossi, the guitarist, and Monsieur Pivier, the celebrated French chess-player, to point out the Boyar. Mira Miles wished she knew a little Moldavian, not so much that she might speak it, but that she might be heard to speak it. Mrs. Miles, who had not had the educational advantages of her daughter, simpered up with “Madame Newcome pas ici — votre excellence nouvellement arrive — avez-vous fait ung bong voyage? Je recois chez moi Mercredi prochaing; lonnure de vous voir — Madamasel Miles ma fille;” and, Mira, now reinforcing her mamma, poured in a glib little oration in French, somewhat to the astonishment of the Colonel, who began to think, however, that perhaps French was the language of the polite world, into which he was now making his very first entree.

Mrs. Newcome had left her place at the door of her drawing-room, to walk through her rooms with Rummun Loll, the celebrated Indian merchant, otherwise His Excellency Rummun Loll, otherwise his Highness Rummun Loll, the chief proprietor of the diamond-mines in Golconda, with a claim of three millions and a-half upon the East India Company — who smoked his hookah after dinner when the ladies were gone, and in whose honour (for his servants always brought a couple or more of hookahs with them) many English gentlemen made themselves sick, while trying to emulate the same practice. Mr. Newcome had been obliged to go to bed himself in consequence of the uncontrollable nausea produced by the chillum; and Doctor McGuffog, in hopes of converting His Highness, had puffed his till he was as black in the face as the interesting Indian — and now, having hung on his arm — always in the dirty gloves — flirting a fan whilst His Excellency consumed betel out of a silver box; and having promenaded him and his turban, and his shawls, and his kincab pelisse, and his lacquered moustache, and keen brown face; and opal eyeballs, through her rooms, the hostess came back to her station at the drawing-room door.

As soon as His Excellency saw the Colonel, whom he perfectly well knew, His Highness’s princely air was exchanged for one of the deepest humility. He bowed his head and put his two hands before his eyes, and came creeping towards him submissively, to the wonderment of Mrs. Miles; who was yet more astonished when the Moldavian magnate exclaimed in perfectly good English, “What, Rummun, you here?”

The Rummun, still bending and holding his hands before him, uttered a number of rapid sentences in the Hindustani language, which Colonel Newcome received twirling his mustachios with much hauteur. He turned on his heel rather abruptly and began to speak to Mrs. Newcome, who smiled and thanked him for coming on his first night after his return.

The Colonel said, “To whose house should he first come but to his brother’s?” How Mrs. Newcome wished she could have had room for him at dinner! And there was room after all, for Mr. Shaloon was detained at the House. The most interesting conversation. The Indian Prince was so intelligent!

“The Indian what?” asks Colonel Newcome. The heathen gentleman had gone off, and was seated by one of the handsomest young women in the room, whose fair face was turned towards him, whose blond ringlets touched his shoulder, and who was listening to him as eagerly as Desdemona listened to Othello.

The Colonel’s rage was excited as he saw the Indian’s behaviour. He curled his mustachios up to his eyes in his wrath. “You don’t mean that that man calls himself a Prince? That a fellow who wouldn’t sit down in an officer’s presence is —”

“How do you do, Mr. Honeyman? — Eh, bong soir, Monsieur — You are very late, Mr. Pressly. — What, Barnes! is it possible that you do me the honour to come all the way from Mayfair to Marylebone? I thought you young men of fashion never crossed Oxford Street. Colonel Newcome, this is your nephew.”

“How do you do, sir?” says Barnes, surveying the Colonel’s costume with inward wonder, but without the least outward manifestation of surprise. “I suppose you dined here to meet the black Prince. I came to ask him and my uncle to meet you at dinner on Wednesday. Where’s my uncle, ma’am?”

“Your uncle is gone to bed ill. He smoked one of those hookahs which the Prince brings, and it has made him very unwell indeed, Barnes. How is Lady Anne? Is Lord Kew in London? Is your sister better for Brighton air? I see your cousin is appointed Secretary of Legation. Have you good accounts of your aunt Lady Fanny?”

“Lady Fanny is as well as can be expected, and the baby is going on perfectly well, thank you,” Barnes said drily; and his aunt, obstinately gracious with him, turned away to some other new comet.

“It’s interesting, isn’t it, sir,” says Barnes, turning to the Colonel, “to see such union in families? Whenever I come here, my aunt trots out all my relations; and I send a man round in the mornin to ask how they all are. So Uncle Hobson is gone to bed sick with a hookah? I know there was a deuce of a row made when I smoked at Marblehead. You are promised to us for Wednesday, please. Is there anybody you would like to meet? Not our friend the Rummun? How the girls crowd

round him! By Gad, a fellow who's rich in London may have the pick of any gal — not here — not in this sort of thing; I mean in society, you know," says Barnes confidentially, "I've seen the old dowagers crowdin round that fellow, and the girls snugglin up to his india-rubber face. He's known to have two wives already in India; but, by Gad, for a settlement, I believe some of 'em here would marry — I mean of the girls in society."

"But isn't this society?" asked the Colonel.

"Oh, of course. It's very good society and that sort of thing — but it's not, you know — you understand. I give you my honour there are not three people in the room one meets anywhere, except the Rummun. What is he at home, sir? I know he ain't a Prince, you know, any more than I am."

"I believe he is a rich man now," said the Colonel. "He began from very low beginnings, and odd stories are told about the origin of his fortune."

"That may be," says the young man; "of course, as businessmen, that's not our affair. But has he got the fortune? He keeps a large account with us; and, I think, wants to have larger dealings with us still. As one of the family we may ask you to stand by us, and tell us anything you know. My father has asked him down to Newcome, and we've taken him up; wisely or not I can't say. I think otherwise; but I'm quite young in the house, and of course the elders have the chief superintendence." The young man of business had dropped his drawl or his languor, and was speaking quite unaffectedly; good-naturedly, and selfishly. Had you talked to him for a week, you could not have made him understand the scorn and loathing with which the Colonel regarded him. Here was a young fellow as keen as the oldest curmudgeon; a lad with scarce a beard to his chin, that would pursue his bond as rigidly as Shylock. "If he is like this at twenty, what will he be at fifty?" groaned the Colonel. "I'd rather Clive were dead than have him such a heartless woriding as this." And yet the young man was not ungenerous, not untruth-telling, not unserviceable. He thought his life was good enough. It was as good as that of other folks he lived with. You don't suppose he had any misgivings, provided he was in the City early enough in the morning; or slept badly, unless he indulged too freely over-night; or twinges of conscience that his life was misspent? He thought his life a most lucky and reputable one. He had a share in a good business, and felt that he could increase it. Some day he would marry a good match, with a good fortune; meanwhile he could take his pleasure decorously, and sow his wild oats as some of the young Londoners sow them, not broadcast after the fashion of careless scatter-brained youth, but trimly and neatly, in quiet places, where the crop can come up unobserved, and be taken in without bustle or scandal. Barnes Newcome never missed going to church, or dressing for dinner. He never kept a tradesman waiting for his money. He never drank too much, except when other fellows did, and in good company. He never was late for business, or huddled over his toilet, however brief had been his sleep, or severe his headache. In a word, he was as scrupulously whited as any sepulchre in the whole bills of mortality.

Whilst young Barnes and his uncle were thus holding parley, a slim gentleman of bland aspect, with a roomy forehead, or what his female admirers called "a noble brow," and a neat white neckcloth tied with clerical skill, was surveying Colonel Newcome through his shining spectacles, and waiting for an opportunity to address him. The Colonel remarked the eagerness with which the gentleman in black regarded him, and asked Mr. Barnes who was the padre? Mr. Barnes turned his eyeglass towards the spectacles, and said "he didn't know any more than the dead; he didn't know two people in the room." The spectacles nevertheless made the eyeglass a bow, of which the latter took no sort of cognisance. The spectacles advanced; Mr. Newcome fell back with a peevish exclamation of "Confound the fellow, what is he coming to speak to me for?" He did not choose to be addressed by all sorts of persons in all houses.

But he of the spectacles, with an expression of delight in his pale blue eyes, and smiles dimpling his countenance, pressed onwards with outstretched hands, and it was towards the Colonel he turned these smiles and friendly salutations. "Did I hear aright, sir, from Mrs. Miles," he said, "and have I the honour of speaking to Colonel Newcome?"

"The same, sir," says the Colonel; at which the other, tearing off a glove of lavender-coloured kid, uttered the words, "Charles Honeyman," and seized the hand of his brother-inlaw. "My poor sister's husband," he continued; "my own benefactor; Clive's father. How strange are these meetings in the mighty world! How I rejoice to see you, and know you!"

"You are Charles, are you?" cries the other. "I am very glad, indeed, to shake you by the hand, Honeyman. Clive and I should have beat up your quarters today, but we were busy until dinnertime. You put me in mind of poor Emma, Charles," he added, sadly. Emma had not been a good wife to him; a flighty silly little woman, who had caused him when alive many a night of pain and day of anxiety.

"Poor, poor Emma!" exclaimed the ecclesiastic, casting his eyes towards the chandelier, and passing a white cambric pocket-handkerchief gracefully before them. No man in London understood the ring business or the pocket-handkerchief business better, or smothered his emotion more beautifully. "In the gayest moments, in the giddiest throng of fashion, the thoughts of the past will rise; the departed will be among us still. But this is not the strain wherewith to greet the friend newly arrived on our shores. How it rejoices me to behold you in old England! How you must have joyed to see Clive!"

"D—— the humbug," muttered Barnes, who knew him perfectly well. "The fellow is always in the pulpit."

The incumbent of Lady Whittlesea's chapel smiled and bowed to him. "You do not recognise me, sir; I have had the honour of seeing you in your public capacity in the City, when I have called at the bank, the bearer of my brother-in-law's generous ——"

"Never mind that, Honeyman!" cried the Colonel.

"But I do mind, my dear Colonel," answers Mr. Honeyman. "I should be a very bad man, and a very ungrateful brother, if I ever forgot your kindness."

"For God's sake leave my kindness alone."

"He'll never leave it alone as long as he can use it," muttered Mr. Barnes in his teeth; and turning to his uncle, "May I take you home, sir? my cab is at the door, and I shall be glad to drive you." But the Colonel said he must talk to his brother-in-law for a while, and Mr. Barnes, bowing very respectfully to him, slipped under a dowager's arm in the doorway, and retreated silently downstairs.

Newcome was now thrown entirely upon the clergyman, and the latter described the personages present to the stranger, who was curious to know how the party was composed. Mrs. Newcome herself would have been pleased had she heard Honeyman's discourse regarding her guests and herself. Charles Honeyman so spoke of most persons that you might fancy they were listening over his shoulder. Such an assemblage of learning, genius, and virtue, might well delight and astonish a stranger. "That lady in the red turban, with the handsome daughters, is Lady Budge, wife of the eminent judge of that name — everybody was astonished that he was not made Chief Justice, and elevated to the Peerage — the only objection (as I have heard confidentially) was on the part of a late sovereign, who said he never could consent to have a peer of the name of Budge. Her ladyship was of humble, I have heard even menial, station originally, but becomes her present rank, dispenses the most elegant hospitality at her mansion in Connaught Terrace, and is a pattern as a wife and a mother. The young man talking to her daughter is a young barrister, already becoming celebrated as a contributor to some of our principal reviews."

"Who is that cavalry officer in a white waistcoat talking to the Jew with the beard?" asks the Colonel.

"He, he! That cavalry officer is another literary man of celebrity, and by profession an attorney. But he has quitted the law for the Muses, and it would appear that the Nine are never wooed except by gentlemen with mustachios."

"Never wrote a verse in my life," says the Colonel, laughing, and stroking his own.

"For I remark so many literary gentlemen with that decoration. The Jew with the beard, as you call him, is Herr von Lungen, the eminent hautboy-player. The three next gentlemen are Mr. Smee, of the Royal Academy (who is shaved as you perceive), and Mr. Moyes and Mr. Cropper, who are both very hairy about the chin. At the piano, singing, accompanied by Mademoiselle Lebrun, is Signor Mezzocaldo, the great barytone from Rome. Professor Quartz and Baron Hammerstein, celebrated geologists from Germany, are talking with their illustrious confrere, Sir Robert Craxton, in the door. Do you see yonder that stout gentleman with stuff on his shirt? the eloquent Dr. McGuffog, of Edinburgh, talking to Dr. Ettore, who lately escaped from the Inquisition at Rome in the disguise of a washerwoman, after undergoing the question several times, the rack and the thumbscrew. They say that he was to have been burned in the Grand Square the next morning; but between ourselves, my dear Colonel, I mistrust these stories of converts and martyrs. Did you ever see a more jolly-looking man than Professor Schnurr, who was locked up in Spielberg, and got out up a chimney, and through a window? Had he waited a few months there are very few windows he could have passed through. That splendid man in the red fez is Kurbash Pasha — another renegade, I deeply lament to say — a hairdresser from Marseilles, by name Monsieur Ferehaud, who passed into Egypt, and laid aside the tongs for a turban. He is talking with Mr. Palmer, one of our most delightful young poets, and with Desmond O'Tara, son of the late revered Bishop of Ballinacorney, who has lately quitted ours for the errors of the Church of Rome. Let me whisper to you that your kinswoman is rather a searcher after what we call here notabilities. I heard talk of one I knew in better days — of one who was the comrade of my youth, and the delight of Oxford

— poor Pidge of Brasenose, who got the Newdigate in my third year, and who, under his present name of Father Bartolo, was to have been here in his capuchin dress, with a beard and bare feet; but I presume he could not get permission from his Superior. That is Mr. Huff, the political economist, talking with Mr. Macduff, the Member for Glenlivat. That is the coroner for Middlesex conversing with the great surgeon Sir Cutler Sharp, and that pretty laughing girl talking with them is no other than the celebrated Miss Pinnifer, whose novel of Ralph the Resurrectionist created such a sensation after it was abused in the Trimestrial Review. It was a little bold certainly — I just looked at it at my club — after hours devoted to parish duty a clergyman is sometimes allowed, you know, desipere in loco — there are descriptions in it certainly startling — ideas about marriage not exactly orthodox; but the poor child wrote the book actually in the nursery, and all England was ringing with it before Dr. Pinnifer, her father, knew who was the author. That is the Doctor asleep in the corner by Miss Rudge, the American authoress, who I dare say is explaining to him the difference between the two Governments. My dear Mrs. Newcome, I am giving my brother-in-law a little sketch of some of the celebrities who are crowding your salon to-night. What a delightful evening you have given us!”

“I try to do my best, Colonel Newcome,” said the lady of the house. “I hope many a night we may see you here; and, as I said this morning, Clive, when he is of an age to appreciate this kind of entertainment. Fashion I do not worship. You may meet that amongst other branches of our family; but genius and talent I do reverence. And if I can be the means — the humble means — to bring men of genius together — mind to associate with mind — men of all nations to mingle in friendly unison — I shall not have lived altogether in vain. They call us women of the world frivolous, Colonel Newcome. So some may be; I do not say there are not in our own family persons who worship mere worldly rank, and think but of fashion and gaiety; but such, I trust, will never be the objects in life of me and my children. We are but merchants; we seek to be no more. If I can look around me and see as I do” — (she waves her fan round, and points to the illustrations scintillating round the room) — “and see as I do now — a Poski, whose name is ever connected with Polish history — an Ettore, who has exchanged a tonsure and a rack for our own free country — a Hammerstein, and a Quartz, a Miss Rudge, our Transatlantic sister (who I trust will not mention this modest salon in her forthcoming work on Europe), and Miss Pinnifer, whose genius I acknowledge, though I deplore her opinions; if I can gather together travellers, poets, and painters, princes and distinguished soldiers from the East, and clergymen remarkable for their eloquence, my humble aim is attained, and Maria Newcome is not altogether useless in her generation. Will you take a little refreshment? Allow your sister to go down to the dining-room supported by your gallant arm.” She looked round to the admiring congregation, whereof Honeyman, as it were acted as clerk, and flirting her fan, and flinging up her little head. Consummate Virtue walked down on the arm of the Colonel.

The refreshment was rather meagre. The foreign artists generally dashed downstairs, and absorbed all the ices, creams, etc. To those coming late there were chicken-bones, table-cloths puddled with melted ice, glasses hazy with sherry, and broken bits of bread. The Colonel said he never supped; and he and Honeyman walked away together, the former to bed, the latter, I am sorry to say, to his club; for he was a dainty feeder, and loved lobster, and talk late at night, and a comfortable little glass of something wherewith to conclude the day.

He agreed to come to breakfast with the Colonel, who named eight or nine for the meal. Nine Mr. Honeyman agreed to with a sigh. The incumbent of Lady Whittlesea’s chapel seldom rose before eleven. For, to tell the truth, no French abbot of Louis XV. was more lazy and luxurious, and effeminate, than our polite bachelor preacher.

One of Colonel Newcome’s fellow-passengers from India was Mr. James Binnie of the Civil Service, a jolly young bachelor of two — or three-and-forty, who, having spent half of his past life in Bengal, was bent upon enjoying the remainder in Britain or in Europe, if a residence at home should prove agreeable to him. The Nabob of books and tradition is a personage no longer to be found among us. He is neither as wealthy nor as wicked as the jaundiced monster of romances and comedies, who purchases the estates of broken-down English gentlemen, with rupees tortured out of bleeding rajahs, who smokes a hookah in public, and in private carries about a guilty conscience, diamonds of untold value, and a diseased liver; who has a vulgar wife, with a retinue of black servants whom she maltreats, and a gentle son and daughter with good impulses and an imperfect education, desirous to amend their own and their parents’ lives, and thoroughly ashamed of the follies of the old people. If you go to the house of an Indian gentleman now, he does not say, “Bring more curricles,” like the famous Nabob of Stanstead Park. He goes to Leadenhall Street in an omnibus, and walks back from the City for exercise. I have known some who have had maid-servants to wait on them at dinner. I have met scores who look as florid and rosy as any British squire who has never left his paternal beef and acres. They do not wear

nankeen jackets in summer. Their livers are not out of order any more; and as for hookahs, I dare swear there are not two now kept alight within the bills of mortality; and that retired Indians would as soon think of smoking them, as their wives would of burning themselves on their husbands' bodies at the cemetery, Kensal Green, near to the Tyburnian quarter of the city which the Indian world at present inhabits. It used to be Baker Street and Harley Street; it used to be Portland Place, and in more early days Bedford Square, where the Indian magnates flourished; districts which have fallen from their pristine state of splendour now, even as Agra, and Benares, and Lucknow, and Tippoo Sultan's city are fallen.

After two-and-twenty years' absence from London, Mr. Binnie returned to it on the top of the Gosport coach with a hatbox and a little portmanteau, a pink fresh-shaven face, a perfect appetite, a suit of clothes like everybody else's, and not the shadow of a black servant. He called a cab at the White Horse Cellar, and drove to Nerot's Hotel, Clifford Street; and he gave the cabman eightpence, making the fellow, who grumbled, understand that Clifford Street was not two hundred yards from Bond Street, and that he was paid at the rate of five shillings and fourpence per mile — calculating the mile at only sixteen hundred yards. He asked the waiter at what time Colonel Newcome had ordered dinner, and finding there was an hour on his hands before the meal, walked out to examine the neighbourhood for a lodging where he could live more quietly than in a hotel. He called it a hotel. Mr. Binnie was a North Briton, his father having been a Writer to the Signet, in Edinburgh, who had procured his son a writership in return for electioneering services done to an East Indian Director. Binnie had his retiring pension, and, besides, had saved half his allowances ever since he had been in India. He was a man of great reading, no small ability, considerable accomplishment, excellent good sense and good humour. The ostentatious said he was a screw; but he gave away more money than far more extravagant people: he was a disciple of David Hume (whom he admired more than any other mortal), and the serious denounced him as a man of dangerous principles, though there were, among the serious, men much more dangerous than James Binnie.

On returning to his hotel, Colonel Newcome found this worthy gentleman installed in his room in the best arm-chair sleeping cosily; the evening paper laid decently over his plump waistcoat, and his little legs placed on an opposite chair. Mr. Binnie woke up briskly when the Colonel entered. "It is you, you gad-about, is it?" cried the civilian. "How has the beau monde of London treated the Indian Adonis? Have you made a sensation, Newcome? Gad, Tom, I remember you a buck of bucks when that coat first came out to Calcutta — just a Barrackpore Brummell — in Lord Minto's reign, was it, or when Lord Hastings was satrap over us?"

"A man must have one good coat," says the Colonel; "I don't profess to be a dandy; but get a coat from a good tailor, and then have done with it." He still thought his garment was as handsome as need be.

"Done with it — ye're never done with it!" cries the civilian.

"An old coat is an old friend, old Binnie. I don't want to be rid of one or the other. How long did you and my boy sit up together — isn't he a fine lad, Binnie? I expect you are going to put him down for something handsome in your will."

"See what it is to have a real friend now, Colonel! I sate up for ye, or let us say more correctly, I waited for you — because I knew you would want to talk about that scapegrace of yours. And if I had gone to bed, I should have had you walking up to No. 28, and waking me out of my first rosy slumber. Well, now confess; avoid not. Haven't ye fallen in love with some young beauty on the very first night of your arrival in your sister's salong, and selected a mother-in-law for young Scapegrace?"

"Isn't he a fine fellow, James?" says the Colonel, lighting a cheroot as he sits on the table. Was it joy, or the bedroom candle with which he lighted his cigar, which illuminated his honest features so, and made them so to shine?

"I have been occupied, sir, in taking the lad's moral measurement: and have pumped him as successfully as ever I cross-examined a rogue in my court. I place his qualities thus:— Love of approbation sixteen. Benevolence fourteen. Combativeness fourteen. Adhesiveness two. Amativeness is not yet of course fully developed, but I expect will be prodeegiously strong. The imaginative and reflective organs are very large — those, of calculation weak. He may make a poet or a painter, or you may make a sojer of him, though worse men than him's good enough for that — but a bad merchant, a lazy lawyer, and a miserable mathematician. He has wit and conscientiousness, so ye mustn't think of making a clergyman of him."

"Binnie!" says the Colonel gravely, "you are always sneering at the cloth."

"When I think that, but for my appointment to India, I should have been a luminary of the faith and a pillar of the church! grappling with the ghostly enemy in the pulpit, and giving out the psawm. Eh, sir, what a loss Scottish Divinity has

had in James Binnie!" cries the little civilian with his most comical face. "But that is not the question. My opinion, Colonel, is, that young Scapegrace will give you a deal of trouble; or would, only you are so absurdly proud of him that you think everything he does is perfection. He'll spend your money for you: he'll do as little work as need be. He'll get into scrapes with the sax. He's almost as simple as his father, and that is to say that any rogue will cheat him; and he seems to me to have got your obstinate habit of telling the truth, Colonel, which may prevent his getting on in the world, but on the other hand will keep him from going very wrong. So that, though there is every fear for him, there's some hope and some consolation."

"What do you think of his Latin and Greek?" asks the Colonel. Before going out to his party, Newcome had laid a deep scheme with Binnie, and it had been agreed that the latter should examine the young fellow in his humanities.

"Wall," cries the Scot, "I find that the lad knows as much about Greek and Latin as I knew myself when I was eighteen years of age."

"My dear Binnie, is it possible? You, the best scholar in all India!"

"And which amounted to exactly nothing. He has acquired in five years, and by the admirable system pursued at your public schools, just about as much knowledge of the ancient languages as he could get by three months' application at home. Mind ye, I don't say he would apply; it is most probable he would do no such thing. But at the cost of — how much? two hundred pounds annually — for five years — he has acquired about five-and-twenty guineas' worth of classical literature — enough, I dare say, to enable him to quote Horace respectably through life, and what more do ye want from a young man of his expectations? I think I should send him into the army, that's the best place for him — there's the least to do, and the handsomest clothes to wear. *Acce segnum!*" says the little wag, daintily taking up the tail of his friend's coat.

"There's never any knowing whether you are in jest or in earnest, Binnie," the puzzled Colonel said.

"How should you know, when I don't know myself?" answered the Scotchman. "In earnest now, Tom Newcome, I think your boy is as fine a lad as I ever set eyes on. He seems to have intelligence and good temper. He carries his letter of recommendation in his countenance; and with the honesty — and the rupees, mind ye — which he inherits from his father, the deuce is in it if he can't make his way. What time's the breakfast? Eh, but it was a comfort this morning not to hear the holystoning on the deck. We ought to go into lodgings, and not fling our money out of the window of this hotel. We must make the young chap take us about and show us the town in the morning, Tom. I had but three days of it five-and-twenty years ago, and I propose to reshoot my observations tomorrow after breakfast. We'll just go on deck and see how's her head before we turn in, eh, Colonel?" and with this the jolly gentleman nodded over his candle to his friend, and trotted off to bed.

The Colonel and his friend were light sleepers and early risers, like most men that come from the country where they had both been so long sojourning, and were awake and dressed long before the London waiters had thought of quitting their beds. The housemaid was the only being stirring in the morning when little Mr. Binnie blundered over her pail as she was washing the deck. Early as he was, his fellow-traveller had preceded him. Binnie found the Colonel in his sitting-room arrayed in what are called in Scotland his stocking-feet, already puffing the cigar, which in truth was seldom out of his mouth at any hour of the day.

He had a couple of bedrooms adjacent to this sitting-room, and when Binnie, as brisk and rosy about the gills as chanticleer, broke out in a morning salutation, "Hush," says the Colonel, putting a long finger up to his mouth, and advancing towards him as noiselessly as a ghost.

"What's in the wind now?" asks the little Scot; "and what for have ye not got your shoes on?"

"Clive's asleep," says the Colonel, with a countenance full of extreme anxiety.

"The darling boy slumbers, does he?" said the wag; "mayn't I just step in and look at his beautiful countenance whilst he's asleep, Colonel?"

"You may if you take off those confounded creaking shoes," the other answered, quite gravely; and Binnie turned away to hide his jolly round face, which was screwed up with laughter.

"Have ye been breathing a prayer over your rosy infant's slumbers, Tom?" asks Mr. Binnie.

"And if I have, James Binnie," the Colonel said gravely, and his sallow face blushing somewhat, "if I have, I hope I've done no harm. The last time I saw him asleep was nine years ago, a sickly little pale-faced boy in his little cot, and now, sir, that I see him again, strong and handsome, and all that a fond father can wish to see a boy, I should be an ungrateful

villain, James, if I didn't — if I didn't do what you said just now, and thank God Almighty for restoring him to me."

Binnie did not laugh any more. "By George, Tom Newcome," said he, "you're just one of the saints of the earth. If all men were like you there'd be an end of both our trades; there would be no fighting and no soldiering, no rogues and no magistrates to catch them." The Colonel wondered at his friend's enthusiasm, who was not used to be complimentary; indeed what so usual with him as that simple act of gratitude and devotion about which his comrade spoke to him? To ask a blessing for his boy was as natural to him as to wake with the sunrise, or to go to rest when the day was over. His first and his last thought was always the child.

The two gentlemen were home in time enough to find Clive dressed, and his uncle arrived for breakfast. The Colonel said a grace over that meal: the life was begun which he had longed and prayed for, and the son smiling before his eyes who had been in his thoughts for so many fond years.



CHAPTER IX

MISS HONEYMAN'S

In Steyne Gardens, Brighton, the lodging-houses are among the most frequented in that city of lodging-houses. These mansions have bow-windows in front, bulging out with gentle prominences, and ornamented with neat verandahs, from which you can behold the tide of humankind as it flows up and down the Steyne, and that blue ocean over which Britannia is said to rule, stretching brightly away eastward and westward. The chain-pier, as every body knows, runs intrepidly into the sea, which sometimes, in fine weather, bathes its feet with laughing wavelets, and anon, on stormy days, dashes over its sides with roaring foam. Here, for the sum of twopence, you can go out to sea and pace this vast deck without need of a steward with a basin. You can watch the sun setting in splendour over Worthing, or illuminating with its rising glories the ups and downs of Rottingdean. You see the citizen with his family inveigled into the shallops of the mercenary native mariner, and fancy that the motion cannot be pleasant; and how the hirer of the boat, otium et oppidi laudat rura sui, haply sighs for ease, and prefers Richmond or Hampstead. You behold a hundred bathing-machines put to sea; and your naughty fancy depicts the beauties splashing under their white awnings. Along the rippled sands (stay, are they rippled sands or shingly beach?) the prawn-boy seeks the delicious material of your breakfast. Breakfast-meal in London almost unknown, greedily devoured in Brighton! In yon vessels now nearing the shore the sleepless mariner has ventured forth to seize the delicate whiting, the greedy and foolish mackerel, and the homely sole. Hark to the twanging horn! it is the early coach going out to London. Your eye follows it, and rests on the pinnacles built by the beloved GEORGE. See the worn-out London roue pacing the pier, inhaling the sea air, and casting furtive glances under the bonnets of the pretty girls who trot here before lessons! Mark the bilious lawyer, escaped for a day from Pump Court, and sniffing the fresh breezes before he goes back to breakfast and a bag full of briefs at the Albion! See that pretty string of prattling schoolgirls, from the chubby-cheeked, flaxen-headed little maiden just toddling by the side of the second teacher, to the arch damsel of fifteen, giggling and conscious of her beauty, whom Miss Griffin, the stern head-governess, awfully reproves! See Tomkins with a telescope and marine jacket; young Nathan and young Abrams, already bedizened in jewellery, and rivalling the sun in oriental splendour; yonder poor invalid crawling along in her chair; yonder jolly fat lady examining the Brighton pebbles (I actually once saw a lady buy one), and her children wondering at the sticking-plaister portraits with gold hair, and gold stocks, and prodigious high-heeled boots, miracles of art, and cheap at seven-and-sixpence! It is the fashion to run down George IV., but what myriads of Londoners ought to thank him for inventing Brighton! One of the best of physicians our city has ever known, is kind, cheerful, merry Doctor Brighton. Hail, thou purveyor of shrimps and honest prescriber of Southdown mutton! There is no mutton so good as Brighton mutton; no flys so pleasant as Brighton flys; nor any cliff so pleasant to ride on; no shops so beautiful to look at as the Brighton gimcrack shops, and the fruit shops, and the market. I fancy myself in Mrs. Honeyman's lodgings in Steyne Gardens, and in enjoyment of all these things.

If the gracious reader has had losses in life, losses not so bad as to cause absolute want, or inflict upon him or her the bodily injury of starvation, let him confess that the evils of this poverty are by no means so great as his timorous fancy depicted. Say your money has been invested in West Diddlesex bonds, or other luckless speculations — the news of the smash comes; you pay your outlying bills with the balance at the banker's; you assemble your family and make them a fine speech; the wife of your bosom goes round and embraces the sons and daughters seriatim; nestling in your own waistcoat finally, in possession of which, she says (with tender tears and fond quotations from Holy Writ, God bless her!), and of the darlings round about, lies all her worldly treasure: the weeping servants are dismissed, their wages paid in full, and with a present of prayer — and hymn-books from their mistress; your elegant house in Harley Street is to let, and you subside into lodgings in Pentonville, or Kensington, or Brompton. How unlike the mansion where you paid taxes and distributed elegant hospitality for so many years!

You subside into lodgings, I say, and you find yourself very tolerably comfortable. I am not sure that in her heart your wife is not happier than in what she calls her happy days. She will be somebody hereafter: she was nobody in Harley Street: that is, everybody else in her visiting-book, take the names all round, was as good as she. They had the very same entrees, plated ware, men to wait, etc., at all the houses where you visited in the street. Your candlesticks might be handsomer (and

indeed they had a very fine effect upon the dinner-table), but then Mr. Jones's silver (or electro-plated) dishes were much finer. You had more carriages at your door on the evening of your delightful soirees than Mrs. Brown (there is no phrase more elegant, and to my taste, than that in which people are described as "seeing a great deal of carriage company"); but yet Mrs. Brown, from the circumstance of her being a baronet's niece, took precedence of your dear wife at most tables. Hence the latter charming woman's scorn at the British baronetcy, and her many jokes at the order. In a word, and in the height of your social prosperity, there was always a lurking dissatisfaction, and a something bitter, in the midst of the fountain of delights at which you were permitted to drink.

There is no good (unless your taste is that way) in living in a society where you are merely the equal of everybody else. Many people give themselves extreme pains to frequent company where all around them are their superiors, and where, do what you will, you must be subject to continual mortification —(as, for instance, when Marchioness X. forgets you, and you can't help thinking that she cuts you on purpose; when Duchess Z. passes by in her diamonds, etc.). The true pleasure of life is to live with your inferiors. Be the cock of your village; the queen of your coterie; and, besides very great persons, the people whom Fate has specially endowed with this kindly consolation are those who have seen what are called better days — those who have had losses. I am like Caesar, and of a noble mind: if I cannot be first in Piccadilly, let me try Hatton Garden, and see whether I cannot lead the ton there. If I cannot take the lead at White's or the Travellers', let me be president of the Jolly Bandboys at the Bag of Nails, and blackball everybody who does not pay me honour. If my darling Bessy cannot go out of a drawing-room until a baronet's niece (ha! ha! a baronet's niece, forsooth!) has walked before her, let us frequent company where we shall be the first; and how can we be the first unless we select our inferiors for our associates? This kind of pleasure is to be had by almost everybody, and at scarce any cost. With a shilling's-worth of tea and muffins you can get as much adulation and respect as many people cannot purchase with a thousand pounds' worth of plate and profusion, hired footmen, turning their houses topsy-turvy, and suppers from Gunter's. Adulation! — why, the people who come to you give as good parties as you do. Respect! — the very menials, who wait behind your supper-table, waited at a duke's yesterday, and actually patronise you! O you silly spendthrift! you can buy flattery for twopence, and you spend ever so much money in entertaining your equals and betters, and nobody admires you!

Now Aunt Honeyman was a woman of a thousand virtues; cheerful, frugal, honest, laborious, charitable, good-humoured, truth-telling, devoted to her family, capable of any sacrifice for those she loved; and when she came to have losses of money, Fortune straightway compensated her by many kindnesses which no income can supply. The good old lady admired the word gentlewoman of all others in the English vocabulary, and made all around her feel that such was her rank. Her mother's father was a naval captain; her father had taken pupils, got a living, sent his son to college, dined with the squire, published his volume of sermons, was liked in his parish, where Miss Honeyman kept house for him, was respected for his kindness and famous for his port wine; and so died, leaving about two hundred pounds a year to his two children, nothing to Clive Newcome's mother who had displeased him by her first marriage (an elopement with Ensign Casey) and subsequent light courses. Charles Honeyman spent his money elegantly in wine-parties at Oxford, and afterwards in foreign travel; — spent his money and as much of Miss Honeyman's as that worthy soul would give him. She was a woman of spirit and resolution. She brought her furniture to Brighton (believing that the whole place still fondly remembered her grandfather, Captain Nokes, who had resided there and his gallantry in Lord Rodney's action with the Count de Grasse), took a house, and let the upper floors to lodgers.

The little brisk old lady brought a maid-servant out of the country with her, who was daughter to her father's clerk, and had learned her letters and worked her first sampler under Miss Honeyman's own eye, whom she adored all through her life. No Indian begum rolling in wealth, no countess mistress of castles and townhouses, ever had such a faithful toady as Hannah Hicks was to her mistress. Under Hannah was a young lady from the workhouse, who called Hannah "Mrs. Hicks, mum," and who bowed in awe as much before that domestic as Hannah did before Miss Honeyman. At five o'clock in summer, at seven in winter (for Miss Honeyman, a good economist, was chary of candlelight), Hannah woke up little Sally, and these three women rose. I leave you to imagine what a row there was in the establishment if Sally appeared with flowers under her bonnet, gave signs of levity or insubordination, prolonged her absence when sent forth for the beer, or was discovered in flirtation with the baker's boy or the grocer's young man. Sally was frequently renewed. Miss Honeyman called all her young persons Sally; and a great number of Sallies were consumed in her house. The qualities of the Sally for the time-being formed a constant and delightful subject of conversation between Hannah and her mistress. The few friends who visited Miss Honeyman in her back-parlour had their Sallies, in discussing whose peculiarities of disposition these

good ladies passed the hours agreeably over their tea.

Many persons who let lodgings in Brighton have been servants themselves — are retired housekeepers, tradesfolk, and the like. With these surrounding individuals Hannah treated on a footing of equality, bringing to her mistress accounts of their various goings on; “how No. 6 was let; how No. 9 had not paid his rent again; how the first floor at 27 had game almost every day, and made-dishes from Mutton’s; how the family who had taken Mrs. Bugsby’s had left as usual after the very first night, the poor little infant blistered all over with bites on its little dear face; how the Miss Learys was going on shameful with the two young men, actually in their setting-room, mum, where one of them offered Miss Laura Leary a cigar; how Mrs. Cribb still went cuttin’ pounds and pounds of meat off the lodgers’ jints, emptying their tea-caddies, actually reading their letters. Sally had been told so by Polly the Cribb’s maid, who was kep, how that poor child was kep, hearing language perfectly hawful!” These tales and anecdotes, not altogether redounding to their neighbours’ credit, Hannah copiously collected and brought to her mistress’s tea-table, or served at her frugal little supper when Miss Honeyman, the labours of the day over, partook of that cheerful meal. I need not say that such horrors as occurred at Mrs. Bugsby’s never befell in Mrs. Honeyman’s establishment. Every room was fiercely swept and sprinkled, and watched by cunning eyes which nothing could escape; curtains were taken down, mattresses explored, every bone in bed dislocated and washed as soon as a lodger took his departure. And as for cribbing meat or sugar, Sally might occasionally abstract a lump or two, or pop a veal-cutlet into her mouth while bringing the dishes downstairs:— Sallies would — giddy creatures bred in workhouses; but Hannah might be entrusted with untold gold and uncorked brandy; and Miss Honeyman would as soon think of cutting a slice off Hannah’s nose and devouring it, as of poaching on her lodgers’ mutton. The best mutton-broth, the best veal-cutlets, the best necks of mutton and French beans, the best fried fish and plumpest partridges, in all Brighton, were to be had at Miss Honeyman’s — and for her favourites the best Indian curry and rice, coming from a distinguished relative, at present an officer in Bengal. But very few were admitted to this mark of Miss Honeyman’s confidence. If a family did not go to church they were not in favour: if they went to a Dissenting meeting she had no opinion of them at all. Once there came to her house a quiet Staffordshire family who ate no meat on Fridays, and whom Miss Honeyman pitied as belonging to the Romish superstition; but when they were visited by two corpulent gentlemen in black, one of whom wore a purple underwaistcoat, before whom the Staffordshire lady absolutely sank down on her knees as he went into the drawing-room — Miss Honeyman sternly gave warning to these idolaters. She would have no Jesuits in her premises. She showed Hannah the picture in Howell’s *Medulla* of the martyrs burning at Smithfield: who said, “Lord bless you, mum,” and hoped it was a long time ago. She called on the curate: and many and many a time, for years after, pointed out to her friends, and sometimes to her lodgers, the spot on the carpet where the poor benighted creature had knelt down. So she went on, respected by all her friends, by all her tradesmen, by herself not a little, talking of her previous “misfortunes” with amusing equanimity; as if her father’s parsonage-house had been a palace of splendour, and the one-horse chaise (with the lamps for evenings) from which she had descended, a noble equipage. “But I know it is for the best, Clive,” she would say to her nephew in describing those grandeurs, “and, thank heaven, can be resigned in that station in life to which it has pleased God to call me.”

The good lady was called the Duchess by her fellow-tradesfolk in the square in which she lived. (I don’t know what would have come to her had she been told she was a tradeswoman!) Her butchers, bakers, and market-people paid her as much respect as though she had been a grandee’s housekeeper out of Kemp Town. Knowing her station, she yet was kind to those inferior beings. She held affable conversations with them, she patronised Mr. Rogers, who was said to be worth a hundred thousand — two-hundred-thousand pounds (or lbs. was it?), and who said, “Law bless the old Duchess, she do make as much of a pound of veal cutlet as some would of a score of bullocks, but you see she’s a lady born and a lady bred: she’d die before she’d owe a farden, and she’s seen better days, you know.” She went to see the grocer’s wife on an interesting occasion, and won the heart of the family by tasting their candle. Her fishmonger (it was fine to hear her talk of “my fishmonger”) would sell her a whiting as respectfully as if she had called for a dozen turbot and lobsters. It was believed by those good folks that her father had been a Bishop at the very least; and the better days which she had known were supposed to signify some almost unearthly prosperity. “I have always found, Hannah,” the simple soul would say, “that people know their place, or can be very very easily made to find it if they lose it; and if a gentlewoman does not forget herself, her inferiors will not forget that she is a gentlewoman.” “No indeed, mum, and I’m sure they would do no such thing, mum,” says Hannah, who carries away the teapot for her own breakfast (to be transmitted to Sally for her subsequent refectation), whilst her mistress washes her cup and saucer, as her mother had washed her own china many

scores of years ago.

If some of the surrounding lodging-house keepers, as I have no doubt they did, disliked the little Duchess for the airs which she gave herself, as they averred; they must have envied her too her superior prosperity, for there was scarcely ever a card in her window, whilst those ensigns in her neighbours' houses would remain exposed to the flies and the weather, and disregarded by passers-by for months together. She had many regular customers, or what should be rather called constant friends. Deaf old Mr. Cricklade came every winter for fourteen years, and stopped until the hunting was over; an invaluable man, giving little trouble, passing all day on horseback, and all night over his rubber at the club. The Misses Barkham, Barkhambury, Tunbridge Wells, whose father had been at college with Mr. Honeyman, came regularly in June for sea air, letting Barkhambury for the summer season. Then, for many years, she had her nephew, as we have seen; and kind recommendations from the clergymen of Brighton, and a constant friend in the celebrated Dr. Goodenough of London, who had been her father's private pupil, and of his college afterwards, who sent his patients from time to time down to her, and his fellow-physician, Dr. H— — who on his part would never take any fee from Miss Honeyman, except a packet of India curry-powder, a ham cured as she only knew how to cure them, and once a year, or so, a dish of her tea.

"Was there ever such luck as that confounded old Duchess's?" says Mr. Gawler, coal-merchant and lodging-house keeper, next door but two, whose apartments were more odious in some respects than Mrs. Bugsby's own. "Was there ever such devil's own luck, Mrs. G.? It's only a fortnight ago as I read in the Sussex Advertiser the death of Miss Barkham, of Barkhambury, Tunbridge Wells, and thinks I, there's a spoke in your wheel, you stuck-up little old Duchess, with your cussed airs and impudence. And she ain't put her card up three days; and look yere, yere's two carriages, two maids, three children, one of them wrapped up in a Hinjar shawl — man hout a livery — looks like a foring cove I think — lady in satin pelisse, and of course they go to the Duchess, be hanged to her! Of course it's our luck, nothing ever was like our luck. I'm blowed if I don't put a pistol to my 'ead, and end it, Mrs. G. There they go in-three, four, six, seven on 'em, and the man. That's the precious child's physic I suppose he's a-carryin' in the basket. Just look at the luggage. I say! There's a bloody hand on the first carriage. It's a baronet, is it? I 'ope your ladyship's very well; and I 'ope Sir John will soon be down yere to join his family." Mr. Gawler makes sarcastic bows over the card in his bow-window whilst making this speech. The little Gawlers rush on to the drawing-room verandah themselves to examine the new arrivals.

"This is Mrs. Honeyman's?" asks the gentleman designated by Mr. Gawler as "the foring cove," and hands in a card on which the words, "Miss Honeyman, 110, Steyne Gardens. J. Goodenough," are written in that celebrated physician's handwriting. "We want five bet-rooms, six bets, two or dree sitting-rooms. Have you got dese?"

"Will you speak to my mistress?" says Hannah. And if it is a fact that Miss Honeyman does happen to be in the front parlour looking at the carriages, what harm is there in the circumstance, pray? Is not Gawler looking, and the people next door? Are not half a dozen little boys already gathered in the street (as if they started up out of the trap-doors for the coals), and the nursery maids in the stunted little garden, are not they looking through the bars of the square? "Please to speak to mistress," says Hannah, opening the parlour-door, and with a curtsy, "A gentleman about the apartments, mum."

"Five bet-rooms," says the man, entering. "Six bets, two or dree sitting-rooms? We come from Dr. Goodenough."

"Are the apartments for you, sir?" says the little Duchess, looking up at the large gentleman.

"For my lady," answers the man.

"Had you not better take off your hat?" asks the Duchess, pointing out of one of her little mittens to "the foring cove's" beaver, which he has neglected to remove.

The man grins, and takes off the hat. "I beck your bardon, ma'am," says he. "Have you fife bet-rooms?" etc. The doctor has cured the German of an illness, as well as his employers, and especially recommended Miss Honeyman to Mr. Kuhn.

"I have such a number of apartments. My servant will show them to you." And she walks back with great state to her chair by the window, and resumes her station and work there.

Mr. Kuhn reports to his mistress, who descends to inspect the apartments, accompanied through them by Hannah. The rooms are pronounced to be exceedingly neat and pleasant, and exactly what are wanted for the family. The baggage is forthwith ordered to be brought from the carriages. The little invalid wrapped in his shawl is brought upstairs by the affectionate Mr. Kuhn, who carries him as gently as if he had been bred all his life to nurse babies. The smiling Sally (the Sally for the time-being happens to be a very fresh pink-cheeked pretty little Sally) emerges from the kitchen and

introduces the young ladies, the governess, the maids, to their apartments. The eldest, a slim black-haired young lass of thirteen, frisks about the rooms, looks at all the pictures, runs in and out of the verandah, tries the piano, and bursts out laughing at its wheezy jingle (it had been poor Emma's piano, bought for her on her seventeenth birthday, three weeks before she ran away with the ensign; her music is still in the stand by it: the Rev. Charles Honeyman has warbled sacred melodies over it, and Miss Honeyman considers it a delightful instrument), kisses her languid little brother laid on the sofa, and performs a hundred gay and agile motions suited to her age.

"Oh, what a piano! Why, it is as cracked as Miss Quigley's voice!"

"My dear!" says mamma. The little languid boy bursts out into a jolly laugh.

"What funny pictures, mamma! Action with Count de Grasse; the death of General Wolfe; a portrait of an officer, an old officer in blue, like grandpapa; Brazen Nose College, Oxford: what a funny name!"

At the idea of Brazen Nose College, another laugh comes from the invalid. "I suppose they've all got brass noses there," he says; and explodes at this joke. The poor little laugh ends in a cough, and mamma's travelling-basket, which contains everything, produces a bottle of syrup, labelled "Master A. Newcome. A teaspoonful to be taken when the cough is troublesome."

"Oh, the delightful sea! the blue, the fresh, the ever free," sings the young lady, with a shake. (I suppose the maritime song from which she quoted was just written at this time.) "How much better this is than going home and seeing those horrid factories and chimneys! I love Doctor Goodenough for sending us here. What a sweet house it is! Everybody is happy in it, even Miss Quigley is happy, mamma. What nice rooms! What pretty chintz! What a — oh, what a — comfortable sofa!" and she falls down on the sofa, which, truth to say, was the Rev. Charles Honeyman's luxurious sofa from Oxford, presented to him by young Cibber Wright of Christchurch, when that gentleman-commoner was eliminated from the University.

"The person of the house," mamma says, "hardly comes up to Dr. Goodenough's description of her. He says he remembers her a pretty little woman when her father was his private tutor."

"She has grown very much since," says the girl. And an explosion takes place from the sofa, where the little man is always ready to laugh at any joke, or anything like a joke, uttered by himself or by any of his family or friends. As for Doctor Goodenough, he says laughing has saved that boy's life.

"She looks quite like a maid," continues the lady. "She has hard hands, and she called me mum always. I was quite disappointed in her." And she subsides into a novel, with many of which kind of works, and with other volumes, and with workboxes, and with wonderful inkstands, portfolios, portable days of the month, scent-bottles, scissor-cases, gilt miniature easels displaying portraits, and countless gimcracks of travel, the rapid Kuhn has covered the tables in the twinkling of an eye.

The person supposed to be the landlady enters the room at this juncture, and the lady rises to receive her. The little wag on the sofa puts his arm round his sister's neck, and whispers, "I say, Eth, isn't she a pretty girl? I shall write to Doctor Goodenough and tell him how much she's grown." Convulsions follow this sally, to the surprise of Hannah, who says, "Pooty little dear! — what time will he have his dinner, mum?"

"Thank you, Mrs. Honeyman, at two o'clock," says the lady with a bow of her head. "There is a clergyman of your name in London; is he a relation?" The lady in her turn is astonished, for the tall person breaks out into a grin, and says, "Law, mum, you're speakin' of Master Charles. He's in London."

"Indeed! — of Master Charles?"

"And you take me for missis, mum. I beg your pardon, mum," cries Hannah. The invalid hits his sister in the side with a weak little fist. If laughter can cure, *salva est res*. Doctor Goodenough's patient is safe. "Master Charles is missis's brother, mum. I've got no brother, mum — never had no brother. Only one son, who's in the police, mum, thank you. And law bless me, I was going to forget! If you please, mum, missis says, if you are quite rested, she will pay her duty to you, mum."

"Oh, indeed," says the lady, rather stiffly; and, taking this for an acceptance of her mistress's visit, Hannah retires.

"This Miss Honeyman seems to be a great personage," says the lady. "If people let lodgings, why do they give themselves such airs?"

"We never saw Monsieur de Boigne at Boulogne, mamma," interposes the girl.

"Monsieur de Boigne, my dear Ethel! Monsieur de Boigne is very well. But —" here the door opens, and in a large cap bristling with ribbons, with her best chestnut front, and her best black silk gown, on which her gold watch shines very splendidly, little Miss Honeyman makes her appearance, and a dignified curtsy to her lodger.

That lady vouchsafes a very slight inclination of the head indeed, which she repeats when Miss Honeyman says, "I am glad to hear your ladyship is pleased with the apartments."

"Yes, they will do very well, thank you," answers the latter person, gravely.

"And they have such a beautiful view of the sea!" cries Ethel.

"As if all the houses hadn't a view of the sea, Ethel! The price has been arranged, I think? My servants will require a comfortable room to dine in-by themselves, ma'am, if you please. My governess and the younger children will dine together. My daughter dines with me — and my little boy's dinner will be ready at two o'clock precisely, if you please. It is now near one."

"Am I to understand ——" interposed Miss Honeyman.

"Oh! I have no doubt we shall understand each other, ma'am," cried Lady Anne Newcome (whose noble presence the acute reader has no doubt ere this divined and saluted). "Doctor Goodenough has given me a most satisfactory account of you — more satisfactory perhaps than — than you are aware of." Perhaps Lady Anne's sentence was not going to end in a very satisfactory way for Miss Honeyman; but, awed by a peculiar look of resolution in the little lady, her lodger of an hour paused in whatever offensive remark she might have been about to make. "It is as well that I at last have the pleasure of seeing you, that I may state what I want, and that we may, as you say, understand each other. Breakfast and tea, if you please, will be served in the same manner as dinner. And you will have the kindness to order fresh milk every morning for my little boy — ass's milk — Doctor Goodenough has ordered ass's milk. Anything further I want I will communicate through the person who spoke to you — Kuhn, Mr. Kuhn; and that will do."

A heavy shower of rain was descending at this moment, and little Mrs. Honeyman looking at her lodger, who had sate down and taken up her book, said, "Have your ladyship's servants unpacked your trunks?"

"What on earth, madam, have you — has that to do with the question?"

"They will be put to the trouble of packing again, I fear. I cannot provide — three times five are fifteen — fifteen separate meals for seven persons — besides those of my own family. If your servants cannot eat with mine, or in my kitchen, they and their mistress must go elsewhere. And the sooner the better, madam, the sooner the better!" says Mrs. Honeyman, trembling with indignation, and sitting down in a chair spreading her silks.

"Do you know who I am?" asks Lady Anne, rising.

"Perfectly well, madam," says the other. "And had I known, you should never have come into my house, that's more."

"Madam!" cries the lady, on which the poor little invalid, scared and nervous, and hungry for his dinner, began to cry from his sofa.

"It will be a pity that the dear little boy should be disturbed. Dear little child, I have often heard of him, and of you, miss," says the little householder, rising. "I will get you some dinner, my dear, for Clive's sake. And meanwhile your ladyship will have the kindness to seek for some other apartments — for not a bit shall my fire cook for any one else of your company." And with this the indignant little landlady sailed out of the room.

"Gracious goodness! Who is the woman?" cries Lady Anne. "I never was so insulted in my life."

"Oh, mamma, it was you began!" says downright Ethel. "That is — Hush, Alfred dear! — Hush, my darling!"

"Oh, it was mamma began! I'm so hungry! I'm so hungry!" howled the little man on the sofa — or off it rather — for he was now down on the ground, kicking away the shawls which enveloped him.

"What is it, my boy? What is it, my blessed darling? You shall have your dinner! Give her all, Ethel. There are the keys of my desk — there's my watch — there are my rings. Let her take my all. The monster! the child must live! It can't go away in such a storm as this. Give me a cloak, a parasol, anything — I'll go forth and get a lodging. I'll beg my bread from house to house — if this fiend refuses me. Eat the biscuits, dear! A little of the syrup, Alfred darling; it's very nice, love! and come to your old mother — your poor old mother."

Alfred roared out, "No — it's not n-ice: it's n-a-a-asty! I won't have syrup. I will have dinner." The mother, whose embraces the child repelled with infantine kicks, plunged madly at the bells, rang them all four vehemently, and ran

downstairs towards the parlour, whence Miss Honeyman was issuing.

The good lady had not at first known the names of her lodgers, but had taken them in willingly enough on Dr. Goodenough's recommendation. And it was not until one of the nurses entrusted with the care of Master Alfred's dinner informed Miss Honeyman of the name of her guest, that she knew she was entertaining Lady Anne Newcome; and that the pretty girl was the fair Miss Ethel; the little sick boy, the little Alfred of whom his cousin spoke, and of whom Clive had made a hundred little drawings in his rude way, as he drew everybody. Then bidding Sally run off to St. James's Street for a chicken — she saw it put on the spit, and prepared a bread sauce, and composed a batter-pudding as she only knew how to make batter-puddings. Then she went to array herself in her best clothes, as we have seen — as we have heard rather (Goodness forbid that we should see Miss Honeyman arraying herself, or penetrate that chaste mystery, her toilette!)— then she came to wait upon Lady Anne, not a little flurried as to the result of that queer interview; then she whisked out of the drawing-room as before has been shown; and, finding the chicken roasted to a turn, the napkin and tray ready spread by Hannah the neat-handed, she was bearing them up to the little patient when the frantic parent met her on the stair.

"Is it — is it for my child?" cried Lady Anne, reeling against the bannister.

"Yes, it's for the child," says Miss Honeyman, tossing up her head. "But nobody else has anything in the house."

"God bless you — God bless you! A mother's bl-l-essings go with you," gurgled the lady, who was not, it must be confessed, a woman of strong moral character.

It was good to see the little man eating the fowl. Ethel, who had never cut anything in her young existence, except her fingers now and then with her brother's and her governess's penknives, bethought her of asking Miss Honeyman to carve the chicken. Lady Anne, with clasped hands and streaming eyes, sate looking on at the ravishing scene.

"Why did you not let us know you were Clive's aunt?" Ethel asked, putting out her hand. The old lady took hers very kindly, and said, "Because you didn't give me time. And do you love Clive, my dear?"

The reconciliation between Miss Honeyman and her lodger was perfect. Lady Anne wrote a quire of notepaper off to Sir Brian for that day's post — only she was too late, as she always was. Mr. Kuhn perfectly delighted Miss Honeyman that evening by his droll sayings, jokes, and pronunciation, and by his praises of Master Glife, as he called him. He lived out of the house, did everything for everybody, was never out of the way when wanted, and never in the way when not wanted. Ere long Miss Honeyman got out a bottle of the famous Madeira which her Colonel sent her, and treated him to a glass in her own room. Kuhn smacked his lips and held out the glass again. The honest rogue knew good wine.



CHAPTER X

ETHEL AND HER RELATIONS

For four-and-twenty successive hours Lady Anne Newcome was perfectly in raptures with her new lodgings, and every person and thing which they contained. The drawing-rooms were fitted with the greatest taste; the dinner was exquisite. Were there ever such delicious veal-cutlets, such verdant French beans? "Why do we have those odious French cooks, my dear, with their shocking principles — the principles of all Frenchmen are shocking — and the dreadful bills they bring us in; and their consequential airs and graces? I am determined to part with Brignol. I have written to your father this evening to give Brignol warning. When did he ever give us veal-cutlets? What can be nicer?"

"Indeed they were very good," said Miss Ethel, who had mutton five times a week at one o'clock. "I am so glad you like the house, and Clive, and Mrs. Honeyman."

"Like her! the dear little old woman. I feel as if she had been my friend all my life! I feel quite drawn towards her. What a wonderful coincidence that Dr. Goodenough should direct us to this very house! I have written to your father about it. And to think that I should have written to Clive at this very house, and quite forgotten Mrs. Honeyman's name — and such an odd name too. I forget everything, everything! You know I forgot your Aunt Louisa's husband's name; and when I was godmother to her baby, and the clergyman said, 'What is the infant's name?' I said, 'Really I forget.' And so I did. He was a London clergyman, but I forget at what church. Suppose it should be this very Mr. Honeyman! It may have been, you know, and then the coincidence would be still more droll. That tall, old, nice-looking, respectable person, with a mark on her nose, the housekeeper — what is her name? — seems a most invaluable person. I think I shall ask her to come to us. I am sure she would save me I don't know how much money every week; and I am certain Mrs. Trotter is making a fortune by us. I shall write to your papa, and ask him permission to ask this person." Ethel's mother was constantly falling in love with her new acquaintances; their man-servants and their maid-servants, their horses and ponies, and the visitor within their gates. She would ask strangers to Newcome, hug and embrace them on Sunday; not speak to them on Monday; and on Tuesday behave so rudely to them, that they were gone before Wednesday. Her daughter had had so many governesses — all darlings during the first week, and monsters afterwards — that the poor child possessed none of the accomplishments of her age. She could not play on the piano; she could not speak French well; she could not tell you when gunpowder was invented: she had not the faintest idea of the date of the Norman Conquest, or whether the earth went round the sun, or vice versa. She did not know the number of counties in England, Scotland, and Wales, let alone Ireland; she did not know the difference between latitude and longitude. She had had so many governesses: their accounts differed: poor Ethel was bewildered by a multiplicity of teachers, and thought herself a monster of ignorance. They gave her a book at a Sunday School, and little girls of eight years old answered questions of which she knew nothing. The place swam before her. She could not see the sun shining on their fair flaxen heads and pretty faces. The rosy little children holding up their eager hands, and crying the answer to this question and that, seemed mocking her. She seemed to read in the book, "O Ethel, you dunce, dunce, dunce!" She went home silent in the carriage, and burst into bitter tears on her bed. Naturally a haughty girl of the highest spirit, resolute and imperious, this little visit to the parish school taught Ethel lessons more valuable than ever so much arithmetic and geography. Clive has told me a story of her in her youth, which, perhaps, may apply to some others of the youthful female aristocracy. She used to walk, with other select young ladies and gentlemen, their nurses and governesses, in a certain reserved plot of ground railed off from Hyde Park, whereof some of the lucky dwellers in the neighbourhood of Apsley House have a key. In this garden, at the age of nine or thereabout, she had contracted an intimate friendship with the Lord Hercules O'Ryan. — as every one of my gentle readers knows, one of the sons of the Marquis of Ballyshannon. The Lord Hercules was a year younger than Miss Ethel Newcome, which may account for the passion which grew up between these young persons; it being a provision in nature that a boy always falls in love with a girl older than himself, or rather, perhaps, that a girl bestows her affections on a little boy, who submits to receive them.

One day Sir Brian Newcome announced his intention to go to Newcome that very morning, taking his family, and of course Ethel, with him. She was inconsolable. "What will Lord Hercules do when he finds I am gone?" she asked of her nurse.

The nurse endeavouring to soothe her, said, "Perhaps his lordship would know nothing about the circumstance." "He

will," said Miss Ethel — "he'll read it in the newspaper." My Lord Hercules, it is to be hoped, strangled this infant passion in the cradle; having long since married Isabella, only daughter of ——— Grains, Esq., of Drayton Windsor, a partner in the great brewery of Foker and Co.

When Ethel was thirteen years old, she had grown to be such a tall girl, that she overtopped her companions by a head or more, and morally perhaps, also, felt herself too tall for their society. "Fancy myself," she thought, "dressing a doll like Lily Putland or wearing a pinafore like Lucy Tucker!" She did not care for their sports. She could not walk with them: it seemed as if every one stared; nor dance with them at the academy, nor attend the Cours de Litterature Universelle et de Science Comprehensive of the professor then the mode — the smallest girls took her up in the class. She was bewildered by the multitude of things they bade her learn. At the youthful little assemblies of her sex, when, under the guide of their respected governesses, the girls came to tea at six o'clock, dancing, charades, and so forth, Ethel herded not with the children of her own age, nor yet with the teachers who sit apart at these assemblies, imparting to each other their little wrongs; but Ethel romped with the little children — the rosy little trots — and took them on her knees, and told them a thousand stories. By these she was adored, and loved like a mother almost, for as such the hearty kindly girl showed herself to them; but at home she was alone, farouche and intractable, and did battle with the governesses, and overcame them one after another. I break the promise of a former page, and am obliged to describe the youthful days of more than one person who is to take a share in this story. Not always doth the writer know whither the divine Muse leadeth him. But of this be sure — she is as inexorable as Truth. We must tell our tale as she imparts it to us, and go on or turn aside at her bidding.

Here she ordains that we should speak of other members of the family, whose history we chronicle, and it behoves us to say a word regarding the Earl of Kew, the head of the noble house into which Sir Brian Newcome had married.

When we read in the fairy stories that the King and Queen, who lived once upon a time, build a castle of steel, defended by moats and sentinels innumerable, in which they place their darling only child, the Prince or Princess, whose birth has blessed them after so many years of marriage, and whose christening feast has been interrupted by the cantankerous humour of that notorious old fairy who always persists in coming, although she has not received any invitation to the baptismal ceremony: when Prince Prettyman is locked up in the steel tower, provided only with the most wholesome food, the most edifying educational works, and the most venerable old tutor to instruct and to bore him, we know, as a matter of course, that the steel bolts and brazen bars one day will be of no avail, the old tutor will go off in a doze, and the moats and drawbridges will either be passed by His Royal Highness's implacable enemies, or crossed by the young scapegrace himself, who is determined to outwit his guardians, and see the wicked world. The old King and Queen always come in and find the chambers empty, the saucy heir-apparent flown, the porter and sentinels drunk, the ancient tutor asleep; they tear their venerable wigs in anguish, they kick the major-domo downstairs, they turn the duenna out of doors — the toothless old dragon! There is no resisting fate. The Princess will slip out of window by the rope-ladder; the Prince will be off to pursue his pleasures, and sow his wild oats at the appointed season. How many of our English princes have been coddled at home by their fond papas and mammas, walled up in inaccessible castles, with a tutor and a library, guarded by cordons of sentinels, sermoners, old aunts, old women from the world without, and have nevertheless escaped from all these guardians, and astonished the world by their extravagance and their frolics? What a wild rogue was that Prince Harry, son of the austere sovereign who robbed Richard the Second of his crown — the youth who took purses on Gadshill, frequented Eastcheap taverns with Colonel Falstaff and worse company, and boxed Chief Justice Gascoigne's ears! What must have been the venerable Queen Charlotte's state of mind when she heard of the courses of her beautiful young Prince; of his punting at gambling-tables; of his dealings with horse-jockeys; of his awful doings with Perdita? Besides instances taken from our Royal Family, could we not draw examples from our respected nobility? There was that young Lord Warwick, Mr. Addison's stepson. We know that his mother was severe, and his stepfather a most eloquent moralist, yet the young gentleman's career was shocking, positively shocking. He boxed the watch; he fuddled himself at taverns; he was no better than a Mohock. The chronicles of that day contain accounts of many a mad prank which he played, as we have legends of a still earlier date of the lawless freaks of the wild Prince and Poins. Our people has never looked very unkindly on these frolics. A young nobleman, full of life and spirits, generous of his money, jovial in his humour, ready with his sword, frank, handsome, prodigal, courageous, always finds favour. Young Scapegrace rides a steeplechase or beats a bargeman, and the crowd applauds him. Sages and seniors shake their heads, and look at him not unkindly; even stern old female moralists are disarmed at the sight of youth and gallantry, and beauty. I know very well that Charles Surface is a sad dog, and Tom Jones no better than he should be; but, in spite of such critics as Dr. Johnson

and Colonel Newcome, most of us have a sneaking regard for honest Tom, and hope Sophia will be happy, and Tom will end well at last.

Five-and-twenty years ago the young Earl of Kew came upon the town, which speedily rang with the feats of his lordship. He began life time enough to enjoy certain pleasures from which our young aristocracy of the present day seem, alas! to be cut off. So much more peaceable and polished do we grow, so much does the spirit of the age appear to equalise all ranks; so strongly has the good sense of society, to which in the end gentlemen of the very highest fashion must bow, put its veto upon practices and amusements with which our fathers were familiar. At that time the Sunday newspapers contained many and many exciting reports of boxing-matches. Bruising was considered a fine manly old English custom. Boys at public schools fondly perused histories of the noble science, from the redoubtable days of Broughton and Slack, to the heroic times of Dutch Sam and the Game Chicken. Young gentlemen went eagerly to Moulsey to see the Slasher punch the Pet's head, or the Negro beat the Jew's nose to a jelly. The island rang as yet with the tooting horns and rattling teams of mail-coaches; a gay sight was the road in merry England in those days, before steam-engines arose and flung its hostility and chivalry over. To travel in coaches, to drive coaches, to know coachmen and guards, to be familiar with inns along the road, to laugh with the jolly hostess in the bar, to chuck the pretty chambermaid under the chin, were the delight of men who were young not very long ago. Who ever thought of writing to the Times then? "Biffin," I warrant, did not grudge his money, and "A Thirsty Soul" paid cheerfully for his drink. The road was an institution, the ring was an institution. Men rallied round them; and, not without a kind conservatism, expatiated upon the benefits with which they endowed the country, and the evils which would occur when they should be no more:— decay of English spirit, decay of manly pluck, ruin of the breed of horses, and so forth, and so forth. To give and take a black eye was not unusual nor derogatory in a gentleman; to drive a stage-coach the enjoyment, the emulation of generous youth. Is there any young fellow of the present time who aspires to take the place of a stoker? You see occasionally in Hyde Park one dismal old drag with a lonely driver. Where are you, charioteers? Where are you, O rattling Quicksilver, O swift Defiance? You are passed by racers stronger and swifter than you. Your lamps are out, and the music of your horns has died away.

Just at the ending of that old time, Lord Kew's life began. That kindly middle-aged gentleman whom his county knows that good landlord, and friend of all his tenantry round about; that builder of churches, and indefatigable visitor of schools; that writer of letters to the farmers of his shire, so full of sense and benevolence; who wins prizes at agricultural shows, and even lectures at county town institutes in his modest, pleasant way, was the wild young Lord Kew of a quarter of a century back; who kept racehorses, patronised boxers, fought a duel, thrashed a Life Guardsman, gambled furiously at Crockford's, and did who knows what besides?

His mother, a devout lady, nursed her son and his property carefully during the young gentleman's minority: keeping him and his younger brother away from all mischief, under the eyes of the most careful pastors and masters. She learnt Latin with the boys, she taught them to play on the piano: she enraged old Lady Kew, the children's grandmother, who prophesied that her daughter-inlaw would make milksops of her sons, to whom the old lady was never reconciled until after my lord's entry at Christchurch, where he began to distinguish himself very soon after his first term. He drove tandems, kept hunters, gave dinners, scandalised the Dean, screwed up the tutor's door, and agonised his mother at home by his lawless proceedings. He quitted the University after a very brief sojourn at that seat of learning. It may be the Oxford authorities requested his lordship to retire; let bygones be bygones. His youthful son, the present Lord Walham, is now at Christchurch, reading with the greatest assiduity. Let us not be too particular in narrating his father's unedifying frolics of a quarter of a century ago.

Old Lady Kew, who, in conjunction with Mrs. Newcome, had made the marriage between Mr. Brian Newcome and her daughter, always despised her son-inlaw; and being a frank, open person, uttering her mind always, took little pains to conceal her opinion regarding him or any other individual. "Sir Brian Newcome," she would say, "is one of the most stupid and respectable of men; Anne is clever, but has not a grain of common sense. They make a very well assorted couple. Her flightiness would have driven any man crazy who had an opinion of his own. She would have ruined any poor man of her own rank; as it is, I have given her a husband exactly suited for her. He pays the bills, does not see how absurd she is, keeps order in the establishment, and checks her follies. She wanted to marry her cousin, Tom Poyntz, when they were both very young, and proposed to die of a broken heart when I arranged her match with Mr. Newcome. A broken fiddlestick! she would have ruined Tom Poyntz in a year; and has no more idea of the cost of a leg of mutton, than I have of algebra."

The Countess of Kew loved Brighton, and preferred living there even at the season when Londoners find such especial

charms in their own city. "London after Easter," the old lady said, "was intolerable. Pleasure becomes a business, then so oppressive, that all good company is destroyed by it. Half the men are sick with the feasts which they eat day after day. The women are thinking of the half-dozen parties they have to go to in the course of the night. The young girls are thinking of their partners and their toilettes. Intimacy becomes impossible, and quiet enjoyment of life. On the other hand, the crowd of bourgeois has not invaded Brighton. The drive is not blocked up by flocks full of stockbrokers' wives and children; and you can take the air in your chair upon the chain-pier, without being stifled by the cigars of the odious shop-boys from London." So Lady Kew's name was usually amongst the earliest which the Brighton newspapers recorded amongst the arrivals.

Her only unmarried daughter, Lady Julia, lived with her ladyship. Poor Lady Julia had suffered early from a spine disease, which had kept her for many years to her couch. Being always at home, and under her mother's eyes, she was the old lady's victim, her pincushion, into which Lady Kew plunged a hundred little points of sarcasm daily. As children are sometimes brought before magistrates, and their poor little backs and shoulders laid bare, covered with bruises and lashes which brutal parents have inflicted, so, I dare say, if there had been any tribunal or judge, before whom this poor patient lady's heart could have been exposed, it would have been found scarred all over with numberless ancient wounds, and bleeding from yesterday's castigation. Old Lady Kew's tongue was a dreadful thong which made numbers of people wince. She was not altogether cruel, but she knew the dexterity with which she wielded her lash, and liked to exercise it. Poor Lady Julia was always at hand, when her mother was minded to try her powers.

Lady Kew had just made herself comfortable at Brighton, when her little grandson's illness brought Lady Anne Newcome and her family down to the sea. Lady Kew was almost scared back to London again, or blown over the water to Dieppe. She had never had the measles. "Why did not Anne carry the child to some other place? Julia, you will on no account go and see that little pestiferous swarm of Newcomes, unless you want to send me out of the world — which I dare say you do, for I am a dreadful plague to you, I know, and my death would be a release to you."

"You see Doctor H., who visits the child every day," cries poor Pincushion; "you are not afraid when he comes."

"Doctor H.? Doctor H. comes to cure me, or to tell me the news, or to flatter me, or to feel my pulse and to pretend to prescribe, or to take his guinea; of course Dr. H. must go to see all sorts of people in all sorts of diseases. You would not have me be such a brute as to order him not to attend my own grandson? I forbid you to go to Anne's house. You will send one of the men every day to inquire. Let the groom go — yes, Charles — he will not go into the house. He will ring the bell and wait outside. He had better ring the bell at the area — I suppose there is an area — and speak to the servants through the bars, and bring us word how Alfred is." Poor Pincushion felt fresh compunctions; she had met the children, and kissed the baby, and held kind Ethel's hand in hers, that day, as she was out in her chair. There was no use, however, to make this confession. Is she the only good woman or man of whom domestic tyranny has made a hypocrite?

Charles, the groom, brings back perfectly favourable reports of Master Alfred's health that day, which Doctor H., in the course of his visit, confirms. The child is getting well rapidly; eating like a little ogre. His cousin Lord Kew has been to see him. He is the kindest of men, Lord Kew; he brought the little man Tom and Jerry with the pictures. The boy is delighted with the pictures.

"Why has not Kew come to see me? When did he come? Write him a note, and send for him instantly, Julia. Did you know he was here?"

Julia says, that she had but that moment read in the Brighton papers the arrival of the Earl of Kew and the Honourable J. Belsize at the Albion.

"I am sure they are here for some mischief," cries the old lady, delighted. "Whenever George and John Belsize are together, I know there is some wickedness planning. What do you know, Doctor? I see by your face you know something. Do tell it me, that I may write it to his odious psalm-singing mother."

Doctor H.'s face does indeed wear a knowing look. He simpers and says, "I did see Lord Kew driving this morning, first with the Honourable Mr. Belsize, and afterwards" — here he glances towards Lady Julia, as if to say, "Before an unmarried lady, I do not like to tell your ladyship with whom I saw Lord Kew driving, after he had left the Honourable Mr. Belsize, who went to play a match with Captain Huxtable at tennis."

"Are you afraid to speak before Julia?" cries the elder lady. "Why, bless my soul, she is forty years old, and has heard everything that can be heard. Tell me about Kew this instant, Doctor H."

The Doctor blandly acknowledges that Lord Kew had been driving Madame Pozzoprofondo, the famous contralto of the Italian Opera, in his phaeton, for two hours, in the face of all Brighton.

"Yes, Doctor," interposes Lady Julia, blushing; "but Signor Pozzoprofondo was in the carriage too — a-a-sitting behind with the groom. He was indeed, mamma."

"Julia, vous n'etes qu'une panache," says Lady Kew, shrugging her shoulders, and looking at her daughter from under her bushy black eyebrows. Her ladyship, a sister of the late lamented Marquis of Steyne, possessed no small share of the wit and intelligence, and a considerable resemblance to the features, of that distinguished nobleman.

Lady Kew bids her daughter take a pen and write:—"Monsieur le Mauvais Sujet — Gentlemen who wish to take the sea air in private, or to avoid their relations, had best go to other places than Brighton, where their names are printed in the newspapers. If you are not drowned in a pozzo —"

"Mamma!" interposes the secretary.

"— in a pozzo-profondo, you will please come to dine with two old women, at half-past seven. You may bring Mr. Belsize, and must tell us a hundred stories. — Yours, etc., L. Kew."

Julia wrote all the letter as her mother dictated it, save only one sentence, and the note was sealed and despatched to my Lord Kew, who came to dinner with Jack Belsize. Jack Belsize liked to dine with Lady Kew. He said, "she was an old dear, and the wickedest old woman in all England;" and he liked to dine with Lady Julia, who was "a poor suffering dear, and the best woman in all England." Jack Belsize liked every one, and every one liked him.

Two evenings afterwards the young men repeated their visit to Lady Kew, and this time Lord Kew was loud in praises of his cousins of the house of Newcome.

"Not of the eldest, Barnes, surely, my dear?" cries Lady Kew.

"No, confound him! not Barnes."

"No, d — it, not Barnes. I beg your pardon, Lady Julia," broke in Jack Belsize. "I can get on with most men; but that little Barney is too odious a little snob."

"A little what — Mr. Belsize?"

"A little snob, ma'am. I have no other word, though he is your grandson. I never heard him say a good word of any mortal soul, or do a kind action."

"Thank you, Mr. Belsize," says the lady.

"But the others are capital. There is that little chap who has just had the measles — he's a clear little brick. And as for Miss Ethel —"

"Ethel is a trump, ma'am," says Lord Kew, slapping his hand on his knee.

"Ethel is a brick, and Alfred is a trump, I think you say," remarks Lady Kew, nodding approval; "and Barnes is a snob. This is very satisfactory to know."

"We met the children out today," cries the enthusiastic Kew, "as I was driving Jack in the drag, and I got out and talked to 'em."

"Governess an uncommonly nice woman — oldish, but — I beg your pardon, Lady Julia," cries the inopportune Jack Belsize — "I'm always putting my foot in it."

"Putting your foot into what? Go on, Kew."

"Well, we met the whole posse of children; and the little fellow wanted a drive, and I said I would drive him and Ethel too, if she would come. Upon my word she is as pretty a girl as you can see on a summer's day. And the governess said 'No,' of course. Governesses always do. But I said I was her uncle, and Jack paid her such a fine compliment, that the young woman was mollified, and the children took their seats beside me, and Jack went behind."

"Where Monsieur Pozzoprofondo sits, bon."

"We drove on to the Downs, and we were nearly coming to grief. My horses are young, and when they get on the grass they are as if they were mad. It was very wrong; I know it was."

"D——d rash," interposes Jack. "He had nearly broken all our necks."

"And my brother Frank would have been Lord Kew," continued the young Earl, with a quiet smile. "What an escape for

him! The horses ran away — ever so far — and I thought the carriage must upset. The poor little boy, who has lost his pluck in the fever, began to cry; but that young girl, though she was as white as a sheet, never gave up for a moment, and sate in her place like a man. We met nothing, luckily; and I pulled the horses in after a mile or two, and I drove 'em into Brighton as quiet as if I had been driving a hearse. And that little trump of an Ethel, what do you think she said? She said, 'I was not frightened, but you must not tell mamma.' My aunt, it appears, was in a dreadful commotion — I ought to have thought of that."

"Lady Anne is a ridiculous old dear. I beg your pardon, Lady Kew," here breaks in Jack the apologist.

"There is a brother of Sir Brian Newcome's staying with them," Lord Kew proceeds; "an East India Colonel — a very fine-looking old boy."

"Smokes awfully, row about it in the hotel. Go on, Kew; beg your —"

"This gentleman was on the look-out for us, it appears, for when we came in sight he despatched a boy who was with him, running like a lamplighter back to my aunt, to say all was well. And he took little Alfred out of the carriage, and then helped out Ethel, and said, 'My dear, you are too pretty to scold; but you have given us all a belle peur.' And then he made me and Jack a low bow, and stalked into the lodgings."

"I think you do deserve to be whipped, both of you," cries Lady Kew.

"We went up and made our peace with my aunt, and were presented in form to the Colonel and his youthful cub."

"As fine a fellow as ever I saw: and as fine a boy as ever I saw," cries Jack Belsize. "The young chap is a great hand at drawing — upon my life the best drawings I ever saw. And he was making a picture for little What-d'you-call-'em. And Miss Newcome was looking over them. And Lady Anne pointed out the group to me, and said how pretty it was. She is uncommonly sentimental, you know, Lady Anne."

"My daughter Anne is the greatest fool in the three kingdoms," cried Lady Kew, looking fiercely over her spectacles. And Julia was instructed to write that night to her sister, and desire that Ethel should be sent to see her grandmother:— Ethel, who rebelled against her grandmother, and always fought on her Aunt Julia's side, when the weaker was oppressed by the older and stronger lady.



CHAPTER XI

AT MRS. RIDLEY'S

Saint Peter of Alcantara, as I have read in a life of St. Theresa, informed that devout lady that he had passed forty years of his life sleeping only an hour and a half each day; his cell was but four feet and a half long, so that he never lay down: his pillow was a wooden log in the stone wall: he ate but once in three days: he was for three years in a convent of his order without knowing any one of his brethren except by the sound of their voices, for he never during this period took his eyes off the ground: he always walked barefoot, and was but skin and bone when he died. The eating only once in three days, so he told his sister Saint, was by no means impossible, if you began the regimen in your youth. To conquer sleep was the hardest of all austerities which he practised:— I fancy the pious individual so employed, day after day, night after night, on his knees, or standing up in devout meditation in the cupboard — his dwelling-place; bareheaded and barefooted, walking over rocks, briars, mud, sharp stones (picking out the very worst places, let us trust, with his downcast eyes), under the bitter snow, or the drifting rain, or the scorching sunshine — I fancy Saint Peter of Alcantara, and contrast him with such a personage as the Incumbent of Lady Whittlesea's Chapel, Mayfair.

His hermitage is situated in Walpole Street, let us say, on the second floor of a quiet mansion, let out to hermits by a nobleman's butler, whose wife takes care of the lodgings. His cells consist of a refectory, a dormitory, and an adjacent oratory where he keeps his shower-bath and boots — the pretty boots trimly stretched on boot-trees and blacked to a nicety (not varnished) by the boy who waits on him. The barefooted business may suit superstitious ages and gentlemen of Alcantara, but does not become Mayfair and the nineteenth century. If St. Pedro walked the earth now with his eyes to the ground he would know fashionable divines by the way in which they were shod. Charles Honeyman's is a sweet foot. I have no doubt as delicate and plump and rosy as the white hand with its two rings, which he passes in impassioned moments through his slender flaxen hair.

A sweet odour pervades his sleeping apartment — not that peculiar and delicious fragrance with which the Saints of the Roman Church are said to gratify the neighbourhood where they repose — but oils, redolent of the richest perfumes of Macassar, essences (from Truefitt's or Delcroix's) into which a thousand flowers have expressed their sweetest breath, await his meek head on rising; and infuse the pocket-handkerchief with which he dries and draws so many tears. For he cries a good deal in his sermons, to which the ladies about him contribute showers of sympathy.

By his bedside are slippers lined with blue silk and worked of an ecclesiastical pattern, by some of the faithful who sit at his feet. They come to him in anonymous parcels: they come to him in silver paper: boys in buttons (pages who minister to female grace!) leave them at the door for the Rev. C. Honeyman, and slip away without a word. Purses are sent to him — penwipers — a portfolio with the Honeyman arms; yea, braces have been known to reach him by the post (in his days of popularity); and flowers, and grapes, and jelly when he was ill, and throat comforters, and lozenges for his dear bronchitis. In one of his drawers is the rich silk cassock presented to him by his congregation at Leatherhead (when the young curate quitted that parish for London duty), and on his breakfast-table the silver teapot, once filled with sovereigns and presented by the same devotees. The devo-teapot he has, but the sovereigns, where are they?

What a different life this is from our honest friend of Alcantara, who eats once in three days! At one time if Honeyman could have drunk tea three times in an evening, he might have had it. The glass on his chimneypiece is crowded with invitations, not merely cards of ceremony (of which there are plenty), but dear little confidential notes from sweet friends of his congregation. "Ob, dear Mr. Honeyman," writes Blanche, "what a sermon that was! I cannot go to bed to-night without thanking you for it." "Do, do, dear Mr. Honeyman," writes Beatrice, "lend me that delightful sermon. And can you come and drink tea with me and Selina, and my aunt? Papa and mamma dine out, but you know I am always your faithful Chesterfield Street." And so on. He has all the domestic accomplishments; he plays on the violoncello: he sings a delicious second, not only in sacred but in secular music. He has a thousand anecdotes, laughable riddles, droll stories (of the utmost correctness, you understand) with which he entertains females of all ages; suiting his conversation to stately matrons, deaf old dowagers (who can hear his clear voice better than the loudest roar of their stupid sons-in-law), mature spinsters, young beauties dancing through the season, even rosy little slips out of the nursery, who cluster round his beloved feet. Societies fight for him to preach their charity sermon. You read in the papers, "The Wapping Hospital for

Wooden-legged Seamen. — On Sunday the 23rd, Sermons will be preached in behalf of this charity, by the Lord Bishop of Tobago in the morning, in the afternoon by the Rev. C. Honeyman, A.M., Incumbent of,” etc. “Clergymen’s Grandmothers’ Fund. — Sermons in aid of this admirable institution will be preached on Sunday, 4th May, by the Very Rev. the Dean of Pimlico, and the Rev. C. Honeyman, A.M.” When the Dean of Pimlico has his illness, many people think Honeyman will have the Deanery; that he ought to have it, a hundred female voices vow and declare: though it is said that a right reverend head at headquarters shakes dubiously when his name is mentioned for preferment. His name is spread wide, and not only women but men come to hear him. Members of Parliament, even Cabinet Ministers, sit under him. Lord Dozeley of course is seen in a front pew: where was a public meeting without Lord Dozeley? The men come away from his sermons and say, “It’s very pleasant, but I don’t know what the deuce makes all you women crowd so to hear the man.” “Oh, Charles! if you would but go oftener!” sighs Lady Anna Maria. “Can’t you speak to the Home Secretary? Can’t you do something for him?” “We can ask him to dinner next Wednesday if you like,” Says Charles. “They say he’s a pleasant fellow out of the wood. Besides there is no use in doing anything for him,” Charles goes on. “He can’t make less than a thousand a year out of his chapel, and that is better than anything any one can give him. A thousand a year, besides the rent of the wine-vaults below the chapel.”

“Don’t, Charles!” says his wife, with a solemn look. “Don’t ridicule things in that way.

“Confound it! there are wine-vaults under the chapel!” answers downright Charles. “I saw the name, Sherrick and Co.; offices, a green door, and a brass plate. It’s better to sit over vaults with wine in them than coffins. I wonder whether it’s the Sherrick with whom Kew and Jack Belsize had that ugly row?”

“What ugly row? — don’t say ugly row. It is not a nice word to hear the children use. Go on, my darlings. What was the dispute of Lord Kew and Mr. Belsize, and this Mr. Sherrick?”

“It was all about pictures, and about horses, and about money, and about one other subject which enters into every row that I ever heard of.”

“And what is that, dear?” asks the innocent lady, hanging on her husband’s arm, and quite pleased to have led him to church and brought him thence. “And what is it, that enters into every row, as you call it, Charles?”

“A woman, my love,” answers the gentleman, behind whom we have been in imagination walking out from Charles Honeyman’s church on a Sunday in June: as the whole pavement blooms with artificial flowers and fresh bonnets; as there is a buzz and cackle all around regarding the sermon; as carriages drive off; as lady-dowagers walk home; as prayer-books and footmen’s sticks gleam in the sun; as little boys with baked mutton and potatoes pass from the courts; as children issue from the public-houses with pots of beer; as the Reverend Charles Honeyman, who has been drawing tears in the sermon, and has seen, not without complacent throbs, a Secretary of State in the pew beneath him, divests himself of his rich silk cassock in the vestry, before he walks away to his neighbouring hermitage — where have we placed it? — in Walpole Street. I wish St. Pedro of Alcantara could have some of that shoulder of mutton with the baked potatoes, and a drink of that frothing beer. See, yonder trots little Lord Dozeley, who has been asleep for an hour with his head against the wood, like St. Pedro of Alcantara.

An East Indian gentleman and his son wait until the whole chapel is clear, and survey Lady Whittlesea’s monument at their leisure, and other hideous slabs erected in memory of defunct frequenters of the chapel. Whose was that face which Colonel Newcome thought he recognised — that of a stout man who came down from the organ-gallery? Could it be Broff the bass singer, who delivered the “Red Cross Knight” with such applause at the Cave of Melody, and who has been singing in this place? There are some chapels in London, where, the function over, one almost expects to see the sextons put brown holland over the pews and galleries, as they do at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden.

The writer of these veracious pages was once walking through a splendid English palace, standing amidst parks and gardens, than which none more magnificent has been seen since the days of Aladdin, in company with a melancholy friend, who viewed all things darkly through his gloomy eyes. The housekeeper, pattering on before us from chamber to chamber, was expatiating upon the magnificence of this picture; the beauty of that statue; the marvellous richness of these hangings and carpets; the admirable likeness of the late Marquis by Sir Thomas; of his father, the fifth Earl, by Sir Joshua, and so on; when, in the very richest room of the whole castle, Hicks — such was my melancholy companion’s name — stopped the cicerone in her prattle, saying in a hollow voice, “And now, madam, will you show us the closet where the skeleton is?” The seared functionary paused in the midst of her harangue; that article was not inserted in the catalogue which she daily

utters to visitors for their half-crown. Hicks's question brought a darkness down upon the hall where we were standing. We did not see the room: and yet I have no doubt there is such an one; and ever after, when I have thought of the splendid castle towering in the midst of shady trees, under which the dappled deer are browsing; of the terraces gleaming with statues, and bright with a hundred thousand flowers; of the bridges and shining fountains and rivers wherein the castle windows reflect their festive gleams, when the halls are filled with happy feasters, and over the darkling woods comes the sound of music; — always, I say, when I think of Castle Bluebeard:— it is to think of that dark little closet, which I know is there, and which the lordly owner opens shuddering — after midnight — when he is sleepless and must go unlock it, when the palace is hushed, when beauties are sleeping around him unconscious, and revellers are at rest. O Mrs. Housekeeper: all the other keys hast thou: but that key thou hast not!

Have we not all such closets, my jolly friend, as well as the noble Marquis of Carabas? At night, when all the house is asleep but you, don't you get up and peep into yours? When you in your turn are slumbering, up gets Mrs. Brown from your side, steals downstairs like Amina to her ghoul, clicks open the secret door, and looks into her dark depository. Did she tell you of that little affair with Smith long before she knew you? Psha! who knows any one save himself alone? Who, in showing his house to the closest and dearest, doesn't keep back the key of a closet or two? I think of a lovely reader laying down the page and looking over at her unconscious husband, asleep, perhaps, after dinner. Yes, madam, a closet he hath: and you, who pry into everything, shall never have the key of it. I think of some honest Othello pausing over this very sentence in a railroad carriage, and stealthily gazing at Desdemona opposite to him, innocently administering sandwiches to their little boy — I am trying to turn off the sentence with a joke, you see — I feel it is growing too dreadful, too serious.

And to what, pray, do these serious, these disagreeable, these almost personal observations tend? To this simply, that Charles Honeyman, the beloved and popular preacher, the elegant divine to whom Miss Blanche writes sonnets, and whom Miss Beatrice invites to tea; who comes with smiles on his lip, gentle sympathy in his tones, innocent gaiety in his accent; who melts, rouses, terrifies in the pulpit; who charms over the tea-urn and the bland bread-and-butter: Charles Honeyman has one or two skeleton closets in his lodgings, Walpole Street, Mayfair; and many a wakeful night, whilst Mrs. Ridley, his landlady, and her tired husband, the nobleman's major-domo, whilst the lodger on the first floor, whilst the cook and housemaid and weary little bootboy are at rest (mind you, they have all got their closets, which they open with their skeleton-keys); he wakes up, and looks at the ghastly occupant of that receptacle. One of the Reverend Charles Honeyman's grisly night-haunters is — but stop; let us give a little account of the lodgings, and of some of the people frequenting the same.

First floor, Mr. Bagshot, Member for a Norfolk borough. Stout jolly gentleman; — dines at the Carlton Club; greatly addicted to Greenwich and Richmond, in the season: bets in a moderate way: does not go into society, except now and again to the chiefs of his party, when they give great entertainments; and once or twice to the houses of great country dons who dwell near him in the country. Is not of very good family; was, in fact, an apothecary: married a woman with money, much older than himself, who does not like London, and stops at home at Hummingham, not much to the displeasure of Bagshot; gives every now and then nice little quiet dinners, which Mrs. Ridley cooks admirably, to exceedingly stupid jolly old Parliamentary fogies, who absorb, with much silence and cheerfulness, a vast quantity of wine. They have just begun to drink '24 claret now, that of '15 being scarce, and almost drunk up. Writes daily, and hears every morning from Mrs. Bagshot; does not read her letters always: does not rise till long past eleven o'clock of a Sunday, and has John Bull and Bell's Life, in bed: frequents the Blue Posts sometimes; rides a stout cob out of his county, and pays like the Bank of England.

The house is a Norfolk house. Mrs. Ridley was housekeeper to the great Squire Bayham, who had the estate before the Conqueror, and who came to such a dreadful crash in the year 1825, the year of the panic. Bayhams still belongs to the family, but in what a state, as those can say who recollect it in its palmy days! Fifteen hundred acres of the best land in England were sold off: all the timber cut down as level as a billiard-board. Mr. Bayham now lives up in one corner of the house, which used to be filled with the finest company in Europe. Law bless you! the Bayhams have seen almost all the nobility of England come in and go out, and were gentlefolks when many a fine lord's father of the present day was sweeping a counting-house.

The house will hold genteelly no more than these two inmates; but in the season it manages to accommodate Miss Cann, who too was from Bayhams, having been a governess there to the young lady who is dead, and who now makes such a livelihood as she can best raise, by going out as a daily teacher. Miss Cann dines with Mrs. Ridley in the adjoining little

back-parlour. Ridley but seldom can be spared to partake of the family dinner, his duties in the house and about the person of my Lord Todmorden keeping him constantly near that nobleman. How little Miss Cann can go on and keep alive on the crumb she eats for breakfast, and the scrap she picks at dinner, du astonish Mrs. Ridley, that it du! She declares that the two canary-birds encaged in her window (whence is a cheerful prospect of the back of Lady Whittlesea's Chapel) eat more than Miss Cann. The two birds set up a tremendous singing and chorussing when Miss Cann, spying the occasion of the first-floor lodger's absence, begins practising her music-pieces. Such trills, roulades, and flourishes go on from the birds and the lodger! it is a wonder how any fingers can move over the jingling ivory so quickly as Miss Cann's. Excellent a woman as she is, admirably virtuous, frugal, brisk, honest, and cheerful, I would not like to live in lodgings where there was a lady so addicted to playing variations. No more does Honeyman. On a Saturday, when he is composing his valuable sermons (the rogue, you may be sure, leaves his work to the last day, and there are, I am given to understand, among the clergy many better men than Honeyman, who are as dilatory as he), he begs, he entreats with tears in his eyes, that Miss Cann's music may cease. I would back little Cann to write a sermon against him, for all his reputation as a popular preacher.

Old and weazened as that piano is, feeble and cracked her voice, it is wonderful what a pleasant concert she can give in that parlour of a Saturday evening, to Mrs. Ridley, who generally dozes a good deal, and to a lad, who listens with all his soul, with tears sometimes in his great eyes, with crowding fancies filling his brain and throbbing at his heart, as the artist plies her humble instrument. She plays old music of Handel and Haydn, and the little chamber anon swells into a cathedral, and he who listens beholds altars lighted, priests ministering, fair children swinging censers, great oriel windows gleaming in sunset, and seen through arched columns and avenues of twilight marble. The young fellow who hears her has been often and often to the opera and the theatres. As she plays Don Juan, Zerlina comes tripping over the meadows, and Masetto after her, with a crowd of peasants and maidens: and they sing the sweetest of all music, and the heart beats with happiness, and kindness, and pleasure. Piano, pianissimo! the city is hushed. The towers of the great cathedral rise in the distance, its spires lighted by the broad moon. The statues in the moonlit place cast long shadows athwart the pavement: but the fountain in the midst is dressed out like Cinderella for the night, and sings and wears a crest of diamonds. That great sombre street all in shade, can it be the famous Toledo? — or is it the Corso? — or is it the great street in Madrid, the one which leads to the Escorial where the Rubens and Velasquez are? It is Fancy Street — Poetry Street — Imagination Street — the street where lovely ladies look from balconies, where cavaliers strike mandolins and draw swords and engage, where long processions pass, and venerable hermits, with long beards, bless the kneeling people: where the rude soldiery, swaggering through the place with flags and halberts, and fife and dance, seize the slim waists of the daughters of the people, and bid the pifferari play to their dancing. Blow, bagpipes, a storm of harmony! become trumpets, trombones, ophicleides, fiddles, and bassoons! Fire, guns sound, tocsins! Shout, people! Louder, shriller and sweeter than all, sing thou, ravishing heroine! And see, on his cream-coloured charger Massaniello prances in, and Fra Diavolo leaps down the balcony, carabine in hand; and Sir Huon of Bordeaux sails up to the quay with the Sultan's daughter of Babylon. All these delights and sights, and joys and glories, these thrills of sympathy, movements of unknown longing, and visions of beauty, a young sickly lad of eighteen enjoys in a little dark room where there is a bed disguised in the shape of a wardrobe, and a little old woman is playing under a gas-lamp on the jingling keys of an old piano.

For a long time Mr. Samuel Ridley, butler and confidential valet to the Right Honourable John James Baron Todmorden, was in a state of the greatest despair and gloom about his only son, the little John James — a sickly and almost deformed child "of whom there was no making nothink," as Mr. Ridley said. His figure precluded him from following his father's profession, and waiting upon the British nobility, who naturally require large and handsome men to skip up behind their rolling carriages, and hand their plates at dinner. When John James was six years old his father remarked, with tears in his eyes, he wasn't higher than a plate-basket. The boys jeered at him in the streets — some whopped him, spite of his diminutive size. At school he made but little progress. He was always sickly and dirty, and timid and crying, whimpering in the kitchen away from his mother; who, though she loved him, took Mr. Ridley's view of his character, and thought him little better than an idiot until such time as little Miss Cann took him in hand, when at length there was some hope of him.

"Half-witted, you great stupid big man," says Miss Cann, who had a fine spirit of her own. "That boy half-witted! He has got more wit in his little finger than you have in all your great person! You are a very good man, Ridley, very good-natured I'm sure, and bear with the teasing of a waspish old woman: but you are not the wisest of mankind. Tut, tut, don't

tell me. You know you spell out the words when you read the newspaper still, and what would your bills look like if I did not write them in my nice little hand? I tell you that boy is a genius. I tell you that one day the world will hear of him. His heart is made of pure gold. You think that all the wit belongs to the big people. Look at me, you great tall man! Am I not a hundred times cleverer than you are? Yes, and John James is worth a thousand such insignificant little chits as I am; and he is as tall as me too, sir. Do you hear that! One day I am determined he shall dine at Lord Todmorden's table, and he shall get the prize at the Royal Academy, and be famous, sir — famous!"

"Well, Miss C., I wish he may get it; that's all I say," answers Mr. Ridley. "The poor fellow does no harm, that I acknowledge; but I never see the good he was up to yet. I wish he'd begin it; I do wish he would now." And the honest gentleman relapses into the study of his paper.

All those beautiful sounds and thoughts which Miss Cann conveys to him out of her charmed piano, the young artist straightway translates into forms; and knights in armour, with plume, and shield, and battle-axe; and splendid young noblemen with flowing ringlets, and bounteous plumes of feathers, and rapiers, and russet boots; and fierce banditti with crimson tights, doublets profusely illustrated with large brass buttons, and the dumpy basket-hilted claymores known to be the favourite weapon with which these whiskered ruffians do battle; wasp-waisted peasant girls, and young countesses with oh, such large eyes and the lips! — all these splendid forms of war and beauty crowd to the young draughtsman's pencil, and cover letter-backs, copybooks, without end. If his hand strikes off some face peculiarly lovely, and to his taste, some fair vision that has shone on his imagination, some houri of a dancer, some bright young lady of fashion in an opera-box, whom he has seen, or fancied he has seen (for the youth is short-sighted, though he hardly as yet knows his misfortune)—if he has made some effort extraordinarily successful, our young Pygmalion hides away the masterpiece, and he paints the beauty with all his skill; the lips a bright carmine, the eyes a deep, deep cobalt, the cheeks a dazzling vermilion, the ringlets of a golden hue; and he worships this sweet creature of his in secret, fancies a history for her; a castle to storm, a tyrant usurper who keeps her imprisoned, and a prince in black ringlets and a spangled cloak, who scales the tower, who slays the tyrant, and then kneels gracefully at the princess's feet, and says, "Lady, wilt thou be mine?"

There is a kind lady in the neighbourhood, who takes in dressmaking for the neighbouring maid-servants, and has a small establishment of lollipops, theatrical characters, and ginger-beer for the boys in Little Craggs Buildings, hard by the Running Footman public-house, where father and other gentlemen's gentlemen have their club: this good soul also sells Sunday newspapers to the footmen of the neighbouring gentry; and besides, has a stock of novels for the ladies of the upper servants' table. Next to Miss Cann, Miss Flinders is John James's greatest friend and benefactor. She has remarked him when he was quite a little man, and used to bring his father's beer of a Sunday. Out of her novels he has taught himself to read, dull boy at the day-school though he was, and always the last in his class, there. Hours, happy hours, has he spent cowering behind her counter, or hugging her books under his pinafore when he had leave to carry them home. The whole library has passed through his hands, his long, lean, tremulous hands, and under his eager eyes. He has made illustrations to every one of those books, and been frightened at his own pictures of Manfroni or the One-handed Monk, Abellino the Terrific Bravo of Venice, and Rinaldo Rinaldini Captain of Robbers. How he has blistered Thaddeus of Warsaw with his tears, and drawn him in his Polish cap, and tights, and Hessians! William Wallace, the Hero of Scotland, how nobly he has depicted him! With what whiskers and bushy ostrich plumes! — in a tight kilt, and with what magnificent calves to his legs, laying about him with his battle-axe, and bestriding the bodies of King Edward's prostrate cavaliers! At this time Mr. Honeyman comes to lodge in Walpole Street, and brings a set of Scott's novels, for which he subscribed when at Oxford; and young John James, who at first waits upon him and does little odd jobs for the reverend gentleman, lights upon the volumes, and reads them with such a delight and passion of pleasure as all the delights of future days will scarce equal. A fool, is he? — an idle feller, out of whom no good will ever come, as his father says. There was a time when, in despair of any better chance for him, his parents thought of apprenticing him to a tailor, and John James was waked up from a dream of Rebecca and informed of the cruelty meditated against him. I forbear to describe the tears and terror, and frantic desperation in which the poor boy was plunged. Little Miss Cann rescued him from that awful board, and Honeyman likewise interceded for him, and Mr. Bagshot promised that, as soon as his party came in, he would ask the Minister for a tide-waitership for him; for everybody liked the solemn, soft-hearted, willing little lad, and no one knew him less than his pompous and stupid and respectable father.

Miss Cann painted flowers and card-screens elegantly, and "finished" pencil-drawings most elaborately for her pupils. She could copy prints, so that at a little distance you would scarcely know that the copy in stumped chalk was not a bad

mezzotinto engraving. She even had a little old paint-box, and showed you one or two ivory miniatures out of the drawer. She gave John James what little knowledge of drawing she had, and handed him over her invaluable recipes for mixing water-colours —“for trees in foregrounds, burnt sienna and indigo”—“for very dark foliage, ivory black and gamboge”—“for flesh-colour,” etc. etc. John James went through her poor little course, but not so brilliantly as she expected. She was forced to own that several of her pupils’ “pieces” were executed much more dexterously than Johnny Ridley’s. Honeyman looked at the boy’s drawings from time to time, and said, “Hm, ha! — very clever — a great deal of fancy, really.” But Honeyman knew no more of the subject than a deaf and dumb man knows of music. He could talk the art cant very glibly, and had a set of Morghens and Madonnas as became a clergyman and a man of taste; but he saw not with eyes such as those wherewith Heaven had endowed the humble little butler’s boy, to whom splendours of Nature were revealed to vulgar sights invisible, and beauties manifest in forms, colours, shadows of common objects, where most of the world saw only what was dull, and gross, and familiar. One reads in the magic story-books of a charm or a flower which the wizard gives, and which enables the bearer to see the fairies. O enchanting boon of Nature, which reveals to the possessor the hidden spirits of beauty round about him! spirits which the strongest and most gifted masters compel into painting or song. To others it is granted but to have fleeting glimpses of that fair Art-world; and tempted by ambition, or barred by faint-heartedness, or driven by necessity, to turn away thence to the vulgar life-track, and the light of common day.

The reader who has passed through Walpole Street scores of times, knows the uncomfortable architecture of all, save the great houses built in Queen Anne’s and George the First’s time; and while some of the neighbouring streets, to wit, Great Craggs Street, Bolingbroke Street, and others, contain mansions fairly coped with stone, with little obelisks before the doors, and great extinguishers wherein the torches of the nobility’s running footmen were put out a hundred and thirty or forty years ago:— houses which still remain abodes of the quality, and where you shall see a hundred carriages gather of a public night; Walpole Street has quite faded away into lodgings, private hotels, doctors’ houses, and the like; nor is No. 23 (Ridley’s) by any means the best house in the street. The parlour, furnished and tenanted by Miss Cann as has been described; the first floor, Bagshot, Esq., M.P.; the second floor, Honeyman; what remains but the garrets, and the ample staircase and the kitchens? and the family being all put to bed, how can you imagine there is room for any more inhabitants?

And yet there is one lodger more, and one who, like almost all the other personages mentioned up to the present time (and some of whom you have no idea yet), will play a definite part in the ensuing history. At night, when Honeyman comes in, he finds on the hall-table three wax bedroom candles — his own, Bagshot’s, and another. As for Miss Cann, she is locked into the parlour in bed long ago, her stout little walking-shoes being on the mat at the door. At 12 o’clock at noon, sometimes at 1, nay at 2 and 3 — long after Bagshot is gone to his committees, and little Cann to her pupils — a voice issues from the very topmost floor, from a room where there is no bell; a voice of thunder calling out “Slavey! Julia! Julia, my love! Mrs. Ridley!” And this summons not being obeyed, it will not unfrequently happen that a pair of trousers enclosing a pair of boots with iron heels, and known by the name of the celebrated Prussian General who came up to help the other christener of boots at Waterloo, will be flung down from the topmost story, even to the marble floor of the resounding hall. Then the boy Thomas, otherwise called Slavey, may say, “There he goes again;” or Mrs. Ridley’s own back-parlour bell rings vehemently, and Julia the cook will exclaim, “Lor, it’s Mr. Frederick.”

If the breeches and boots are not understood, the owner himself appears in great wrath dancing on the upper story; dancing down to the lower floor; and loosely enveloped in a ragged and flowing robe de chambre. In this costume and condition he will dance into Honeyman’s apartment, where that meek divine may be sitting with a headache or over a novel or a newspaper; dance up to the fire flapping his robe-tails, poke it, and warm himself there; dance up to the cupboard where his reverence keeps his sherry, and help himself to a glass.

“Salve, spes fidei, lumen ecclesiae,” he will say; “here’s towards you, my buck. I knows the tap. Sherrick’s Marsala bottled three months after date, at two hundred and forty-six shillings the dozen.”

“Indeed, indeed it’s not” (and now we are coming to an idea of the skeleton in poor Honeyman’s closet — not that this huge handsome jolly Fred Bayham is the skeleton, far from it. Mr. Frederick weighs fourteen stone). “Indeed, indeed it isn’t, Fred, I’m sure,” sighs the other. “You exaggerate, indeed you do. The wine is not dear, not by any means so expensive as you say.”

“How much a glass, think you?” says Fred, filling another bumper. “A half-crown, think ye? — a half-crown, Honeyman? By cock and pye, it is not worth a bender.” He says this in the manner of the most celebrated tragedian of the

day. He can imitate any actor, tragic or comic; any known Parliamentary orator or clergyman; any saw, cock, cloop of a cork wrenched from a bottle and guggling of wine into the decanter afterwards, bee buzzing, little boy up a chimney, etc. He imitates people being ill on board a steam-packet so well that he makes you die of laughing; his uncle the Bishop could not resist this comic exhibition, and gave Fred a cheque for a comfortable sum of money; and Fred, getting cash for the cheque at the Cave of Harmony, imitated his uncle the Bishop and his Chaplain, winding up with his Lordship and Chaplain being unwell at sea — the Chaplain and Bishop quite natural and distinct.

“How much does a glass of this sack cost thee, Charley?” resumes Fred, after this parenthesis. “You say it is not dear. Charles Honeyman, you had, even from your youth up, a villainous habit. And I perfectly well remember, sir, in boyhood’s breezy hour, when I was the delight of his school, that you used to tell lies to your venerable father. You did, Charles. Excuse the frankness of an early friend, it’s my belief you’d rather lie than not. Hm”— he looks at the cards in the chimney-glass “Invitations to dinner, proffers of muffins. Do lend me your sermon. Oh, you old impostor! you hoary old Ananias! I say, Charley, why haven’t you picked out some nice girl for yours truly? One with lauds and beeves, with rents and consols, mark you? I have no money, ’tis true, but then I don’t owe as much as you. I am a handsomer man than you are. Look at this chest” (he slaps it), “these limbs; they are manly, sir, manly.”

“For Heaven’s sake, Bayham,” cries Mr. Honeyman, white with terror; “if anybody were to come —”

“What did I say anon, sir? that I was manly, ay, manly. Let any ruffian, save a bailiff, come and meet the doughty arm of Frederick Bayham.”

“Oh, Lord, Lord, here’s somebody coming into the room!” cries Charles, sinking back on the sofa, as the door opens.

“Ha! dost thou come with murderous intent?” and he now advances in an approved offensive attitude. “Caitiff, come on, come on!” and he walks off with a tragic laugh, crying, “Ha, ha, ha, ’tis but the slavey!”

The slavey has Mr. Frederick’s hot water, and a bottle of sodawater on the same tray. He has been instructed to bring soda whenever he hears the word slavey pronounced from above. The bottle explodes, and Frederick drinks, and hisses after his drink as though he had been all hot within.

“What’s o’clock now, slavey — half-past three? Let me see, I breakfasted exactly ten hours ago, in the rosy morning, off a modest cup of coffee in Covent Garden Market. Coffee, a penny; bread, a simple halfpenny. What has Mrs. Ridley for dinner?”

“Please, sir, roast pork.”

“Get me some. Bring it into my room, unless, Honeyman, you insist upon my having it here, kind fellow!”

At the moment a smart knock comes to the door, and Fred says, “Well, Charles, it may be a friend or a lady come to confess, and I’m off; I knew you’d be sorry I was going. Tom, bring up my things; brush ’em gently, you scoundrel, and don’t take the nap off. Bring up the roast pork, and plenty of apple-sauce, tell Mrs. Ridley, with my love; and one of Mr. Honeyman’s shirts, and one of his razors. Adieu, Charles! Amend! Remember me.” And he vanishes into the upper chambers.



CHAPTER XII

IN WHICH EVERYBODY IS ASKED TO DINNER

John James had opened the door hastening to welcome a friend and patron, the sight of whom always gladdened the youth's eyes; no other than Clive Newcome — in young Ridley's opinion, the most splendid, fortunate, beautiful, high-born, and gifted youth this island contained. What generous boy in his time has not worshipped somebody? Before the female enslaver makes her appearance, every lad has a friend of friends, a crony of cronies, to whom he writes immense letters in vacation, whom he cherishes in his heart of hearts; whose sister he proposes to marry in after life; whose purse he shares; for whom he will take a thrashing if need be: who is his hero. Clive was John James's youthful divinity: when he wanted to draw Thaddeus of Warsaw, a Prince, Ivanhoe, or some one splendid and egregious, it was Clive he took for a model. His heart leapt when he saw the young fellow. He would walk cheerfully to Grey Friars, with a letter or message for Clive, on the chance of seeing him, and getting a kind word from him, or a shake of the hand. An ex-butler of Lord Todmorden was a pensioner in the Grey Friars Hospital (it has been said that at that ancient establishment is a college for old men as well as for boys), and this old man would come sometimes to his successor's Sunday dinner, and grumble from the hour of that meal until nine o'clock, when he was forced to depart, so as to be within Grey Friars' gates before ten; grumble about his dinner — grumble about his beer — grumble about the number of chapels he had to attend, about the gown he wore, about the master's treatment of him, about the want of plums in the pudding, as old men and schoolboys grumble. It was wonderful what a liking John James took to this odious, querulous, graceless, stupid, and snuffy old man, and how he would find pretexts for visiting him at his lodging in the old hospital. He actually took that journey that he might have a chance of seeing Clive. He sent Clive notes and packets of drawings; thanked him for books lent, asked advice about future reading — anything, so that he might have a sight of his pride, his patron, his paragon.

I am afraid Clive Newcome employed him to smuggle rum-shrub and cigars into the premises; giving him appointments in the school precincts, where young Clive would come and stealthily receive the forbidden goods. The poor lad was known by the boys, and called Newcome's Punch. He was all but hunchbacked; long and lean in the arm; sallow, with a great forehead, and waving black hair, and large melancholy eyes.

"What, is it you, J. J.?" cries Clive gaily, when his humble friend appears at the door. "Father, this is my friend Ridley. This is the fellow what can draw."

"I know who I will back against any young man of his size at that," says the Colonel, looking at Clive fondly. He considered there was not such a genius in the world; and had already thought of having some of Clive's drawings published by M'Lean of the Haymarket.

"This is my father just come from India — and Mr. Pendennis, an old Grey Friars' man. Is my uncle at home?" Both these gentlemen bestow rather patronising nods of the head on the lad introduced to them as J. J. His exterior is but mean-looking. Colonel Newcome, one of the humblest-minded men alive, has yet his old-fashioned military notions; and speaks to a butler's son as to a private soldier, kindly, but not familiarly.

"Mr Honeyman is at home, gentlemen," the young lad says, humbly. "Shall I show you up to his room?" And we walk up the stairs after our guide. We find Mr. Honeyman deep in study on his sofa, with Pearson on the Creed before him. The novel has been whipped under the pillow. Clive found it there some short time afterwards, during his uncle's temporary absence in his dressing-room. He has agreed to suspend his theological studies, and go out with his brother-inlaw to dine.

As Clive and his friends were at Honeyman's door, and just as we were entering to see the divine seated in state before his folio, Clive whispers, "J. J., come along, old fellow, and show us some drawings. What are you doing?"

"I was doing some Arabian Nights," says J. J., "up in my room; and hearing a knock which I thought was yours, I came down."

"Show us the pictures. Let's go up into your room," cries Clive. "What — will you?" says the other. "It is but a very small place."

"Never mind, come along," says Clive; and the two lads disappear together, leaving the three grown gentlemen to discourse together, or rather two of us to listen to Honeyman, who expatiates upon the beauty of the weather, the

difficulties of the clerical calling, the honour Colonel Newcome does him by a visit, etc., with his usual eloquence.

After a while Clive comes down without J. J., from the upper regions. He is greatly excited. "Oh, sir," he says to his father, "you talk about my drawings — you should see J. J.'s! By Jove, that fellow is a genius. They are beautiful, sir. You seem actually to read the Arabian Nights, you know, only in pictures. There is Scheherazade telling the stories, and — what do you call her? — Dinarzade and the Sultan sitting in bed and listening. Such a grim old cove! You see he has cut off ever so many of his wives' heads. I can't think where that chap gets his ideas from. I can beat him in drawing horses, I know, and dogs; but I can only draw what I see. Somehow he seems to see things we don't, don't you know? Oh, father, I'm determined I'd rather be a painter than anything." And he falls to drawing horses and dogs at his uncle's table, round which the elders are seated.

"I've settled it upstairs with J. J.," says Clive, working away with his pen. "We shall take a studio together; perhaps we will go abroad together. Won't that be fun, father?"

"My dear Clive," remarks Mr. Honeyman, with bland dignity, "there are degrees in society which we must respect. You surely cannot think of being a professional artist. Such a profession is very well for your young protegee; but for you —"

"What for me?" cries Clive. "We are no such great folks that I know of; and if we were, I say a painter is as good as a lawyer, or a doctor, or even a soldier. In Dr. Johnston's Life — which my father is always reading — I like to read about Sir Joshua Reynolds best: I think he is the best gentleman of all in the book. My! wouldn't I like to paint a picture like Lord Heathfield in the National Gallery! Wouldn't I just! I think I would sooner have done that, than have fought at Gibraltar. And those Three Graces — oh, aren't they graceful! And that Cardinal Beaufort at Dulwich! — it frightens me so, I daren't look at it. Wasn't Reynolds a clipper, that's all! and wasn't Rubens a brick! He was an ambassador, and Knight of the Bath; so was Vandyck. And Titian, and Raphael, and Velasquez? — I'll just trouble you to show me better gentlemen than them, Uncle Charles."

"Far be it from me to say that the pictorial calling is not honourable," says Uncle Charles; "but as the world goes there are other professions in greater repute; and I should have thought Colonel Newcome's son —"

"He shall follow his own bent," said the Colonel; "as long as his calling is honest it becomes a gentleman; and if he were to take a fancy to play on the fiddle — actually on the fiddle — I shouldn't object."

"Such a rum chap there was upstairs!" Clive resumes, looking up from his scribbling. "He was walking up and down on the landing in a dressing-gown, with scarcely any other clothes on, holding a plate in one hand, and a pork-chop he was munching with the other. Like this" (and Clive draws a figure). "What do you think, sir? He was in the Cave of Harmony, he says, that night you flared up about Captain Costigan. He knew me at once; and he says, 'Sir, your father acted like a gentleman, a Christian, and a man of honour. Maxima debetur puero reverentia. Give him my compliments. I don't know his highly respectable name.' His highly respectable name," says Clive, cracking with laughter — "those were his very words. 'And inform him that I am an orphan myself — in needy circumstances' — he said he was in needy circumstances; and I heartily wish he'd adopt me."

The lad puffed out his face, made his voice as loud and as deep as he could; and from his imitation and the picture he had drawn, I knew at once that Fred Bayham was the man he mimicked.

"And does the Red Rover live here," cried Mr. Pendennis, "and have we earthed him at last?"

"He sometimes comes here," Mr. Honeyman said with a careless manner. "My landlord and landlady were butler and housekeeper to his father, Bayham of Bayham, one of the oldest families in Europe. And Mr. Frederick Bayham, the exceedingly eccentric person of whom you speak, was a private pupil of my own dear father in our happy days at Borehambury."

He had scarcely spoken when a knock was heard at the door, and before the occupant of the lodgings could say "Come in!" Mr. Frederick Bayham made his appearance, arrayed in that peculiar costume which he affected. In those days we wore very tall stocks, only a very few poetic and eccentric persons venturing on the Byron collar; but Fred Bayham confined his neck by a simple ribbon, which allowed his great red whiskers to curl freely round his capacious jowl. He wore a black frock and a large broad-brimmed hat, and looked somewhat like a Dissenting preacher. At other periods you would see him in a green coat and a blue neckcloth, as if the turf or the driving of coaches was his occupation.

"I have heard from the young man of the house who you were, Colonel Newcome," he said with the greatest gravity, "and happened to be present, sir, the other night; for I was aweary, having been toiling all the day in literary labour, and

needed some refreshment. I happened to be present, sir, at a scene which did you the greatest honour, and of which I spoke, not knowing you, with something like levity to your son. He is an *ingenui vultus puer ingenuique pudoris* — Pendennis, how are you? And I thought, sir, I would come down and tender an apology if I had said any words that might savour of offence to a gentleman who was in the right, as I told the room when you quitted it, as Mr. Pendennis, I am sure, will remember.”

Mr. Pendennis looked surprise and perhaps negation.

“You forget, Pendennis? Those who quit that room, sir, often forget on the morrow what occurred during the revelry of the night. You did right in refusing to return to that scene. We public men are obliged often to seek our refreshment at hours when luckier individuals are lapt in slumber.”

“And what may be your occupation, Mr. Bayham?” asks the Colonel, rather gloomily, for he had an idea that Bayham was adopting a strain of persiflage which the Indian gentleman by no means relished. Never saying aught but a kind word to any one, he was on fire at the notion that any should take a liberty with him.

“A barrister, sir, but without business — a literary man, who can but seldom find an opportunity to sell the works of his brains — a gentleman, sir, who has met with neglect, perhaps merited, perhaps undeserved, from his family. I get my bread as best I may. On that evening I had been lecturing on the genius of some of our comic writers, at the Parthenopoeon, Hackney. My audience was scanty, perhaps equal to my deserts. I came home on foot to an egg and a glass of beer after midnight, and witnessed the scene which did you so much honour. What is this? I fancy a ludicrous picture of myself” — he had taken up the sketch which Clive had been drawing — “I like fun, even at my own expense; and can afford to laugh at a joke which is meant in good-humour.” This speech quite reconciled the honest Colonel. “I am sure the author of that, Mr. Bayham, means you or any man no harm. Why! the rascal, sir, has drawn me, his own father; and I have sent the drawing to Major Hobbs, who is in command of my regiment. Chinnery himself, sir, couldn’t hit off a likeness better; he has drawn me on horseback, and he has drawn me on foot, and he has drawn my friend, Mr. Binnie, who lives with me. We have scores of his drawings at my lodgings; and if you will favour us by dining with us today, and these gentlemen, you shall see that you are not the only person caricatured by Clive here.”

“I just took some little dinner upstairs, sir. I am a moderate man, and can live, if need be, like a Spartan; but to join such good company I will gladly use the knife and fork again. You will excuse the traveller’s dress? I keep a room here, which I use only occasionally, and am at present lodging — in the country.”

When Honeyman was ready, the Colonel, who had the greatest respect for the Church, would not hear of going out of the room before the clergyman, and took his arm to walk. Bayham then fell to Mr. Pendennis’s lot, and they went together. Through Hill Street and Berkeley Square their course was straight enough; but at Hay Hill, Mr. Bayham made an abrupt tack larboard, engaging in a labyrinth of stables, and walking a long way round from Clifford Street, whither we were bound. He hinted at a cab, but Pendennis refused to ride, being, in truth, anxious to see which way his eccentric companion would steer. “There are reasons,” growled Bayham, “which need not be explained to one of your experience, why Bond Street must be avoided by some men peculiarly situated. The smell of Truefitt’s pomatum makes me ill. Tell me, Pendennis, is this Indian warrior a rajah of large wealth? Could he, do you think, recommend me to a situation in the East India Company? I would gladly take any honest post in which fidelity might be useful, genius might be appreciated, and courage rewarded. Here we are. The hotel seems comfortable. I never was in it before.”

When we entered the Colonel’s sitting-room at Nerot’s, we found the waiter engaged in extending the table. “We are a larger party than I expected,” our host said. “I met my brother Brian on horseback leaving cards at that great house in ——— Street.”

“The Russian Embassy,” says Mr. Honeyman, who knew the town quite well.

“And he said he was disengaged, and would dine with us,” continues the Colonel.

“Am I to understand, Colonel Newcome,” says Mr. Frederick Bayham, “that you are related to the eminent banker, Sir Brian Newcome, who gives such uncommonly swell parties in Park Lane?”

“What is a swell party?” asks the Colonel, laughing. “I dined with my brother last Wednesday; and it was a very grand dinner certainly. The Governor-General himself could not give a more splendid entertainment. But, do you know, I scarcely had enough to eat? I don’t eat side dishes; and as for the roast beef of Old England, why, the meat was put on the table and whisked away like Sancho’s inauguration feast at Barataria. We did not dine till nine o’clock. I like a few glasses

of claret and a cosy talk after dinner; but — well, well” — (no doubt the worthy gentleman was accusing himself of telling tales out of school and had come to a timely repentance). “Our dinner, I hope, will be different. Jack Binnie will take care of that. That fellow is full of anecdote and fun. You will meet one or two more of our service; Sir Thomas de Boots, who is not a bad chap over a glass of wine; Mr. Pendennis’s chum, Mr. Warrington, and my nephew, Barnes Newcome — a dry fellow at first, but I dare say he has good about him when you know him; almost every man has,” said the good-natured philosopher. “Clive, you rogue, mind and be moderate with the champagne, sir!”

“Champagne’s for women,” says Clive. “I stick to claret.”

“I say, Pendennis,” here Bayham remarked, “it is my deliberate opinion that F. B. has got into a good thing.”

Mr. Pendennis seeing there was a great party was for going home to his chambers to dress. “Hm!” says Mr. Bayham, “don’t see the necessity. What right-minded man looks at the exterior of his neighbour? He looks here, sir, and examines there,” and Bayham tapped his forehead, which was expansive, and then his heart, which he considered to be in the right place.

“What is this I hear about dressing?” asks our host. “Dine in your frock, my good friend, and welcome, if your dress-coat is in the country.”

“It is at present at an uncle’s,” Mr. Bayham said, with great gravity, “and I take your hospitality as you offer it, Colonel Newcome, cordially and frankly.”

Honest Mr. Binnie made his appearance a short time before the appointed hour for receiving the guests, arrayed in a tight little pair of trousers, and white silk stockings and pumps, his bald head shining like a billiard-ball, his jolly gills rosy with good-humour. He was bent on pleasure. “Hey, lads!” says he; “but we’ll make a night of it. We haven’t had a night since the farewell dinner off Plymouth.”

“And a jolly night it was, James,” ejaculates the Colonel.

“Egad, what a song that Tom Norris sings!”

“And your ‘Jock o’ Hazeldean’ is as good as a play, Jack.”

“And I think you beat in any one I ever heard in ‘Tom Bowling,’ yourself, Tom!” cries the Colonel’s delighted chum. Mr. Pendennis opened the eyes of astonishment at the idea of the possibility of renewing these festivities, but he kept the lips of prudence closed. And now the carriages began to drive up, and the guests of Colonel Newcome to arrive.



CHAPTER XIII

IN WHICH THOMAS NEWCOME SINGS HIS LAST SONG

The earliest comers were the first mate and the medical officer of the ship in which the two gentlemen had come to England. The mate was a Scotchman: the doctor was a Scotchman; of the gentlemen from the Oriental Club, three were Scotchmen.

The Southrons, with one exception, were the last to arrive, and for a while we stood looking out of the windows awaiting their coming. The first mate pulled out a penknife and arranged his nails. The doctor and Mr. Binnie talked of the progress of medicine. Binnie had walked the hospitals of Edinburgh before getting his civil appointment to India. The three gentlemen from Hanover Square and the Colonel had plenty to say about Tom Smith of the Cavalry, and Harry Hall of the Engineers: how Topham was going to marry poor little Bob Wallis's widow; how many lakhs Barber had brought home, and the like. The tall grey-headed Englishman, who had been in the East too, in the King's service, joined for a while in this conversation, but presently left it, and came and talked with Clive; "I knew your father in India," said the gentleman to the lad; "there is not a more gallant or respected officer in that service. I have a boy too, a stepson, who has just gone into the army; he is older than you, he was born at the end of the Waterloo year, and so was a great friend of his and mine, who was at your school, Sir Rawdon Crawley."

"He was in Gown Boys, I know," says the boy; "succeeded his uncle Pitt, fourth Baronet. I don't know how his mother — her who wrote the hymns, you know, and goes to Mr. Honeyman's chapel — comes to be Rebecca, Lady Crawley. His father, Colonel Rawdon Crawley, died at Coventry Island, in August, 182-, and his uncle, Sir Pitt, not till September here. I remember, we used to talk about it at Grey Friars, when I was quite a little chap; and there were bets whether Crawley, I mean the young one, was a Baronet or not."

"When I sailed to Rigy, Cornel," the first mate was speaking — nor can any spelling nor combination of letters of which I am master, reproduce this gentleman's accent when he was talking his best — "I racklackt they used always to sairve us a drem before denner. And as your frinds are kipping the denner, and as I've no watch to-night, I'll jist do as we used to do at Rigy. James, my fine fellow, jist look alive and breng me a small glass of brandy, will ye? Did ye iver try a brandy cocktail, Cornel? Whin I sailed on the New York line, we used jest to make bits before denner and — thank ye, James:" and he tossed off a glass of brandy.

Here a waiter announces, in a loud voice, "Sir Thomas de Boots," and the General enters, scowling round the room according to his fashion, very red in the face, very tight in the girth, splendidly attired with a choking white neckcloth, a voluminous waistcoat, and his orders on.

"Stars and garters, by jingo!" cries Mr. Frederick Bayham; "I say, Pendennis, have you any idea, is the Duke coming? I wouldn't have come in these Bluchers if I had known it. Confound it, no — Hoby himself, my own bootmaker, wouldn't have allowed poor F. B. to appear in Bluchers, if he had known that I was going to meet the Duke. My linen's all right, anyhow;"

F. B. breathed a thankful prayer for that. Indeed, who but the very curious could tell that not F. B.'s, but C. H.'s — Charles Honeyman's — was the mark upon that decorous linen?

Colonel Newcome introduced Sir Thomas to every one in the room, as he had introduced us all to each other previously, and as Sir Thomas looked at one after another, his face was kind enough to assume an expression which seemed to ask, "And who the devil are you, sir?" as clearly as though the General himself had given utterance to the words. With the gentleman in the window talking to Clive he seemed to have some acquaintance, and said not unkindly, "How d'you do, Dobbin?"

The carriage of Sir Brian Newcome now drove up, from which the Baronet descended in state, leaning upon the arm of the Apollo in plush and powder, who closed the shutters of the great coach, and mounted by the side of the coachman, laced and periwigged. The Bench of Bishops has given up its wigs; cannot the box, too, be made to resign that insane decoration? Is it necessary for our comfort, that the men who do our work in stable or household should be dressed like Merry-Andrews? Enter Sir Brian Newcome, smiling blandly: he greets his brother affectionately, Sir Thomas gaily; he nods

and smiles to Clive, and graciously permits Mr. Pendennis to take hold of two fingers of his extended right hand. That gentleman is charmed, of course, with the condescension. What man could be otherwise than happy to be allowed a momentary embrace of two such precious fingers? When a gentleman so favours me, I always ask, mentally, why he has taken the trouble at all, and regret that I have not had the presence of mind to poke one finger against his two. If I were worth ten thousand a year, I cannot help inwardly reflecting, and kept a large account in Threadneedle Street, I cannot help thinking he would have favoured me with the whole palm.

The arrival of these two grandees has somehow cast a solemnity over the company. The weather is talked about: brilliant in itself, it does not occasion very brilliant remarks among Colonel Newcome's guests. Sir Brian really thinks it must be as hot as it is in India. Sir Thomas de Boots, swelling in his white waistcoat, in the armholes of which his thumbs are engaged, smiles scornfully, and wishes Sir Brian had ever felt a good sweltering day in the hot winds in India. Sir Brian withdraws the untenable proposition that London is as hot as Calcutta. Mr. Binnie looks at his watch, and at the Colonel. "We have only your nephew, Tom, to wait for," he says; "I think we may make so bold as to order the dinner," — a proposal heartily seconded by Mr. Frederick Bayham.

The dinner appears steaming, borne by steaming waiters. The grandees take their places, one on each side of the Colonel. He begs Mr. Honeyman to say grace, and stands reverentially during that brief ceremony, while de Boots looks queerly at him from over his napkin. All the young men take their places at the farther end of the table, round about Mr. Binnie; and at the end of the second course Mr. Barnes Newcome makes his appearance.

Mr. Barnes does not show the slightest degree of disturbance, although he disturbs all the company. Soup and fish are brought for him, and meat, which he leisurely eats, while twelve other gentlemen are kept waiting. We mark Mr. Binnie's twinkling eyes, as they watch the young man. "Eh," he seems to say, "but that's just about as free-and-easy a young chap as ever I set eyes on." And so Mr. Barnes was a cool young chap. That dish is so good, he must really have some more. He discusses the second supply leisurely; and turning round simpering to his neighbour, says, "I really hope I'm not keeping everybody waiting."

"Hem!" grunts the neighbour, Mr. Bayham; "it doesn't much matter, for we had all pretty well done dinner." Barnes takes a note of Mr. Bayham's dress — his long frock-coat, the ribbon round his neck; and surveys him with an admirable impudence. "Who are these people," thinks he, "my uncle has got together?" He bows graciously to the honest Colonel, who asks him to take wine. He is so insufferably affable, that every man near him would like to give him a beating.

All the time of the dinner the host was challenging everybody to drink wine, in his honest old-fashioned way, and Mr. Binnie seconding the chief entertainer. Such was the way in England and Scotland when they were young men. And when Binnie, asking Sir Brian, receives for reply from the Baronet — "Thank you, no, my dear sir. I have exceeded already, positively exceeded," the poor discomfited gentleman hardly knows whither to apply: but, luckily, Tom Norris, the first mate, comes to his rescue, and cries out, "Mr. Binnie, I've not had enough, and I'll drink a glass of anything ye like with ye." The fact is, that Mr. Norris has had enough. He has drunk bumpers to the health of every member of the company; his glass has been filled scores of times by watchful waiters. So has Mr. Bayham absorbed great quantities of drink; but without any visible effect on that veteran toper. So has young Clive taken more than is good for him. His cheeks are flushed and burning; he is chattering and laughing loudly at his end of the table. Mr. Warrington eyes the lad with some curiosity; and then regards Mr. Barnes with a look of scorn, which does not scorch that affable young person.

I am obliged to confess that the mate of the Indiaman, at an early period of the dessert, and when nobody had asked him for any such public expression of his opinion, insisted on rising and proposing the health of Colonel Newcome, whose virtues he lauded outrageously, and whom he pronounced to be one of the best of mortal men. Sir Brian looked very much alarmed at the commencement of this speech, which the mate delivered with immense shrieks and gesticulation: but the Baronet recovered during the course of the rambling oration, and at its conclusion gracefully tapped the table with one of those patronising fingers; and lifting up a glass containing at least a thimbleful of claret, said, "My dear brother, I drink your health with all my heart, I'm su-ah." The youthful Barnes had uttered many "Hear, hears!" during the discourse, with an irony which, with every fresh glass of wine he drank, he cared less to conceal. And though Barnes had come late he had drunk largely, making up for lost time.

Those ironical cheers, and all his cousin's behaviour during dinner, had struck young Clive, who was growing very angry. He growled out remarks uncomplimentary to Barnes. His eyes, as he looked towards his kinsman, flashed out challenges, of which we who were watching him could see the warlike purport. Warrington looked at Bayham and

Pendennis with glances of apprehension. We saw that danger was brooding, unless the one young man could be restrained from his impertinence, and the other from his wine.

Colonel Newcome said a very few words in reply to his honest friend the chief mate, and there the matter might have ended: but I am sorry to say Mr. Binnie now thought it necessary to rise and deliver himself of some remarks regarding the King's service, coupled with the name of Major-General Sir Thomas de Boots, K.C.B., etc. — the receipt of which that gallant officer was obliged to acknowledge in a confusion amounting almost to apoplexy. The glasses went whack whack upon the hospitable board; the evening set in for public speaking. Encouraged by his last effort, Mr. Binnie now proposed Sir Brian Newcome's health; and that Baronet rose and uttered an exceedingly lengthy speech, delivered with his wine-glass on his bosom.

Then that sad rogue Bayham must get up, and call earnestly and respectfully for silence and the chairman's hearty sympathy, for the few observations which he had to propose. "Our armies had been drunk with proper enthusiasm — such men as he beheld around him deserved the applause of all honest hearts, and merited the cheers with which their names had been received. ('Hear, hear!' from Barnes Newcome sarcastically. 'Hear, hear, HEAR!' fiercely from Clive.) But whilst we applauded our army, should we forget a profession still more exalted? Yes, still more exalted, I say in the face of the gallant General opposite; and that profession, I need not say, is the Church. (Applause.) Gentlemen, we have among us one who, while partaking largely of the dainties on this festive board, drinking freely of the sparkling wine-cup which our gallant hospitality administers to us, sanctifies by his presence the feast of which he partakes, inaugurates with appropriate benedictions, and graces it, I may say, both before and after meat. Gentlemen, Charles Honeyman was the friend of my childhood, his father the instructor of my early days. If Frederick Bayham's latter life has been chequered by misfortune, it may be that I have forgotten the precepts which the venerable parent of Charles Honeyman poured into an inattentive ear. He too, as a child, was not exempt from faults; as a young man, I am told, not quite free from youthful indiscretions. But in this present Anno Domini, we hail Charles Honeyman as a precept and an example, as a decus fidei and a lumen ecclesiae (as I told him in the confidence of the private circle this morning, and ere I ever thought to publish my opinion in this distinguished company). Colonel Newcome and Mr. Binnie! I drink to the health of the Reverend Charles Honeyman, A.M. May we listen to many more of his sermons, as well as to that admirable discourse with which I am sure he is about to electrify us now. May we profit by his eloquence; and cherish in our memories the truths which come mended from his tongue!" He ceased; poor Honeyman had to rise on his legs, and gasp out a few incoherent remarks in reply. Without a book before him, the Incumbent of Lady Whittlesea's Chapel was no prophet, and the truth is he made poor work of his oration.

At the end of it, he, Sir Brian, Colonel Dobbin, and one of the Indian gentlemen quitted the room, in spite of the loud outcries of our generous host, who insisted that the party should not break up. "Close up, gentlemen," called out honest Newcome, "we are not going to part just yet. Let me fill your glass, General. You used to have no objection to a glass of wine." And he poured out a bumper for his friend, which the old campaigner sucked in with fitting gusto. "Who will give us a song? Binnie, give us the 'Laird of Cockpen.' It's capital, my dear General. Capital," the Colonel whispered to his neighbour.

Mr. Binnie struck up the "Laird of Cockpen," without, I am bound to say, the least reluctance. He bobbed to one man, and he winked to another, and he tossed his glass, and gave all the points of his song in a manner which did credit to his simplicity and his humour. You haughty Southerners little know how a jolly Scotch gentleman can desipere in loco, and how he chirrup over his honest cups. I do not say whether it was with the song or with Mr. Binnie that we were most amused. It was a good commonty, as Christopher Sly says; nor were we sorry when it was done.

Him the first mate succeeded; after which came a song from the redoubted F. Bayham, which he sang with a bass voice which Lablache might envy, and of which the chorus was frantically sung by the whole company. The cry was then for the Colonel; on which Barnes Newcome, who had been drinking much, started up with something like an oath, crying, "Oh, I can't stand this."

"Then leave it, confound you!" said young Clive, with fury in his face. "If our company is not good for you, why do you come into it?"

"What's that?" asks Barnes, who was evidently affected by wine. Bayham roared "Silence!" and Barnes Newcome, looking round with a tipsy toss of the head, finally sate down.

The Colonel sang, as we have said, with a very high voice, using freely the falsetto, after the manner of the tenor singers of his day. He chose one of his maritime songs, and got through the first verse very well, Barnes wagging his head at the chorus, with a “Bravo!” so offensive that Fred Bayham, his neighbour, gripped the young man’s arm, and told him to hold his confounded tongue.

The Colonel began his second verse: and here, as will often happen to amateur singers, his falsetto broke down. He was not in the least annoyed, for I saw him smile very good-naturedly; and he was going to try the verse again, when that unlucky Barnes first gave a sort of crowing imitation of the song, and then burst into a yell of laughter. Clive dashed a glass of wine in his face at the next minute, glass and all; and no one who had watched the young man’s behaviour was sorry for the insult.

I never saw a kind face express more terror than Colonel Newcome’s. He started back as if he had himself received the blow from his son. “Gracious God!” he cried out. “My boy insult a gentleman at my table!”

“I’d like to do it again,” says Clive, whose whole body was trembling with anger.

“Are you drunk, sir?” shouted his father.

“The boy served the young fellow right, sir,” growled Fred Bayham in his deepest voice. “Come along, young man. Stand up straight, and keep a civil tongue in your head next time, mind you, when you dine with gentlemen. It’s easy to see,” says Fred, looking round with a knowing air, “that this young man hasn’t got the usages of society — he’s not been accustomed to it:” and he led the dandy out.

Others had meanwhile explained the state of the case to the Colonel — including Sir Thomas de Boots, who was highly energetic and delighted with Clive’s spirit; and some were for having the song to continue; but the Colonel, puffing his cigar, said, “No. My pipe is out. I will never sing again.” So this history will record no more of Thomas Newcome’s musical performances.



CHAPTER XIV

PARK LANE

Clive woke up the next morning to be aware of a racking headache, and, by the dim light of his throbbing eyes, to behold his father with solemn face at his bed-foot — a reproving conscience to greet his waking.

“You drank too much wine last night, and disgraced yourself, sir,” the old soldier said. “You must get up and eat humble pie this morning, my boy.”

“Humble what, father?” asked the lad, hardly aware of his words, or the scene before him. “Oh, I’ve got such a headache!”

“Serve you right, sir. Many a young fellow has had to go on parade in the morning, with a headache earned overnight. Drink this water. Now, jump up. Now, dash the water well over your head. There you come! Make your toilette quickly; and let us be off, and find cousin Barnes before he has left home.”

Clive obeyed the paternal orders; dressed himself quickly; and descending, found his father smoking his morning cigar in the apartment where they had dined the night before, and where the tables still were covered with the relics of yesterday’s feast — the emptied bottles, the blank lamps, the scattered ashes and fruits, the wretched heel-taps that have been lying exposed all night to the air. Who does not know the aspect of an expired feast?

“The field of action strewed with the dead, my boy,” says Clive’s father. “See, here’s the glass on the floor yet, and a great stain of claret on the carpet.”

“Oh, father!” says Clive, hanging his head down, “I know I shouldn’t have done it. But Barnes Newcome would provoke the patience of Job; and I couldn’t bear to have my father insulted.”

“I am big enough to fight my own battles, my boy,” the Colonel said good-naturedly, putting his hand on the lad’s damp head. “How your head throbs! If Barnes laughed at my singing, depend upon it, sir, there was something ridiculous in it, and he laughed because he could not help it. If he behaved ill, we should not; and to a man who is eating our salt too, and is of our blood.”

“He is ashamed of our blood, father,” cries Clive, still indignant.

“We ought to be ashamed of doing wrong. We must go and ask his pardon. Once when I was a young man in India,” the father continued very gravely, “some hot words passed at mess — not such an insult as that of last night; I don’t think I could have quite borne that — and people found fault with me for forgiving the youngster who had uttered the offensive expressions over his wine. Some of my acquaintance sneered at my courage, and that is a hard imputation for a young fellow of spirit to bear. But providentially, you see, it was war-time, and very soon after I had the good luck to show that I was not a poule mouillée, as the French call it; and the man who insulted me, and whom I forgave, became my fastest friend, and died by my side — it was poor Jack Cutler — at Argaum. We must go and ask Barnes Newcome’s pardon, sir, and forgive other people’s trespasses, my boy, if we hope forgiveness of our own.” His voice sank down as he spoke, and he bowed his honest head reverently. I have heard his son tell the simple story years afterwards, with tears in his eyes.

Piccadilly was hardly yet awake the next morning, and the sparkling dews and the poor homeless vagabonds still had possession of the grass of Hyde Park, as the pair walked up to Sir Brian Newcome’s house, where the shutters were just opening to let in the day. The housemaid, who was scrubbing the steps of the house, and washing its trim feet in a manner which became such a polite mansion’s morning toilet, knew Master Clive, and smiled at him from under her blousy curl-papers, admitting the two gentlemen into Sir Brian’s dining-room, where they proposed to wait until Mr. Barnes should appear. There they sate for an hour looking at Lawrence’s picture of Lady Anne, leaning over a harp, attired in white muslin; at Harlowe’s portrait of Mrs. Newcome, with her two sons simpering at her knees, painted at a time when the Newcome Brothers were not the bald-headed, red-whiskered British merchants with whom the reader has made acquaintance, but chubby children with hair flowing down their backs, and quaint little swallow-tailed jackets and nankeen trousers. A splendid portrait of the late Earl of Kew in his peer’s robes hangs opposite his daughter and her harp. We are writing of George the Fourth’s reign; I dare say there hung in the room a fine framed print of that great sovereign. The chandelier is in a canvas bag; the vast sideboard, whereon are erected open frames for the support of Sir Brian Newcome’s

grand silver trays, which on dinner days gleam on that festive board, now groans under the weight of Sir Brian's bluebooks. An immense receptacle for wine, shaped like a Roman sarcophagus, lurks under the sideboard. Two people sitting at that large dining-table must talk very loud so as to make themselves heard across those great slabs of mahogany covered with damask. The butler and servants who attend at the table take a long time walking round it. I picture to myself two persons of ordinary size sitting in that great room at that great table, far apart, in neat evening costume, sipping a little sherry, silent, genteel, and glum; and think the great and wealthy are not always to be envied, and that there may be more comfort and happiness in a snug parlour, where you are served by a brisk little maid, than in a great dark, dreary dining-hall, where a funereal major-domo and a couple of stealthy footmen minister to you your mutton-chops. They come and lay the cloth presently, wide as the main-sheet of some tall admiral. A pile of newspapers and letters for the master of the house; the *Newcome Sentinel*, old county paper, moderate conservative, in which our worthy townsman and member is praised, his benefactions are recorded, and his speeches given at full length; the *Newcome Independent*, in which our precious member is weekly described as a ninny, and informed almost every Thursday morning that he is a bloated aristocrat, as he munches his dry toast. Heaps of letters, county papers, *Times* and *Morning Herald* for Sir Brian Newcome; little heaps of letters (dinner and soiree cards most of these) and *Morning Post* for Mr. Barnes. Punctually as eight o'clock strikes, that young gentleman comes to breakfast; his father will lie yet for another hour; the Baronet's prodigious labours in the House of Commons keeping him frequently out of bed till sunrise.

As his cousin entered the room, Clive turned very red, and perhaps a faint blush might appear on Barnes's pallid countenance. He came in, a handkerchief in one hand, a pamphlet in the other, and both hands being thus engaged, he could offer neither to his kinsmen.

"You are come to breakfast, I hope," he said — calling it "weakfast," and pronouncing the words with a most languid drawl — "or, perhaps, you want to see my father? He is never out of his room till half-past nine. Harper, did Sir Brian come in last night before or after me?" Harper, the butler, thinks Sir Brian came in after Mr. Barnes.

When that functionary had quitted the room, Barnes turned round to his uncle in a candid, smiling way, and said, "The fact is, sir, I don't know when I came home myself very distinctly, and can't, of course, tell about my father. Generally, you know, there are two candles left in the hall, you know; and if there are two, you know, I know of course that my father is still at the House. But last night, after that capital song you sang, hang me if I know what happened to me. I beg your pardon, sir, I'm shocked at having been so overtaken. Such a confounded thing doesn't happen to me once in ten years. I do trust I didn't do anything rude to anybody, for I thought some of your friends the pleasantest fellows I ever met in my life; and as for the claret, 'gad, as if I hadn't had enough after dinner, I brought a quantity of it away with me on my shirt-front and waistcoat!"

"I beg your pardon, Barnes," Clive said, blushing deeply, "and I'm very sorry indeed for what passed; I threw it."

The Colonel, who had been listening with a queer expression of wonder and doubt on his face, here interrupted Mr. Barnes. "It was Clive that — that spilled the wine over you last night," Thomas Newcome said; "the young rascal had drunk a great deal too much wine, and had neither the use of his head nor his hands, and this morning I have given him a lecture, and he has come to ask your pardon for his clumsiness; and if you have forgotten your share in the night's transaction, I hope you have forgotten his, and will accept his hand and his apology."

"Apology: There's no apology," cries Barnes, holding out a couple of fingers of his hand, but looking towards the Colonel. "I don't know what happened any more than the dead. Did we have a row? Were there any glasses broken? The best way in such cases is to sweep 'em up. We can't mend them."

The Colonel said gravely — "that he was thankful to find that the disturbance of the night before had no worse result." He pulled the tail of Clive's coat, when that unlucky young blunderer was about to trouble his cousin with indiscreet questions or explanations, and checked his talk. "The other night you saw an old man in drink, my boy," he said, "and to what shame and degradation the old wretch had brought himself. Wine has given you a warning too, which I hope you will remember all your life; no one has seen me the worse for drink these forty years, and I hope both you young gentlemen will take counsel by an old soldier, who fully preaches what he practises, and beseeches you to beware of the bottle."

After quitting their kinsman, the kind Colonel further improved the occasion with his son; and told him out of his own experience many stories of quarrels, and duels, and wine; — how the wine had occasioned the brawls, and the foolish speech overnight the bloody meeting at morning; how he had known widows and orphans made by hot words uttered in

idle orgies: how the truest honour was the manly confession of wrong; and the best courage the courage to avoid temptation. The humble-minded speaker, whose advice contained the best of all wisdom, that which comes from a gentle and reverent spirit, and a pure and generous heart, never for once thought of the effect which he might be producing, but uttered his simple say according to the truth within him. Indeed, he spoke out his mind pretty resolutely on all subjects which moved or interested him; and Clive, his son, and his honest chum, Mr. Binnie, who had a great deal more reading and much keener intelligence than the Colonel, were amused often at his naive opinion about men, or books, or morals. Mr. Clive had a very fine natural sense of humour, which played perpetually round his father's simple philosophy with kind and smiling comments. Between this pair of friends the superiority of wit lay, almost from the very first, on the younger man's side; but, on the other hand, Clive felt a tender admiration for his father's goodness, a loving delight in contemplating his elder's character, which he has never lost, and which in the trials of their future life inexpressibly cheered and consoled both of them! *Beati illi!* O man of the world, whose wearied eyes may glance over this page, may those who come after you so regard you! O generous boy, who read in it, may you have such a friend to trust and cherish in youth, and in future days fondly and proudly to remember!

Some four or five weeks after the quasi-reconciliation between Clive and his kinsman, the chief part of Sir Brian Newcome's family were assembled at the breakfast-table together, where the meal was taken in common, and at the early hour of eight (unless the senator was kept too late in the House of Commons overnight); and Lady Anne and her nursery were now returned to London again, little Alfred being perfectly set up by a month of Brighton air. It was a Thursday morning; on which day of the week, it has been said, the Newcome Independent and the Newcome Sentinel both made their appearance upon the Baronet's table. The household from above and from below; the maids and footmen from the basement; the nurses, children, and governesses from the attics; all poured into the room at the sound of a certain bell.

I do not sneer at the purpose for which, at that chiming eight-o'clock bell, the household is called together. The urns are hissing, the plate is shining; the father of the house, standing up, reads from a gilt book for three or four minutes in a measured cadence. The members of the family are around the table in an attitude of decent reverence; the younger children whisper responses at their mother's knees; the governess worships a little apart; the maids and the large footmen are in a cluster before their chairs, the upper servants performing their devotion on the other side of the sideboard; the nurse whisks about the unconscious last-born, and tosses it up and down during the ceremony. I do not sneer at that — at the act at which all these people are assembled — it is at the rest of the day I marvel; at the rest of the day, and what it brings. At the very instant when the voice has ceased speaking and the gilded book is shut, the world begins again, and for the next twenty-three hours and fifty-seven minutes all that household is given up to it. The servile squad rises up and marches away to its basement, whence, should it happen to be a gala-day, those tall gentlemen at present attired in Oxford mixture will issue forth with flour plastered on their heads, yellow coats, pink breeches, sky-blue waistcoats, silver lace, buckles in their shoes, black silk bags on their backs, and I don't know what insane emblems of servility and absurd bedizenments of folly. Their very manner of speaking to what we call their masters and mistresses will be a like monstrous masquerade. You know no more of that race which inhabits the basement floor, than of the men and brethren of Timbuctoo, to whom some among us send missionaries. If you met some of your servants in the streets (I respectfully suppose for a moment that the reader is a person of high fashion and a great establishment), you would not know their faces. You might sleep under the same roof for half a century and know nothing about them. If they were ill, you would not visit them, though you would send them an apothecary and of course order that they lacked for nothing. You are not unkind, you are not worse than your neighbours. Nay, perhaps, if you did go into the kitchen, or to take the tea in the servants'-hall, you would do little good, and only bore the folks assembled there. But so it is. With those fellow-Christians who have been just saying Amen to your prayers, you have scarcely the community of Charity. They come, you don't know whence; they think and talk, you don't know what; they die, and you don't care, or vice versa. They answer the bell for prayers as they answer the bell for coals: for exactly three minutes in the day you all kneel together on one carpet — and, the desires and petitions of the servants and masters over, the rite called family worship is ended.

Exeunt servants, save those two who warm the newspaper, administer the muffins, and serve out the tea. Sir Brian reads his letters, and chumps his dry toast. Ethel whispers to her mother, she thinks Eliza is looking very ill. Lady Anne asks, which is Eliza? Is it the woman that was ill before they left town? If she is ill, Mrs. Trotter had better send her away. Mrs. Trotter is only a great deal too good-natured. She is always keeping people who are ill. Then her ladyship begins to read the Morning Post, and glances over the names of the persons who were present at Baroness Bosco's ball, and Mrs.

Toddle Tompkins's soiree dansante in Belgrave Square.

"Everybody was there," says Barnes, looking over from his paper.

"But who is Mrs. Toddle Tompkins?" asks mamma. "Who ever heard of a Mrs. Toddle Tompkins? What do people mean by going to such a person?"

"Lady Popinjoy asked the people," Barnes says gravely. "The thing was really doosed well done. The woman looked frightened; but she's pretty, and I am told the daughter will have a great lot of money."

"Is she pretty, and did you dance with her?" asks Ethel.

"Me dance!" says Mr. Barnes. We are speaking of a time before casinos were, and when the British youth were by no means so active in dancing practice as at this present period. Barnes resumed the reading of his county paper, but presently laid it down, with an execration so brisk and loud, that his mother gave a little outcry, and even his father looked up from his letters to ask the meaning of an oath so unexpected and ungenteel.

"My uncle, the Colonel of sepoy, and his amiable son have been paying a visit to Newcome — that's the news which I have the pleasure to announce to you," says Mr. Barnes.

"You are always sneering about our uncle," breaks in Ethel, with impetuous voice, "and saying unkind things about Clive. Our uncle is a dear, good, kind man, and I love him. He came to Brighton to see us, and went out every day for hours and hours with Alfred; and Clive, too, drew pictures for him. And he is good, and kind, and generous, and honest as his father. And Barnes is always speaking ill of him behind his back."

"And his aunt lets very nice lodgings, and is altogether a most desirable acquaintance," says Mr. Barnes. "What a shame it is that we have not cultivated that branch of the family!"

"My dear fellow," cries Sir Brian, "I have no doubt Miss Honeyman is a most respectable person. Nothing is so ungenerous as to rebuke a gentleman or a lady on account of their poverty, and I coincide with Ethel in thinking that you speak of your uncle and his son in terms which, to say the least, are disrespectful."

"Miss Honeyman is a dear little old woman," breaks in Ethel. "Was not she kind to Alfred, mamma, and did not she make him nice jelly? And a Doctor of Divinity — you know Clive's grandfather was a Doctor of Divinity, mamma, there's a picture of him in a wig — is just as good as a banker, you know he is."

"Did you bring some of Miss Honeyman's lodging-house cards with you, Ethel?" says her brother, "and had we not better hang up one or two in Lombard Street; hers and our other relation's, Mrs. Mason?"

"My darling love, who is Mrs. Mason?" asks Lady Anne.

"Another member of the family, ma'am. She was cousin ——"

"She was no such thing, sir," roars Sir Brian.

"She was relative and housemaid of my grandfather during his first marriage. She acted, I believe, as dry nurse to the distinguished Colonel of sepoy, my uncle. She has retired into private life in her native town of Newcome, and occupies her latter days by the management of a mangle. The Colonel and young pothouse have gone down to spend a few days with their elderly relative. It's all here in the paper, by Jove!" Mr. Barnes clenched his fist, and stamped upon the newspaper with much energy.

"And so they should go down and see her, and so the Colonel should love his nurse, and not forget his relations if they are old and poor," cries Ethel, with a flush on her face, and tears starting into her eyes.

"Hear what the Newcome papers say about it," shrieks out Mr. Barnes, his voice quivering, his little eyes flashing out scorn. "It's in both the papers, I dare say. It will be in the Times tomorrow. By —— it's delightful. Our paper only mentions the gratifying circumstance; here is the paragraph. 'Lieutenant-Colonel Newcome, C.B., a distinguished Indian officer, and younger brother of our respected townsman and representative Sir Brian Newcome, Bart., has been staying for the last week at the King's Arms, in our city. He has been visited by the principal inhabitants and leading gentlemen of Newcome, and has come among us, as we understand, in order to pass a few days with an elderly relative, who has been living for many years past in great retirement in this place.'"

"Well, I see no great harm in that paragraph," says Sir Brian. "I wish my brother had gone to the Roebuck, and not to the King's Arms, as the Roebuck is our house: but he could not be expected to know much about the Newcome inns, as he is a new comer himself. And I think it was very right of the people to call on him."

“Now hear what the Independent says, and see if you like that, sir,” cries Barnes, grinning fiercely; and he began to read as follows:—

“Mr. Independent — I was born and bred a Screwcomite, and am naturally proud of everybody and everything which bears the revered name of Screwcome. I am a Briton and a man, though I have not the honour of a vote for my native borough; if I had, you may be sure I would give it to our admired and talented representative, Don Pomposo Lickspittle Grindpauper, Poor House Agincourt, Screwcome, whose ancestors fought with Julius Caesar against William the Conqueror, and whose father certainly wielded a cloth yard shaft in London not fifty years ago.

“Don Pomposo, as you know, seldom favours the town o Screwcome with a visit. — Our gentry are not of ancient birth enough to be welcome to a Lady Screwcome. Our manufacturers make their money by trade. Oh, fie I how can it be supposed that such vulgarians should be received among the, aristocratic society of Screwcome House? Two balls in the season, and ten dozen o gooseberry, are enough for them.”

“It’s that scoundrel Parrot,” burst out Sir Brian; “because I wouldn’t have any more wine of him — No, it’s Vidler, the apothecary. By heavens! Lady Anne, I told you it would be so. Why didn’t you ask the Miss Vidlers to your ball?”

“They were on the list,” cries Lady Anne, “three of them; I did everything I could; I consulted Mr. Vidler for poor Alfred, and he actually stopped and saw the dear child take the physic. Why were they not asked to the ball?” cries her ladyship bewildered; “I declare to gracious goodness I don’t know.”

“Barnes scratched their names,” cries Ethel, “out of the list, mamma. You know you did, Barnes; you said you had gallipots enough.”

“I don’t think it is like Vidler’s writing,” said Mr. Barnes, perhaps willing to turn the conversation. “I think it must be that villain Duff the baker, who made the song about us at the last election; — but hear the rest of the paragraph,” and he continued to read:—

“The Screwcomites are at this moment favoured with a visit from a gentleman of the Screwcome family, who, having passed all his life abroad, is somewhat different from his relatives, whom we all so love and honour! This distinguished gentleman, this gallant soldier, has come among us, not merely to see our manufactures — in which Screwcome can vie with any city in the North — but an old servant and relation of his family, whom he is not above recognising; who nursed him in his early days; who has been living in her native place for many years, supported by the generous bounty of Colonel N——. The gallant officer, accompanied by his son, a fine youth, has taken repeated drives round our beautiful environs in one of friend Taplow’s (of the King’s Arms) open drags, and accompanied by Mrs. — — now an aged lady, who speaks, with tears in her eyes, of the goodness and gratitude of her gallant soldier!

“One day last week they drove to Screwcome House. Will it be believed that, though the house is only four miles distant from our city — though Don Pomposo’s family have inhabited it these twelve years for four or five months every year — Mrs. M—— saw her cousin’s house for the first time; has never set eyes upon those grandees, except in public places, since the day when they honoured the county by purchasing the estate which they own?

“I have, as I repeat, no vote for the borough; but if I had, oh, wouldn’t I show my respectful gratitude at the next election, and plump for Pomposo! I shall keep my eye upon him, and am, Mr. Independent — Your Constant Reader, Peeping Tom.”

“The spirit of radicalism abroad in this country,” said Sir Brian Newcome, crushing his egg-shell desperately, “is dreadful, really dreadful. We are on the edge of a positive volcano.” Down went the egg-spoon into its crater. “The worst sentiments are everywhere publicly advocated; the licentiousness of the press has reached a pinnacle which menaces us with ruin; there is no law which these shameless newspapers respect; no rank which is safe from their attacks; no ancient landmark which the lava-flood of democracy does not threaten to overwhelm and destroy.”

“When I was at Spielberg,” Barnes Newcome remarked kindly, “I saw three long-bearded, putty-faced blaguards pacin up and down a little courtyard, and Count Keppenheimer told me they were three damned editors of Milanese newspapers, who had had seven years of imprisonment already; and last year when Keppenheimer came to shoot at Newcome, I showed him that old thief, old Batters, the proprietor of the Independent, and Potts, his infernal ally, driving in a dogcart; and I said to him, Keppenheimer, I wish we had a place where we could lock up some of our infernal radicals of the press, or that you could take off those two villains to Spielberg; and as we were passin, that infernal Potts burst out laughin in my face, and cut one of my pointers over the head with his whip. We must do something with that Independent, sir.”

"We must," says the father, solemnly, "we must put it down, Barnes, we must put it down."

"I think," says Barnes, "we had best give the railway advertisements to Batters."

"But that makes the man of the Sentinel so angry," says the elder persecutor of the press.

"Then let us give Tom Potts some shootin at any rate; the ruffian is always poachin about our covers as it is. Speers should be written to, sir, to keep a look-out upon Batters and that villain his accomplice, and to be civil to them, and that sort of thing; and, damn it, to be down upon them whenever he sees the opportunity."

During the above conspiracy for bribing or crushing the independence of a great organ of British opinion, Miss Ethel Newcome held her tongue; but when her papa closed the conversation by announcing solemnly that he would communicate with Speers, Ethel turning to her mother said, "Mamma, is it true that grandpapa has a relation living at Newcome who is old and poor?"

"My darling child, how on earth should I know?" says Lady Anne. "I daresay Mr. Newcome had plenty of poor relations."

"I am sure some on your side, Anne, have been good enough to visit me at the bank," said Sir Brian, who thought his wife's ejaculation was a reflection upon his family, whereas it was the statement of a simple fact in natural history. "This person was no relation of my father's at all. She was remotely connected with his first wife, I believe. She acted as servant to him, and has been most handsomely pensioned by the Colonel."

"Who went to her, like a kind, dear, good, brave uncle as he is," cried Ethel; "the very day I go to Newcome I'll go to see her." She caught a look of negation in her father's eye — "I will go — that is, if papa will give me leave," says Miss Ethel.

"By Gad, sir," says Barnes, "I think it is the very best thing she could do; and the best way of doing it, Ethel can go with one of the boys and take Mrs. What-do-you-call'em a gown, or a, tract, or that sort of thing, and stop that infernal Independent's mouth."

"If we had gone sooner," said Miss Ethel, simply, "there would not have been all this abuse of us in the paper." To which statement her worldly father and brother perforce agreeing, we may congratulate good old Mrs. Mason upon the new and polite acquaintances she is about to make.



CHAPTER XV

THE OLD LADIES

The above letter and conversation will show what our active Colonel's movements and history had been since the last chapter in which they were recorded. He and Clive took the Liverpool mail, and travelled from Liverpool to Newcome with a post-chaise and a pair of horses, which landed them at the King's Arms. The Colonel delighted in post-chaising — the rapid transit through the country amused him and cheered his spirits. Besides, had he not Dr. Johnson's word for it, that a swift journey in a post-chaise was one of the greatest enjoyments in life, and a sojourn in a comfortable inn one of its chief pleasures? In travelling he was as happy and noisy as a boy. He talked to the waiters, and made friends with the landlord; got all the information which he could gather regarding the towns into which he came; and drove about from one sight or curiosity to another with indefatigable good-humour and interest. It was good for Clive to see men and cities; to visit mills, manufactories, country seats, cathedrals. He asked a hundred questions regarding all things round about him; and any one caring to know who Thomas Newcome was, and what his rank and business, found no difficulty in having his questions answered by the simple and kindly traveller.

Mine host of the King's Arms, Mr. Taplow aforesaid, knew in five minutes who his guest was, and the errand on which he came. Was not Colonel Newcome's name painted on all his trunks and boxes? Was not his servant ready to answer all questions regarding the Colonel and his son? Newcome pretty generally introduced Clive to my landlord, when the latter brought his guest his bottle of wine. With old-fashioned cordiality, the Colonel would bid the landlord drink a glass of his own liquor, and seldom failed to say to him, "This is my son, sir. We are travelling together to see the country. Every English gentleman should see his own country first, before he goes abroad, as we intend to do afterwards — to make the Grand Tour. And I will thank you to tell me what there is remarkable in your town, and what we ought to see — antiquities, manufactures, and seats in the neighbourhood. We wish to see everything, sir — everything. Elaborate diaries of these home tours are still extant, in Clive's boyish manuscript and the Colonel's dashing handwriting — quaint records of places visited, and alarming accounts of inn bills paid."

So Mr. Taplow knew in five minutes that his guest was a brother of Sir Brian, their member; and saw the note despatched by an ostler to "Mrs. Sarah Mason, Jubilee Row," announcing that the Colonel had arrived, and would be with her after his dinner. Mr. Taplow did not think fit to tell his guest that the house Sir Brian used — the Blue house — was the Roebuck, not the King's Arms. Might not the gentlemen be of different politics? Mr. Taplow's wine knew none.

Some of the jolliest fellows in all Newcome use the Boscawen Room at the King's Arms as their club, and pass numberless merry evenings and crack countless jokes there.

Duff, the baker; old Mr. Vidler, when he can get away from his medical labours (and his hand shakes, it must be owned, very much now, and his nose is very red); Parrot, the auctioneer; and that amusing dog, Tom Potts, the talented reporter of the Independent — were pretty constant attendants at the King's Arms; and Colonel Newcome's dinner was not over before some of these gentlemen knew what dishes he had had; how he had called for a bottle of sherry and a bottle of claret, like a gentleman; how he had paid the postboys, and travelled with a servant like a top-sawyer; that he was come to shake hands with an old nurse and relative of his family. Every one of those jolly Britons thought well of the Colonel for his affectionateness and liberality, and contrasted it with the behaviour of the Tory Baronet — their representative.

His arrival made a sensation in the place. The Blue Club at the Roebuck discussed it, as well as the uncompromising Liberals at the King's Arms. Mr. Speers, Sir Brian's agent, did not know how to act, and advised Sir Brian by the next night's mail, The Reverend Dr. Bulders, the rector, left his card.

Meanwhile it was not gain or business, but only love and gratitude, which brought Thomas Newcome to his father's native town. Their dinner over, away went the Colonel and Clive, guided by the ostler, their previous messenger, to the humble little tenement which Thomas Newcome's earliest friend inhabited. The good old woman put her spectacles into her Bible, and flung herself into her boy's arms — her boy who was more than fifty years old. She embraced Clive still more eagerly and frequently than she kissed his father. She did not know her Colonel with them whiskers. Clive was the very picture of the dear boy as he had left her almost twoscore years ago. And as fondly as she hung on the boy, her memory had

ever clung round that early time when they were together. The good soul told endless tales of her darling's childhood, his frolics and beauty. To-day was uncertain to her, but the past was still bright and clear. As they sat prattling together over the bright tea-table, attended by the trim little maid, whose services the Colonel's bounty secured for his old nurse, the kind old creature insisted on having Clive by her side. Again and again she would think he was actually her own boy, forgetting, in that sweet and pious hallucination, that the bronzed face, and thinned hair, and melancholy eyes of the veteran before her, were those of her nursling of old days. So for near half the space of man's allotted life he had been absent from her, and day and night wherever he was, in sickness or health, in sorrow or danger, her innocent love and prayers had attended the absent darling. Not in vain, not in vain, does he live whose course is so befriended. Let us be thankful for our race, as we think of the love that blesses some of us. Surely it has something of Heaven in it, and angels celestial may rejoice in it, and admire it.

Having nothing whatever to do, our Colonel's movements are of course exceedingly rapid, and he has the very shortest time to spend in any single place. That evening, Saturday, and the next day, Sunday, when he will faithfully accompany his dear old nurse to church. And what a festival is that day for her, when she has her Colonel and that beautiful brilliant boy of his by her side, and Mr. Hicks, the curate, looking at him, and the venerable Dr. Bulders himself eyeing him from the pulpit, and all the neighbours fluttering and whispering, to be sure, who can be that fine military gentleman, and that splendid young man sitting by old Mrs. Mason, and leading her so affectionately out of church? That Saturday and Sunday the Colonel will pass with good old Mason, but on Monday he must be off; on Tuesday he must be in London, he has important business in London — in fact, Tom Hamilton, of his regiment, comes up for election at the Oriental on that day, and on such an occasion could Thomas Newcome be absent? He drives away from the King's Arms through a row of smirking chambermaids, smiling waiters, and thankful ostlers, accompanied to the post-chaise, of which the obsequious Taplow shuts the door; and the Boscawen Room pronounces him that night to be a trump; and the whole of the busy town, ere the next day is over, has heard of his coming and departure, praised his kindness and generosity, and no doubt contrasted it with the different behaviour of the Baronet, his brother, who has gone for some time by the ignominious sobriquet of Screwcome, in the neighbourhood of his ancestral hall.

Dear old nurse Mason will have a score of visits to make and to receive, at all of which you may be sure that triumphal advent of the Colonel's will be discussed and admired. Mrs. Mason will show her beautiful new India shawl, and her splendid Bible with the large print, and the affectionate inscription, from Thomas Newcome to his dearest old friend; her little maid will exhibit her new gown; the curate will see the Bible, and Mrs. Bulders will admire the shawl; and the old friends and humble companions of the good old lady, as they take their Sunday walks by the pompous lodge-gates of Newcome Park, which stand with the Baronet's new-fangled arms over them, gilded, and filagreed, and barred, will tell their stories, too, about the kind Colonel and his hard brother. When did Sir Brian ever visit a poor old woman's cottage, or his bailiff exempt from the rent? What good action, except a few thin blankets and beggarly coal and soup tickets, did Newcome Park ever do for the poor? And as for the Colonel's wealth, Lord bless you, he's been in India these five-and-thirty years; the Baronet's money is a drop in the sea to his. The Colonel is the kindest, the best, the richest of men. These facts and opinions, doubtless, inspired the eloquent pen of "Peeping Tom," when he indited the sarcastic epistle to the Newcome Independent, which we perused over Sir Brian Newcome's shoulder in the last chapter.

And you may be sure Thomas Newcome had not been many weeks in England before good little Miss Honeyman, at Brighton, was favoured with a visit from her dear Colonel. The envious Gawler scowling out of his bow-window, where the fly-blown card still proclaimed that his lodgings were unoccupied, had the mortification to behold a yellow post-chaise drive up to Miss Honeyman's door, and having discharged two gentlemen from within, trot away with servant and baggage to some house of entertainment other than Gawler's. Whilst this wretch was cursing his own ill fate, and execrating yet more deeply Miss Honeyman's better fortune, the worthy little lady was treating her Colonel to a sisterly embrace and a solemn reception. Hannah, the faithful housekeeper, was presented, and had a shake of the hand. The Colonel knew all about Hannah: ere he had been in England a week, a basket containing pots of jam of her confection, and a tongue of Hannah's curing, had arrived for the Colonel. That very night when his servant had lodged Colonel Newcome's effects at the neighbouring hotel, Hannah was in possession of one of the Colonel's shirts, she and her mistress having previously conspired to make a dozen of those garments for the family benefactor.

All the presents which Newcome had ever transmitted to his sister-inlaw from India had been taken out of the cotton and lavender in which the faithful creature kept them. It was a fine hot day in June, but I promise you Miss Honeyman

wore her blazing scarlet Cashmere shawl; her great brooch, representing the Taj of Agra, was in her collar; and her bracelets (she used to say, I am given to understand they are called bangles, my dear, by the natives) decorated the sleeves round her lean old hands, which trembled with pleasure as they received the kind grasp of the Colonel of colonels. How busy those hands had been that morning! What custards they had whipped! — what a triumph of pie-crusts they had achieved! Before Colonel Newcome had been ten minutes in the house, the celebrated veal-cutlets made their appearance. Was not the whole house adorned in expectation of his coming? Had not Mr. Kuhn, the affable foreign gentleman of the first-floor lodgers, prepared a French dish? Was not Betty on the look-out, and instructed to put the cutlets on the fire at the very moment when the Colonel's carriage drove up to her mistress's door? The good woman's eyes twinkled, the kind old hand and voice shook, as, holding up a bright glass of Madeira, Miss Honeyman drank the Colonel's health. "I promise you, my dear Colonel," says she, nodding her head, adorned with a bristling superstructure of lace and ribbons, "I promise you, that I can drink your health in good wine!" The wine was of his own sending, and so were the China fire-screens, and the sandalwood workbox, and the ivory cardcase, and those magnificent pink and white chessmen, carved like little sepoys and mandarins, with the castles on elephants' backs, George the Third and his queen in pink ivory, against the Emperor of China and lady in white — the delight of Clive's childhood, the chief ornament of the old spinster's sitting-room.

Miss Honeyman's little feast was pronounced to be the perfection of cookery; and when the meal was over, came a noise of little feet at the parlour door, which being opened, there appeared, first, a tall nurse with a dancing baby; second and third, two little girls with little frocks, little trousers, long ringlets, blue eyes, and blue ribbons to match; fourth, Master Alfred, now quite recovered from his illness, and holding by the hand, fifth, Miss Ethel Newcome, blushing like a rose.

Hannah, grinning, acted as mistress of the ceremonies, calling out the names of "Miss Newcomes, Master Newcomes, to see the Colonel, if you please, ma'am," bobbing a curtsy, and giving a knowing nod to Master Clive, as she smoothed her new silk apron. Hannah, too, was in new attire, all crisp and rustling, in the Colonel's honour. Miss Ethel did not cease blushing as she advanced towards her uncle; and the honest campaigner started up, blushing too. Mr. Clive rose also, as little Alfred, of whom he was a great friend, ran towards him. Clive rose, laughed, nodded at Ethel, and ate gingerbread nuts all at the same time. As for Colonel Thomas Newcome and his niece, they fell in love with each other instantaneously, like Prince Camaralzaman and the Princess of China.

I have turned away one artist: the poor creature was utterly incompetent to depict the sublime, graceful, and pathetic personages and events with which this history will most assuredly abound, and I doubt whether even the designer engaged in his place can make such a portrait of Miss Ethel Newcome as shall satisfy her friends and her own sense of justice. That blush which we have indicated, he cannot render. How are you to copy it with a steel point and a ball of printer's ink? That kindness which lights up the Colonel's eyes; gives an expression to the very wrinkles round about them; shines as a halo round his face; — what artist can paint it? The painters of old, when they portrayed sainted personages, were fain to have recourse to compasses and gold leaf — as if celestial splendour could be represented by Dutch metal! As our artist cannot come up to this task, the reader will be pleased to let his fancy paint for itself the look of courtesy for a woman, admiration for a young beauty, protection for an innocent child, all of which are expressed upon the Colonel's kind face, as his eyes are set upon Ethel Newcome.

"Mamma has sent us to bid you welcome to England, uncle," says Miss Ethel, advancing, and never thinking for a moment of laying aside that fine blush which she brought into the room, and which is her pretty symbol of youth, and modesty, and beauty.

He took a little slim white hand and laid it down on his brown palm, where it looked all the whiter: he cleared the grizzled mustachio from his mouth, and stooping down he kissed the little white hand with a great deal of grace and dignity. There was no point of resemblance, and yet a something in the girl's look, voice, and movements, which caused his heart to thrill, and an image out of the past to rise up and salute him. The eyes which had brightened his youth (and which he saw in his dreams and thoughts for faithful years afterwards, as though they looked at him out of heaven) seemed to shine upon him after five-and-thirty years. He remembered such a fair bending neck and clustering hair, such a light foot and airy figure, such a slim hand lying in his own — and now parted from it with a gap of ten thousand long days between. It is an old saying, that we forget nothing; as people in fever begin suddenly to talk the language of their infancy we are stricken by memory sometimes, and old affections rush back on us as vivid as in the time when they were our daily talk, when their presence gladdened our eyes, when their accents thrilled in our ears, when with passionate tears and grief we flung ourselves upon their hopeless corpses. Parting is death, at least as far as life is concerned. A passion comes to an end;

it is carried off in a coffin, or weeping in a post-chaise; it drops out of life one way or other, and the earthclods close over it, and we see it no more. But it has been part of our souls, and it is eternal. Does a mother not love her dead infant? a man his lost mistress? with the fond wife nestling at his side — yes, with twenty children smiling round her knee. No doubt, as the old soldier held the girl's hand in his, the little talisman led him back to Hades, and he saw Leonora. —

“How do you do, uncle?” say girls Nos. 2 and 3 in a pretty little infantile chorus. He drops the talisman, he is back in common life again — the dancing baby in the arms of the bobbing nurse babbles a welcome. Alfred looks up for a while at his uncle in the white trousers, and then instantly proposes that Clive should make him some drawings; and is on his knees at the next moment. He is always climbing on somebody or something, or winding over chairs, curling through banisters, standing on somebody's head, or his own head — as his convalescence advances, his breakages are fearful. Miss Honeyman and Hannah will talk about his dilapidations for years after the little chap has left them. When he is a jolly young officer in the Guards, and comes to see them at Brighton, they will show him the blue-dragon Chayny jar, on which he would sit, and which he cried so fearfully upon breaking.

When this little party has gone out smiling to take its walk on the sea-shore, the Colonel sits down and resumes the interrupted dessert. Miss Honeyman talks of the children and their mother, and the merits of Mr. Kuhn, and the beauty of Miss Ethel, glancing significantly towards Clive, who has had enough of gingerbread nuts and dessert and wine, and whose youthful nose is by this time at the window. What kind-hearted woman, young or old, does not love match-making?

The Colonel, without lifting his eyes from the table, says “she reminds him of — of somebody he knew once.”

“Indeed?” cries Miss Honeyman, and thinks Emma must have altered very much after going to India, for she had fair hair, and white eyelashes, and not a pretty foot certainly — but, my dear good lady, the Colonel is not thinking of the late Mrs. Casey.

He has taken a fitting quantity of the Madeira, the artless greeting of the people here, young and old, has warmed his heart, and he goes upstairs to pay a visit to his sister-inlaw, to whom he makes his most courteous bow as becomes a lady of her rank. Ethel takes her place quite naturally beside him during his visit. Where did he learn those fine manners which all of us who knew him admired in him? He had a natural simplicity, an habitual practice of kind and generous thoughts; a pure mind, and therefore above hypocrisy and affectation — perhaps those French people with whom he had been intimate in early life had imparted to him some of the traditional graces of their *vieille tour* — certainly his half-brothers had inherited none such. “What is this that Barnes has written about his uncle, that the Colonel is ridiculous?” Lady Anne said to her daughter that night. “Your uncle is adorable. I have never seen a more perfect grand Seigneur. He puts me in mind of my grandfather, though grandpapa's grand manner was more artificial, and his voice spoiled by snuff. See the Colonel. He smokes round the garden, but with what perfect grace! This is the man Uncle Hobson, and your poor dear papa, have represented to us as a species of bear! Mr. Newcome, who has himself the ton of a waiter! The Colonel is perfect. What can Barnes mean by ridiculing him? I wish Barnes had such a distinguished air; but he is like his poor dear papa. *Que voulez-vous*, my love? The Newcomes are honourable: the Newcomes are wealthy: but distinguished — no. I never deluded myself with that notion when I married your poor dear papa. At once I pronounce Colonel Newcome a person to be in every way distinguished by us. On our return to London I shall present him to all our family: poor good man! let him see that his family have some presentable relations besides those whom he will meet at Mrs. Newcome's, in Bryanstone Square. You must go to Bryanstone Square immediately we return to London. You must ask your cousins and their governess, and we will give them a little party. Mrs. Newcome is insupportable, but we must never forsake our relatives, Ethel. When you come out you will have to dine there, and to go to her ball. Every young lady in your position in the world has sacrifices to make, and duties to her family to perform. Look at me. Why did I marry your poor dear papa? From duty. Has your Aunt Fanny, who ran away with Captain Canonbury, been happy? They have eleven children, and are starving at Boulogne. Think of three of Fanny's boys in yellow stockings at the Bluecoat School. Your papa got them appointed. I am sure my papa would have gone mad if he had seen that day! She came with one of the poor wretches to Park Lane: but I could not see them. My feelings would not allow me. When my maid — I had a French maid then, Louise, you remember; her conduct was abominable: so was Preville's — when she came and said that my Lady Fanny was below with a young gentleman, *qui portait des bas jaunes*, I could not see the child. I begged her to come up in my room: and, absolutely that I might not offend her, I went to bed. That wretch Louise met her at Boulogne and told her afterwards. Good night, we must not stand chattering here any more. Heaven bless you, my darling! Those are the Colonel's windows! Look, he is smoking on his balcony — that must be Clive's room. Clive is a good kind boy. It was very kind of him to draw so many pictures for

Alfred. Put the drawings away, Ethel. Mr. Smee saw some in Park Lane, and said they showed remarkable genius. What a genius your Aunt Emily had for drawing; but it was flowers! I had no genius in particular, so mamma used to say — and Doctor Belper said, ‘My dear Lady Walham’ (it was before my grandpapa’s death), ‘has Miss Anne a genius for sewing buttons and making puddens?’ — puddens he pronounced it. Goodnight, my own love. Blessings, blessings, on my Ethel!”

The Colonel from his balcony saw the slim figure of the retreating girl, and looked fondly after her: and as the smoke of his cigar floated in the air, he formed a fine castle in it, whereof Clive was lord, and that pretty Ethel, lady. “What a frank, generous, bright young creature is yonder!” thought he. “How cheery and gay she is; how good to Miss Honeyman, to whom she behaved with just the respect that was the old lady’s due — how affectionate with her brothers and sisters! What a sweet voice she has! What a pretty little white hand it is! When she gave it me, it looked like a little white bird lying in mine. I must wear gloves, by Jove I must, and my coat is old-fashioned, as Binnie says; what a fine match might be made between that child and Clive! She reminds me of a pair of eyes I haven’t seen these forty years. I would like to have Clive married to her; to see him out of the scrapes and dangers that young fellows encounter, and safe with such a sweet girl as that. If God had so willed it, I might have been happy myself, and could have made a woman happy. But the Fates were against me. I should like to see Clive happy, and then say *Nunc dimittis*. I shan’t want anything more to-night, Kean, and you can go to bed.”

“Thank you, Colonel,” says Kean, who enters, having prepared his master’s bedchamber, and is retiring when the Colonel calls after him:

“I say, Kean, is that blue coat of mine very old?”

“Uncommon white about the seams, Colonel,” says the man.

“Is it older than other people’s coats?” — Kean is obliged gravely to confess that the Colonel’s coat is very queer.

“Get me another coat, then — see that I don’t do anything or wear anything unusual. I have been so long out of Europe, that I don’t know the customs here, and am not above learning.”

Kean retires, vowing that his master is an old trump; which opinion he had already expressed to Mr. Kuhn, Lady Hanne’s man, over a long potation which those two gentlemen had taken together. And, as all of us, in one way or another, are subject to this domestic criticism, from which not the most exalted can escape, I say, lucky is the man whose servants speak well of him.



CHAPTER XVI

IN WHICH MR. SHERRICK LETS HIS HOUSE IN FITZROY SQUARE

In spite of the sneers of the Newcome Independent, and the Colonel's unlucky visit to his nurse's native place, he still remained in high favour in Park Lane; where the worthy gentleman paid almost daily visits, and was received with welcome and almost affection, at least by the ladies and the children of the house. Who was it that took the children to Astley's but Uncle Newcome? I saw him there in the midst of a cluster of these little people, all children together. He laughed delighted at Mr. Merryman's jokes in the ring. He beheld the Battle of Waterloo with breathless interest, and was amazed — amazed, by Jove, sir — at the prodigious likeness of the principal actor to the Emperor Napoleon; whose tomb he had visited on his return from India, as it pleased him to tell his little audience who sat clustering round him: the little girls, Sir Brian's daughters, holding each by a finger of his honest hands; young Masters Alfred and Edward clapping and hurrahing by his side; while Mr. Clive and Miss Ethel sat in the back of the box enjoying the scene, but with that decorum which belonged to their superior age and gravity. As for Clive, he was in these matters much older than the grizzled old warrior his father. It did one good to hear the Colonel's honest laughs at clown's jokes, and to see the tenderness and simplicity with which he watched over this happy brood of young ones. How lavishly did he supply them with sweetmeats between the acts! There he sat in the midst of them, and ate an orange himself with perfect satisfaction. I wonder what sum of money Mr. Barnes Newcome would have taken to sit for five hours with his young brothers and sisters in a public box at the theatre and eat an orange in the face of the audience? When little Alfred went to Harrow, you may be sure Colonel Newcome and Clive galloped over to see the little man, and tipped him royally. What money is better bestowed than that of a schoolboy's tip? How the kindness is recalled by the recipient in after days! It blesses him that gives and him that takes. Remember how happy such benefactions made you in your own early time, and go off on the very first fine day and tip your nephew at school!

The Colonel's organ of benevolence was so large, that he would have liked to administer bounties to the young folks his nephews and nieces in Bryanstone Square, as well as to their cousins in Park Lane; but Mrs. Newcome was a great deal too virtuous to admit of such spoiling of children. She took the poor gentleman to task for an attempt upon her boys when those lads came home for their holidays, and caused them ruefully to give back the shining gold sovereign with which their uncle had thought to give them a treat.

"I do not quarrel with other families," says she; "I do not allude to other families;" meaning, of course, that she did not allude to Park Lane. "There may be children who are allowed to receive money from their father's grown-up friends. There may be children who hold out their hands for presents, and thus become mercenary in early life. I make no reflections with regard to other households. I only look, and think, and pray for the welfare of my own beloved ones. They want for nothing. Heaven has bounteously furnished us with every comfort, with every elegance, with every luxury. Why need we be bounden to others, who have been ourselves so amply provided? I should consider it ingratitude, Colonel Newcome, want of proper spirit, to allow my boys to accept money. Mind, I make no allusions. When they go to school they receive a sovereign a-piece from their father, and a shilling a week, which is ample pocket-money. When they are at home, I desire that they may have rational amusements: I send them to the Polytechnic with Professor Hickson, who kindly explains to them some of the marvels of science and the wonders of machinery. I send them to the picture-galleries and the British Museum. I go with them myself to the delightful lectures at the institution in Albemarle Street. I do not desire that they should attend theatrical exhibitions. I do not quarrel with those who go to plays; far from it! Who am I that I should venture to judge the conduct of others? When you wrote from India, expressing a wish that your boy should be made acquainted with the works of Shakspeare, I gave up my own opinion at once. Should I interpose between a child and his father? I encouraged the boy to go to the play, and sent him to the pit with one of our footmen."

"And you tipped him very handsomely, my dear Maria, too," said the good-natured Colonel, breaking in upon her sermon; but Virtue was not to be put off in that way.

"And why, Colonel Newcome," Virtue exclaimed, laying a pudgy little hand on its heart; "why did I treat Clive so? Because I stood towards him in loco parentis; because he was as a child to me, and I to him as a mother. I indulged him more than my own. I loved him with a true maternal tenderness. Then he was happy to come to our house: then perhaps

Park Lane was not so often open to him as Bryanstone Square: but I make no allusions. Then he did not go six times to another house for once that he came to mine. He was a simple, confiding, generous boy, was not dazzled by worldly rank or titles of splendour. He could not find these in Bryanstone Square. A merchant's wife, a country lawyer's daughter — I could not be expected to have my humble board surrounded by titled aristocracy; I would not if I could. I love my own family too well; I am too honest, too simple — let me own it at once, Colonel Newcome, too proud! And now, now his father has come to England, and I have resigned him, and he meets with no titled aristocrats at my house, and he does not come here any more."

Tears rolled out of her little eyes as she spoke, and she covered her round face with her pocket-handkerchief.

Had Colonel Newcome read the paper that morning, he might have seen amongst what are called the fashionable announcements, the cause, perhaps, why his sister-inlaw had exhibited so much anger and virtue. The Morning Post stated, that yesterday Sir Brian and Lady Newcome entertained at dinner His Excellency the Persian Ambassador and Bucksheesh Bey; the Right Honourable Cannon Rowe, President of the Board of Control, and Lady Louisa Rowe; the Earl of H— — the Countess of Kew, the Earl of Kew, Sir Currey Baughton, Major-General and Mrs. Hooker, Colonel Newcome, and Mr. Horace Fogey. Afterwards her ladyship had an assembly, which was attended by, etc. etc.

This catalogue of illustrious names had been read by Mr. Newcome to her spouse at breakfast, with such comments as she was in the habit of making.

"The President of the Board of Control, the Chairman of the Court of Directors, and Ex-Governor-General of India, and a whole regiment of Kews. By Jove, Maria, the Colonel is in good company," cries Mr. Newcome, with a laugh. "That's the sort of dinner you should have given him. Some people to talk about India. When he dined with us he was put between old Lady Wormely and Professor Roots. I don't wonder at his going to sleep after dinner. I was off myself once or twice during that confounded long argument between Professor Roots and Dr. Windus. That Windus is the deuce to talk."

"Dr. Windus is a man of science, and his name is of European celebrity!" says Maria solemnly. "Any intellectual person would prefer such company to the titled nobodies into whose family your brother has married."

"There you go, Polly; you are always having a shy at Lady Anne and her relations," says Mr. Newcome, good-naturedly.

"A shy! How can you use such vulgar words, Mr. Newcome? What have I to do with Sir Brian's titled relations? I do not value nobility. I prefer people of science — people of intellect — to all the rank in the world."

"So you do," says Hobson her spouse. "You have your party — Lady Anne has her party. You take your line — Lady Anne takes her line. You are a superior woman, my dear Polly; every one knows that. I'm a plain country farmer, I am. As long as you are happy, I am happy too. The people you get to dine here may talk Greek or algebra for what I care. By Jove, my dear, I think you can hold your own with the best of them."

"I have endeavoured by assiduity to make up for time lost, and an early imperfect education," says Mrs. Newcome. "You married a poor country lawyer's daughter. You did not seek a partner in the Peerage, Mr. Newcome."

"No, no. Not such a confounded flat as that," cries Mr. Newcome, surveying his plump partner behind her silver teapot, with eyes of admiration.

"I had an imperfect education, but I knew its blessings, and have, I trust, endeavoured to cultivate the humble talents which Heaven has given me, Mr. Newcome."

"Humble, by Jove!" exclaims the husband. "No gammon of that sort, Polly. You know well enough that you are a superior woman. I ain't a superior man. I know that: one is enough in a family. I leave the reading to you, my dear. Here comes my horses. I say, I wish you'd call on Lady Anne today. Do go and see her, now that's a good girl. I know she is flighty, and that; and Brian's back is up a little. But he ain't a bad fellow; and I wish I could see you and his wife better friends."

On his way to the City, Mr. Newcome rode to look at the new house, No. 120 Fitzroy Square, which his brother, the Colonel, had taken in conjunction with that Indian friend of his, Mr. Binnie. Shrewd old cock, Mr. Binnie. Has brought home a good bit of money from India. Is looking out for safe investments. Has been introduced to Newcome Brothers. Mr. Newcome thinks very well of the Colonel's friend.

The house is vast, but, it must be owned, melancholy. Not long since it was a ladies' school, in an unprosperous condition. The scar left by Madame Latour's brass plate may still be seen on the tall black door, cheerfully ornamented in the style of the end of the last century, with a funereal urn in the centre of the entry, and garlands, and the skulls of rams at

each corner. Madame Latour, who at one time actually kept a large yellow coach, and drove her parlour young ladies in the Regent's Park, was an exile from her native country (Islington was her birthplace, and Grigson her paternal name), and an outlaw at the suit of Samuel Sherrick: that Mr. Sherrick whose wine-vaults undermine Lady Whittlesea's Chapel where the eloquent Honeyman preaches.

The house is Mr. Sherrick's house. Some say his name is Shadrach, and pretend to have known him as an orange-boy, afterwards as a chorus-singer in the theatres, afterwards as secretary to a great tragedian. I know nothing of these stories. He may or he may not be a partner of Mr. Campion, of Shepherd's Inn: he has a handsome villa, Abbey Road, St. John's Wood, entertains good company, rather loud, of the sporting sort, rides and drives very showy horses, has boxes at the Opera whenever he likes, and free access behind the scenes: is handsome, dark, bright-eyed, with a quantity of jewellery, and a tuft to his chin; sings sweetly sentimental songs after dinner. Who cares a fig what was the religion of Mr. Sherrick's ancestry, or what the occupation of his youth? Mr. Honeyman, a most respectable man surely, introduced Sherrick to the Colonel and Binnie.

Mr. Sherrick stocked their cellar with some of the wine over which Honeyman preached such lovely sermons. It was not dear; it was not bad when you dealt with Mr. Sherrick for wine alone. Going into his market with ready money in your hand, as our simple friends did, you were pretty fairly treated by Mr. Sherrick.

The house being taken, we may be certain there was fine amusement for Clive, Mr. Binnie, and the Colonel, in frequenting the sales, in the inspection of upholsterers' shops, and the purchase of furniture for the new mansion. It was like nobody else's house. There were three masters with four or five servants over them. Kean for the Colonel and his son; a smart boy with boots for Mr. Binnie; Mrs. Kean to cook and keep house, with a couple of maids under her. The Colonel, himself, was great at making hash mutton, hot-pot, curry, and pillau. What cosy pipes did we not smoke in the dining-room, in the drawing-room, or where we would! What pleasant evenings did we not have with Mr Binnie's books and Schiedam! Then there were the solemn state dinners, at most of which the writer of this biography had a corner.

Clive had a tutor — Cirindey of Corpus — whom we recommended to him, and with whom the young gentleman did not fatigue his brains very much; but his great forte decidedly lay in drawing. He sketched the horses, he sketched the dogs; all the servants from the blear-eyed boot-boy to the rosy-cheeked lass, Mrs. Kean's niece, whom that virtuous housekeeper was always calling to come downstairs. He drew his father in all postures — asleep, on foot, on horseback; and jolly little Mr. Binnie, with his plump legs on a chair, or jumping briskly on the back of the cob which he rode. He should have drawn the pictures for this book, but that he no longer condescends to make sketches. Young Ridley was his daily friend now; and Grindley, his classics and mathematics over in the morning, and the ride with father over, this pair of young men would constantly attend Gandish's Drawing Academy, where, to be sure, Ridley passed many hours at work on his art, before his young friend and patron could be spared from his books to his pencil.

"Oh," says Clive, "if you talk to him now about those early days, it was a jolly time! I do not believe there was any young fellow in London so happy." And there hangs up in his painting-room now, a head, painted at one sitting, of a man rather bald, with hair touched with grey, with a large moustache, and a sweet mouth half smiling beneath it, and melancholy eyes; and Clive shows that portrait of their grandfather to his children, and tells them that the whole world never saw a nobler gentleman.



CHAPTER XVII

A SCHOOL OF ART

British art either finds her peculiar nourishment in melancholy, and loves to fix her abode in desert places; or it may be her purse is but slenderly furnished, and she is forced to put up with accommodations rejected by more prosperous callings. Some of the most dismal quarters of the town are colonised by her disciples and professors. In walking through streets which may have been gay and polite when ladies' chairmen jostled each other on the pavement, and linkboys with their torches lighted the beaux over the mud, who has not remarked the artist's invasion of those regions once devoted to fashion and gaiety? Centre windows of drawing-rooms are enlarged so as to reach up into bedrooms — bedrooms where Lady Betty has had her hair powdered, and where the painter's north-light now takes possession of the place which her toilet-table occupied a hundred years ago. There are degrees in decadence: after the Fashion chooses to emigrate, and retreats from Soho or Bloomsbury, let us say, to Cavendish Square, physicians come and occupy the vacant houses, which still have a respectable look, the windows being cleaned, and the knockers and plates kept bright, and the doctor's carriage rolling round the square, almost as fine as the countess's, which has whisked away her ladyship to other regions. A boarding-house mayhap succeeds the physician, who has followed after his sick folks into the new country; and then Dick Tinto comes with his dingy brass plate, and breaks in his north window, and sets up his sitters' throne. I love his honest moustache, and jaunty velvet jacket; his queer figure, his queer vanities, and his kind heart. Why should he not suffer his ruddy ringlets to fall over his shirt-collar? Why should he deny himself his velvet? it is but a kind of fustian which costs him eighteenpence a yard. He is naturally what he is, and breaks out into costume as spontaneously as a bird sings, or a bulb bears a tulip. And as Dick, under yonder terrific appearance of waving cloak, bristling beard, and shadowy sombrero, is a good kindly simple creature, got up at a very cheap rate, his life is so consistent with his dress; he gives his genius a darkling swagger, and a romantic envelope, which, being removed, you find, not a bravo, but a kind chirping soul; not a moody poet avoiding mankind for the better company of his own great thoughts, but a jolly little chap who has an aptitude for painting brocade gowns, a bit of armour (with figures inside them), or trees and cattle, or gondolas and buildings, or what not; an instinct for the picturesque, which exhibits itself in his works, and outwardly on his person; beyond this, a gentle creature loving his friends, his cups, feasts, merrymakings, and all good things. The kindest folks alive I have found among those scowling whiskeradoes. They open oysters with their yataghans, toast muffins on their rapiers, and fill their Venice glasses with half-and-half. If they have money in their lean purses, be sure they have a friend to share it. What innocent gaiety, what jovial suppers on threadbare cloths, and wonderful songs after; what pathos, merriment, humour does not a man enjoy who frequents their company! Mr. Clive Newcome, who has long since shaved his beard, who has become a family man, and has seen the world in a thousand different phases, avers that his life as an art-student at home and abroad was the pleasantest part of his whole existence. It may not be more amusing in the telling than the chronicle of a feast, or the accurate report of two lovers' conversation; but the biographer, having brought his hero to the period of his life, is bound to relate it, before passing to other occurrences which are to be narrated in their turn.

We may be sure the boy had many conversations with his affectionate guardian as to the profession which he should follow. As regarded mathematical and classical learning, the elder Newcome was forced to admit, that out of every hundred boys, there were fifty as clever as his own, and at least fifty more industrious; the army in time of peace Colonel Newcome thought a bad trade for a young fellow so fond of ease and pleasure as his son: his delight in the pencil was manifest to all. Were not his school-books full of caricatures of the masters? Whilst his tutor, Grindley, was lecturing him, did he not draw Grindley instinctively under his very nose? A painter Clive was determined to be, and nothing else; and Clive, being then some sixteen years of age, began to study the art, en regle, under the eminent Mr. Gandish, of Soho.

It was that well-known portrait-painter, Alfred Smee, Esq., R.A., who recommended Gandish to Colonel Newcome, one day when the two gentlemen met at dinner at Lady Anne Newcome's table. Mr. Smee happened to examine some of Clive's drawings, which the young fellow had executed for his cousins. Clive found no better amusement than in making pictures for them, and would cheerfully pass evening after evening in that diversion. He had made a thousand sketches of Ethel before a year was over; a year, every day of which seemed to increase the attractions of the fair young creature, develop her nymph-like form, and give her figure fresh graces. He also of course drew Alfred and the nursery in general,

Aunt Anne and the Blenheim spaniels, and Mr. Kuhn and his earrings, the majestic John bringing in the coal-scuttle, and all persons or objects in that establishment with which he was familiar. "What a genius the lad has," the complimentary Mr. Smee averred; "what a force and individuality there is in all his drawings! Look at his horses! capital, by Jove, capital! and Alfred on his pony, and Miss Ethel in her Spanish bat, with her hair flowing in the wind! I must take this sketch, I positively must now, and show it to Landseer." And the courtly artist daintily enveloped the drawing in a sheet of paper, put it away in his hat, and vowed subsequently that the great painter had been delighted with the young man's performance. Smee was not only charmed with Clive's skill as an artist, but thought his head would be an admirable one to paint. Such a rich complexion, such fine turns in his hair! such eyes! to see real blue eyes was so rare nowadays! And the Colonel too, if the Colonel would but give him a few sittings, the grey uniform of the Bengal Cavalry, the silver lace, the little bit of red ribbon just to warm up the picture! it was seldom, Mr. Smee declared, that an artist could get such an opportunity for colour. With our hideous vermilion uniforms there was no chance of doing anything; Rubens himself could scarcely manage scarlet. Look at the horseman in Cuyp's famous picture at the Louvre: the red was a positive blot upon the whole picture. There was nothing like French grey and silver! All which did not prevent Mr. Smee from painting Sir Brian in a flaring deputy-lieutenant's uniform, and entreating all military men whom he met to sit to him in scarlet. Clive Newcome the Academician succeeded in painting, of course for mere friendship's sake, and because he liked the subject, though he could not refuse the cheque which Colonel Newcome sent him for the frame and picture; but no cajoleries could induce the old campaigner to sit to any artist save one. He said he should be ashamed to pay fifty guineas for the likeness of his homely face; he jocularly proposed to James Binnie to have his head put on the canvas, and Mr. Smee enthusiastically caught at the idea; but honest James winked his droll eyes, saying his was a beauty that did not want any paint; and when Mr. Smee took his leave after dinner in Fitzroy Square, where this conversation was held, James Binnie hinted that the Academician was no better than an old humbug, in which surmise he was probably not altogether incorrect. Certain young men who frequented the kind Colonel's house were also somewhat of this opinion; and made endless jokes at the painter's expense. Smee plastered his sitters with adulation as methodically as he covered his canvas. He waylaid gentlemen at dinner; he inveigled unsuspecting folks into his studio, and had their heads off their shoulders before they were aware. One day, on our way from the Temple, through Howland Street, to the Colonel's house, we beheld Major-General Sir Thomas de Boots, in full uniform, rushing from Smee's door to his brougham. The coachman was absent refreshing himself at a neighbouring tap: the little street-boys cheered and hurraed Sir Thomas, as, arrayed in gold and scarlet, he sate in his chariot. He blushed purple when he beheld us. No artist would have dared to imitate those purple tones: he was one of the numerous victims of Mr. Smee.

One day, then, day to be noted with a white stone, Colonel Newcome, with his son and Mr. Smee, R.A., walked from the Colonel's house to Gandish's, which was not far removed thence; and young Clive, who was a perfect mimic, described to his friends, and illustrated, as was his wont, by diagrams, the interview which he had with that professor. "By Jove, you must see Gandish, pa!" cries Clive: "Gandish is worth the whole world. Come and be an art-student. You'll find such jolly fellows there! Gandish calls it hart-student, and says, 'Hars est celare Hartem'— by Jove he does! He treated us to a little Latin, as he brought out a cake and a bottle of wine, you know."

"The governor was splendid, sir. He wore gloves: you know he only puts them on on parade days; and turned out for the occasion spick and span. He ought to be a general officer. He looks like a field-marshal — don't he? You should have seen him bowing to Mrs. Gandish and the Miss Gandishes, dressed all in their best, round the cake-tray! He takes his glass of wine, and sweeps them all round with a bow. 'I hope, young ladies,' says he, 'you don't often go to the students' room. I'm afraid the young gentlemen would leave off looking at the statues if you came in.' And so they would: for you never saw such guys; but the dear old boy fancies every woman is a beauty."

"Mr. Smee, you are looking at my picture of 'Boadishia?' says Gandish. Wouldn't he have caught it for his quantities at Grey Friars, that's all."

"Yes — ah — yes," says Mr. Smee, putting his hand over his eyes, and standing before it, looking steady, you know, as if he was going to see whereabouts he should hit Boadishia.

"It was painted when you were a young man, four years before you were an associate, Smee. Had some success in its time, and there's good pints about that picture," Gandish goes on. "But I never could get my price for it; and here it hangs in my own room. Igh art won't do in this country, Colonel — it's a melancholy fact."

"High art! I should think it is high art!" whispers old Smee; "fourteen feet high, at least!" And then out loud he says

'The picture has very fine points in it, Gandish, as you say. Foreshortening of that arm, capital! That red drapery carried off into the right of the picture very skilfully managed!'

"It's not like portrait-painting, Smee — Igh art,' says Gandish. 'The models of the hancient Britons in that pictur alone cost me thirty pound — when I was a struggling man, and had just married my Betsey here. You reckonise Boadishia, Colonel, with the Roman elmet, cuirass, and javeling of the period — all studied from the hantique, sir, the glorious hantique.'

"All but Boadicea,' says father. 'She remains always young.' And he began to speak the lines out of Cowper, he did — waving his stick like an old trump — and famous they are," cries the lad:

"When the British warrior queen,
Bleeding from the Roman rods" —

"Jolly verses! Haven't I translated them into alcaics?" says Clive, with a merry laugh, and resumes his history.

"Oh, I must have those verses in my album,' cries one of the young ladies. 'Did you compose them, Colonel Newcome?' But Gandish, you see, is never thinking about any works but his own, and goes on, 'Study of my eldest daughter, exhibited 1816.'

"No, pa, not '16,' cries Miss Gandish. She don't look like a chicken, I can tell you.

"Admired,' Gandish goes on, never heeding her — 'I can show you what the papers said of it at the time — Morning Chronicle and Examiner — spoke most ighly of it. My son as an infant Ercules, stranglin the serpent over the piano. Fust conception of my picture of 'Non Hangli said Hangeli."

"For which I can guess who were the angels that sat,' says father. Upon my word, that old governor! He is a little too strong. But Mr. Gandish listened no more to him than to Mr. Smee, and went on, buttering himself all over, as I have read the Hottentots do. 'Myself at thirty-three years of age!' says he, pointing to a portrait of a gentleman in leather breeches and mahogany boots; 'I could have been a portrait-painter, Mr. Smee.'

"Indeed it was lucky for some of us you devoted yourself to high art, Gandish,' Mr. Smee says, and sips the wine and puts it down again, making a face. It was not first-rate tipple, you see.

"Two girls,' continues that indomitable Mr. Gandish. 'Hidea for 'Babes in the Wood.' 'View of Paestum,' taken on the spot by myself, when travelling with the late lamented Earl of Kew. 'Beauty, Valour, Commerce, and Liberty, condoling with Britannia on the death of Admiral Viscount Nelson,'— allegorical piece drawn at a very early age after Trafalgar. Mr. Fuseli saw that piece, sir, when I was a student of the Academy, and said to me, 'Young man, stick to the antique. There's nothing like it.' Those were 'is very words. If you do me the favour to walk into the Hatrium, you'll remark my great pictures also from English istry. An English historical painter, sir, should be employed chiefly in English istry. That's what I would have done. Why ain't there temples for us, where the people might read their history at a glance, and without knowing how to read? Why is my 'Alfred' 'anging up in this 'all? Because there is no patronage for a man who devotes himself to Igh art. You know the anecdote, Colonel? King Alfred flying from the Danes, took refuge in a neaterd's 'ut. The rustic's wife told him to bake a cake, and the fugitive sovering set down to his ignoble task, and forgetting it in the cares of state, let the cake burn, on which the woman struck him. The moment chose is when she is lifting her 'and to deliver the blow. The king receives it with majesty mingled with meekness. In the background the door of the 'ut is open, letting in the royal officers to announce the Danes are defeated. The daylight breaks in at the aperture, signifying the dawning of 'Ope. That story, sir, which I found in my researches in istry, has since become so popular, sir, that hundreds of artists have painted it, hundreds! I who discovered the legend, have my picture — here!'

"Now, Colonel,' says the showman, 'let me — let me lead you through the statue gallery. 'Apollo,' you see. The 'Venus Hanadyomene,' the glorious Venus of the Louvre, which I saw in 1814, Colonel, in its glory — the 'Laocoon'— my friend Gibson's 'Nymth,' you see, is the only figure I admit among the antiques. Now up this stair to the students' room, where I trust my young friend, Mr. Newcome, will labour assiduously. Ars longa est, Mr. Newcome. Vita —"

"I trembled," Clive said, "lest my father should introduce a certain favourite quotation, beginning 'ingenuas didicisse'— but he refrained, and we went into the room, where a score of students were assembled, who all looked away from their drawing-boards as we entered.

"Here will be your place, Mr. Newcome,' says the Professor, 'and here that of your young friend — what did you say was his name?' I told him Rigby, for my dear old governor has promised to pay for J. J. too, you know. 'Mr. Chivers is the

senior pupil and custos of the room in the absence of my son. Mr. Chivers, Mr. Newcome; gentlemen, Mr. Newcome, a new pupil. My son, Charles Gandish, Mr. Newcome. Assiduity, gentlemen, assiduity. *Ars longa. Vita brevis, et linea recta brevissima est.* This way, Colonel, down these steps, across the courtyard, to my own studio. There, gentlemen,— and pulling aside a curtain, Gandish says “There!”

“And what was the masterpiece behind it?” we ask of Clive, after we have done laughing at his imitation.

“Hand round the hat, J. J.!” cries Clive. “Now, ladies and gentlemen, pay your money. Now walk in, for the performance is ‘just a-going to begin.’”

Nor would the rogue ever tell us what Gandish’s curtained picture was. Not a successful painter, Mr. Gandish was an excellent master, and regarding all artists save one perhaps a good critic. Clive and his friend J. J. came soon after and commenced their studies under him. The one took his humble seat at the drawing-board, a poor mean-looking lad, with worn clothes, downcast features, and a figure almost deformed; the other adorned by good health, good looks, and the best of tailors; ushered into the studio with his father and Mr. Smee as his aides-de-camp on his entry; and previously announced there with all the eloquence of honest Gandish. “I bet he’s ‘ad cake and wine,” says one youthful student, of an epicurean and satirical turn. “I bet he might have it every day if he liked.” In fact Gandish was always handing him sweetmeats of compliments and cordials of approbation. He had coat-sleeves with silk linings — he had studs in his shirt. How different was the texture and colour of that garment, to the sleeves Bob Grimes displayed when he took his coat off to put on his working jacket! Horses used actually to come for him to Gandish’s door (which was situated in a certain lofty street in Soho). The Miss G.’s would smile at him from the parlour window as he mounted and rode splendidly off; and those opposition beauties, the Miss Levisons, daughters of the professor of dancing over the way, seldom failed to greet the young gentleman with an admiring ogle from their great black eyes. Master Clive was pronounced an ‘out-and-outer,’ a ‘swell and no mistake,’ and complimented with scarce one dissentient voice by the simple academy at Gandish’s. Besides, he drew very well. There could be no doubt about that. Caricatures of the students of course were passing constantly among them, and in revenge for one which a huge red-haired Scotch student, Mr. Sandy M’Collop, had made of John James, Clive perpetrated a picture of Sandy which set the whole room in a roar; and when the Caledonian giant uttered satirical remarks against the assembled company, averring that they were a parcel of sneaks, a set of lick-spittles, and using epithets still more vulgar, Clive slipped off his fine silk-sleeved coat in an instant, invited Mr. M’Collop into the back-yard, instructed him in a science which the lad himself had acquired at Grey Friars, and administered two black eyes to Sandy, which prevented the young artist from seeing for some days after the head of the ‘Laocoon’ which he was copying. The Scotchman’s superior weight and age might have given the combat a different conclusion, had it endured long after Clive’s brilliant opening attack with his right and left; but Professor Gandish came out of his painting-room at the sound of battle, and could scarcely credit his own eyes when he saw those of poor M’Collop so darkened. To do the Scotchman justice, he bore Clive no rancour. They became friends there, and afterwards at Rome, whither they subsequently went to pursue their studies. The fame of Mr. M’Collop as an artist has long since been established. His pictures of ‘Lord Lovat in Prison,’ and ‘Hogarth painting him,’ of the ‘Blowing up of the Kirk of Field’ (painted for M’Collop of M’Collop), of the ‘Torture of the Covenanters,’ the ‘Murder of the Regent,’ the ‘Murder of Rizzio,’ and other historical pieces, all of course from Scotch history, have established his reputation in South as well as in North Britain. No one would suppose from the gloomy character of his works that Sandy M’Collop is one of the most jovial souls alive. Within six months after their little difference, Clive and he were the greatest of friends, and it was by the former’s suggestion that Mr. James Binnie gave Sandy his first commission, who selected the cheerful subject of ‘The Young Duke of Rothsay starving in Prison.’ During this period, Mr. Clive assumed the toga virilis, and beheld with inexpressible satisfaction the first growth of those mustachios which have since given him such a marked appearance. Being at Gandish’s, and so near the dancing academy, what must he do but take lessons in the terpsichorean art too?— making himself as popular with the dancing folks as with the drawing folks, and the jolly king of his company everywhere. He gave entertainments to his fellow-students in the upper chambers in Fitzroy Square, which were devoted to his use, inviting his father and Mr. Binnie to those parties now and then. And songs were sung, and pipes were smoked, and many a pleasant supper eaten. There was no stint: but no excess. No young man was ever seen to quit those apartments the worse, as it is called, for liquor. Fred Bayham’s uncle the Bishop could not be more decorous than F. B. as he left the Colonel’s house, for the Colonel made that one of the conditions of his son’s hospitality, that nothing like intoxication should ensue from it. The good gentleman did not frequent the parties of the juniors. He saw that his presence rather silenced the young men; and left them to themselves, confiding in Clive’s parole, and went away to play his honest rubber of whist at the Club. And many a time he heard the young fellows’ steps tramping by his bedchamber door, as he lay wakeful within, happy to think his son was happy.

CHAPTER XVIII

NEW COMPANIONS

Clive used to give droll accounts of the young disciples at Gandish's, who were of various ages and conditions, and in whose company the young fellow took his place with that good temper and gaiety which have seldom deserted him in life, and have put him at ease wherever his fate has led him. He is, in truth, as much at home in a fine drawing-room as in a public-house parlour; and can talk as pleasantly to the polite mistress of the mansion, as to the jolly landlady dispensing her drinks from her bar. Not one of the Gandishites but was after a while well inclined to the young fellow; from Mr. Chivers, the senior pupil, down to the little imp Harry Hooker, who knew as much mischief at twelve years old, and could draw as cleverly as many a student of five-and-twenty; and Bob Trotter, the diminutive fag of the studio, who ran on all the young men's errands, and fetched them in apples, oranges, and walnuts. Clive opened his eyes with wonder when he first beheld these simple feasts, and the pleasure with which some of the young men partook of them. They were addicted to polonies; they did not disguise their love for Banbury cakes; they made bets in ginger-beer, and gave and took the odds in that frothing liquor. There was a young Hebrew amongst the pupils, upon whom his brother-students used playfully to press ham sandwiches, pork sausages, and the like. This young man (who has risen to great wealth subsequently, and was bankrupt only three months since) actually bought cocoa-nuts, and sold them at a profit amongst the lads. His pockets were never without pencil-cases, French chalk, garnet brooches, for which he was willing to bargain. He behaved very rudely to Gandish, who seemed to be afraid before him. It was whispered that the Professor was not altogether easy in his circumstances, and that the elder Moss had some mysterious hold over him. Honeyman and Bayham, who once came to see Clive at the studio, seemed each disturbed at beholding young Moss seated there (making a copy of the Marsyas). "Pa knows both those gents," he informed Clive afterwards, with a wicked twinkle of his Oriental eyes. "Step in, Mr. Newcome, any day you are passing down Wardour Street, and see if you don't want anything in our way." (He pronounced the words in his own way, saying: "Step id, Bister Doocob, ady day idto Vordor Street," etc.) This young gentleman could get tickets for almost all the theatres, which he gave or sold, and gave splendid accounts at Cavendish's of the brilliant masquerades. Clive was greatly diverted at beholding Mr. Moss at one of these entertainments, dressed in a scarlet coat and top-boots, and calling out, "Yoicks! Hark forward!" fitfully to another Orientalist, his younger brother, attired like a midshipman. Once Clive bought a half-dozen of theatre tickets from Mr. Moss, which he distributed to the young fellows of the studio. But, when this nice young man tried further to tempt him on the next day, "Mr. Moss," Clive said to him with much dignity, "I am very much obliged to you for your offer, but when I go to the play, I prefer paying at the doors."

Mr. Chivers used to sit in one corner of the room, occupied over a lithographic stone. He was an uncouth and peevish young man; for ever finding fault with the younger pupils, whose butt he was. Next in rank and age was M'Collop, before named: and these two were at first more than usually harsh and captious with Clive, whose prosperity offended them, and whose dandified manners, free-and-easy ways, and evident influence over the younger scholars, gave umbrage to these elderly apprentices. Clive at first returned Mr. Chivers war for war, controlment for controlment; but when he found Chivers was the son of a helpless widow; that he maintained her by his lithographic vignettes for the music-sellers, and by the scanty remuneration of some lessons which he gave at a school at Highgate; — when Clive saw, or fancied he saw, the lonely senior eyeing with hungry eyes the luncheons of cheese and bread, and sweetstuff, which the young lads of the studio enjoyed, I promise you Mr. Clive's wrath against Chivers was speedily turned into compassion and kindness, and he sought, and no doubt found, means of feeding Chivers without offending his testy independence.

Nigh to Gandish's was, and perhaps is, another establishment for teaching the art of design — Barker's, which had the additional dignity of a life academy and costume; frequented by a class of students more advanced than those of Gandish's. Between these and the Barkerites there was a constant rivalry and emulation, in and out of doors. Gandish sent more pupils to the Royal Academy; Gandish had brought up three medallists; and the last R.A. student sent to Rome was a Gandishite. Barker, on the contrary, scorned and loathed Trafalgar Square, and laughed at its art. Barker exhibited in Pall Mall and Suffolk Street: he laughed at old Gandish and his pictures, made mincemeat of his "Angli and Angeli," and tore "King Alfred" and his muffins to pieces. The young men of the respective schools used to meet at Lundy's coffee-house and billiard-room, and smoke there, and do battle. Before Clive and his friend J. J. came to Gandish's, the Barkerites were

having the best of that constant match which the two academies were playing. Fred Bayham, who knew every coffee-house in town, and whose initials were scored on a thousand tavern doors, was for a while a constant visitor at Lundy's, played pool with the young men, and did not disdain to dip his beard into their porter-pots, when invited to partake of their drink; treated them handsomely when he was in cash himself; and was an honorary member of Barker's academy. Nay, when the guardsman was not forthcoming, who was standing for one of Barker's heroic pictures, Bayham bared his immense arms and brawny shoulders, and stood as Prince Edward, with Philippa sucking the poisoned wound. He would take his friends up to the picture in the Exhibition, and proudly point to it. "Look at that biceps, sir, and now look at this — that's Barker's masterpiece, sir, and that's the muscle of F. B., sir." In no company was F. B. greater than in the society of the artists, in whose smoky haunts and airy parlours he might often be found. It was from F. B. that Clive heard of Mr. Chivers' struggles and honest industry. A great deal of shrewd advice could F. B. give on occasion, and many a kind action and gentle office of charity was this jolly outlaw known to do and cause to be done. His advice to Clive was most edifying at this time of our young gentleman's life, and he owns that he was kept from much mischief by this queer counsellor.

A few months after Clive and J. J. had entered at Gandish's, that academy began to hold its own against its rival. The silent young disciple was pronounced to be a genius. His copies were beautiful in delicacy and finish. His designs were for exquisite grace and richness of fancy. Mr. Gandish took to himself the credit for J. J.'s genius; Clive ever and fondly acknowledged the benefit he got from his friend's taste and bright enthusiasm and sure skill. As for Clive, if he was successful in the academy he was doubly victorious out of it. His person was handsome, his courage high, his gaiety and frankness delightful and winning. His money was plenty and he spent it like a young king. He could speedily beat all the club at Lundy's at billiards, and give points to the redoubted F. B. himself. He sang a famous song at their jolly supper-parties: and J. J. had no greater delight than to listen to his fresh voice, and watch the young conqueror at the billiard-table, where the balls seemed to obey him.

Clive was not the most docile of Mr. Gandish's pupils. If he had not come to the studio on horseback, several of the young students averred, Gandish would not always have been praising him and quoting him as that professor certainly did. It must be confessed that the young ladies read the history of Clive's uncle in the Book of Baronets, and that Gandish jun., probably with an eye to business, made a design of a picture, in which, according to that veracious volume, one of the Newcomes was represented as going cheerfully to the stake at Smithfield, surrounded by some very ill-favoured Dominicans, whose arguments did not appear to make the least impression upon the martyr of the Newcome family. Sandy M'Collop devised a counter picture, wherein the barber-surgeon of King Edward the Confessor was drawn, operating upon the beard of that monarch. To which piece of satire Clive gallantly replied by a design, representing Sawney Bean M'Collop, chief of the clan of that name, descending from his mountains into Edinburgh, and his astonishment at beholding a pair of breeches for the first time. These playful jokes passed constantly amongst the young men of Gandish's studio. There was no one there who was not caricatured in one way or another. He whose eyes looked not very straight was depicted with a most awful squint. The youth whom nature had endowed with somewhat lengthy nose was drawn by the caricaturists with a prodigious proboscis. Little Bobby Moss, the young Hebrew artist from Wardour Street, was delineated with three hats and an old-clothes bag. Nor were poor J. J.'s round shoulders spared, until Clive indignantly remonstrated at the hideous hunchback pictures which the boys made of his friend, and vowed it was a shame to make jokes at such a deformity.

Our friend, if the truth must be told regarding him, though one of the most frank, generous, and kind-hearted persons, is of a nature somewhat haughty and imperious, and very likely the course of life which he now led and the society which he was compelled to keep, served to increase some original defects in his character, and to fortify a certain disposition to think well of himself, with which his enemies not unjustly reproach him. He has been known very pathetically to lament that he was withdrawn from school too early, where a couple of years' further course of thrashings from his tyrant, old Hodge, he avers, would have done him good. He laments that he was not sent to college, where if a young man receives no other discipline, at least he acquires that of meeting with his equals in society and of assuredly finding his betters: whereas in poor Mr. Gandish's studio of art, our young gentleman scarcely found a comrade that was not in one way or other his flatterer, his inferior, his honest or dishonest admirer. The influence of his family's rank and wealth acted more or less on all those simple folks, who would run on his errands and vied with each other in winning the young nabob's favour. His very goodness of heart rendered him a more easy prey to their flattery, and his kind and jovial disposition led him into company from which he had been much better away. I am afraid that artful young Moss, whose parents dealt in pictures, furniture, gimcracks, and jewellery, victimised Clive sadly with rings and chains, shirt-studs and flaming shirt-pins, and

such vanities, which the poor young rogue locked up in his desk generally, only venturing to wear them when he was out of his father's sight or of Mr. Binnie's, whose shrewd eyes watched him very keenly.

Mr. Clive used to leave home every day shortly after noon, when he was supposed to betake himself to Gandish's studio. But was the young gentleman always at the drawing-board copying from the antique when his father supposed him to be so devotedly engaged? I fear his place was sometimes vacant. His friend J. J. worked every day and all day. Many a time the steady little student remarked his patron's absence, and no doubt gently remonstrated with him, but when Clive did come to his work he executed it with remarkable skill and rapidity; and Ridley was too fond of him to say a word at home regarding the shortcomings of the youthful scapegrace. Candid readers may sometimes have heard their friend Jones's mother lament that her darling was working too hard at college: or Harry's sisters express their anxiety lest his too rigorous attendance in chambers (after which he will persist in sitting up all night reading those dreary law books which cost such an immense sum of money) should undermine dear Henry's health; and to such acute persons a word is sufficient to indicate young Mr. Clive Newcome's proceedings. Meanwhile his father, who knew no more of the world than Harry's simple sisters or Jones's fond mother, never doubted that all Clive's doings were right, and that his boy was the best of boys.

"If that young man goes on as charmingly as he has begun," Clive's cousin, Barnes Newcome, said of his kinsman, "he will be a paragon. I saw him last night at Vauxhall in company with young Moss, whose father does bills and keeps the bric-a-brac shop in Wardour Street. Two or three other gentlemen, probably young old-clothes-men, who had concluded for the day the labours of the bag, joined Mr. Newcome and his friend, and they partook of rack-punch in an arbour. He is a delightful youth, cousin Clive, and I feel sure he is about to be an honour to our family."



CHAPTER XIX

THE COLONEL AT HOME

Our good Colonel's house had received a coat of paint, which, like Madame Latour's rouge in her latter days, only served to make her careworn face look more ghastly. The kitchens were gloomy. The stables were gloomy. Great black passages; cracked conservatory; dilapidated bathroom, with melancholy waters moaning and fizzing from the cistern; the great large blank stone staircase — were all so many melancholy features in the general countenance of the house; but the Colonel thought it perfectly, cheerful and pleasant, and furnished it in his rough-and-ready way. One day a cartload of chairs; the next a waggonful of fenders, fire-irons, and glass and crockery — a quantity of supplies, in a word, he poured into the place. There were a yellow curtain in the back drawing-room, and green curtains in the front. The carpet was an immense bargain, bought dirt cheap, sir, at a sale in Euston Square. He was against the purchase of a carpet for the stairs. What was the good of it? What did men want with stair-carpets? His own apartment contained a wonderful assortment of lumber. Shelves which he nailed himself, old Indian garments, camphor trunks. What did he want with gewgaws? anything was good enough for an old soldier. But the spare bedroom was endowed with all sorts of splendour: a bed as big as a general's tent, a cheval glass — whereas the Colonel shaved in a little cracked mirror, which cost him no more than King Stephen's breeches — and a handsome new carpet; while the boards of the Colonel's bedchamber were as bare — as bare as old Miss Scragg's shoulders, which would be so much more comfortable were they covered up. Mr. Binnie's bedchamber was neat, snug, and appropriate. And Clive had a study and bedroom at the top of the house, which he was allowed to furnish entirely according to his own taste. How he and Ridley revelled in Wardour Street! What delightful coloured prints of hunting, racing, and beautiful ladies, did they not purchase, mount with their own hands, cut out for screens, frame and glaze, and hang up on the walls. When the rooms were ready they gave a party, inviting the Colonel and Mr. Binnie by note of hand, two gentlemen from Lamb Court, Temple, Mr. Honeyman, and Fred Bayham. We must have Fred Bayham. Fred Bayham frankly asked, "Is Mr. Sherrick, with whom you have become rather intimate lately — and mind you I say nothing, but I recommend strangers in London to be cautious about their friends — is Mr. Sherrick coming to you, young 'un? because if he is, F. B. must respectfully decline."

Mr. Sherrick was not invited, and accordingly F. B. came. But Sherrick was invited on other days, and a very queer society did our honest Colonel gather together in that queer house, so dreary, so dingy, so comfortless, so pleasant. He, who was one of the most hospitable men alive, loved to have his friends around him; and it must be confessed that the evening parties now occasionally given in Fitzroy Square were of the oddest assemblage of people. The correct East India gentlemen from Hanover Square: the artists, Clive's friends, gentlemen of all ages with all sorts of beards, in every variety of costume. Now and again a stray schoolfellow from Grey Friars, who stared, as well he might, at the company in which he found himself. Sometimes a few ladies were brought to these entertainments. The immense politeness of the good host compensated some of them for the strangeness of his company. They had never seen such odd-looking hairy men as those young artists, nor such wonderful women as Colonel Newcome assembled together. He was good to all old maids and poor widows. Retired captains with large families of daughters found in him their best friend. He sent carriages to fetch them and bring them back from the suburbs where they dwelt. Gandish, Mrs. Gandish, and the four Miss Gandishes in scarlet robes, were constant attendants at the Colonel's soirees.

"I delight, sir, in the 'ospitality of my distinguished military friend," Mr. Gandish would say. "The harmy has always been my passion. — I served in the Soho Volunteers three years myself, till the conclusion of the war, sir, till the conclusion of the war."

It was a great sight to see Mr. Frederick Bayham engaged in the waltz or the quadrille with some of the elderly houris at the Colonel's parties. F. B., like a good-natured F. B. as he was, always chose the plainest women as partners, and entertained them with profound compliments and sumptuous conversation. The Colonel likewise danced quadrilles with the utmost gravity. Waltzing had been invented long since his time: but he practised quadrilles when they first came in, about 1817, in Calcutta. To see him leading up a little old maid, and bowing to her when the dance was ended, and performing cavalier *seul* with stately simplicity, was a sight indeed to remember. If Clive Newcome had not such a fine sense of humour, he would have blushed for his father's simplicity. — As it was, the elder's guileless goodness and childlike

trustfulness endeared him immensely to his son. "Look at the old boy, Pendennis," he would say, "look at him leading up that old Miss Tidswell to the piano. Doesn't he do it like an old duke? I lay a wager she thinks she is going to be my mother-in-law; all the women are in love with him, young and old. 'Should he upbraid?' There she goes. 'I'll own that he'll prevail, and sing as sweetly as a nigh-tin-gale!' Oh, you old warbler! Look at father's old head bobbing up and down! Wouldn't he do for Sir Roger de Coverley? How do you do, Uncle Charles? — I say, M'Collop, how gets on the Duke of What-d'ye-call-'em starving in the castle? — Gandish says it's very good." The lad retires to a group of artists. Mr. Honeyman comes up with a faint smile playing on his features, like moonlight on the facade of Lady Whittlesea's Chapel.

"These parties are the most singular I have ever seen," whispers Honeyman. "In entering one of these assemblies, one is struck with the immensity of London: and with the sense of one's own insignificance. Without, I trust, departing from my clerical character, nay, from my very avocation as incumbent of a London chapel — I have seen a good deal of the world, and here is an assemblage no doubt of most respectable persons, on scarce one of whom I ever set eyes till this evening. Where does my good brother find such characters?"

"That," says Mr. Honeyman's interlocutor, "is the celebrated, though neglected artist, Professor Gandish, whom nothing but jealousy has kept out of the Royal Academy. Surely you have heard of the great Gandish?"

"Indeed I am ashamed to confess my ignorance, but a clergyman busy with his duties knows little, perhaps too little, of the fine arts."

"Gandish, sir, is one of the greatest geniuses on whom our ungrateful country ever trampled; he exhibited his first celebrated picture of 'Alfred in the Neatherd's Hut' (he says he is the first who ever touched that subject) in 180-; but Lord Nelson's death, and victory of Trafalgar, occupied the public attention at that time, and Gandish's work went unnoticed. In the year 1816, he painted his great work of 'Boadicea.' You see her before you. That lady in yellow, with a light front and a turban. Boadicea became Mrs. Gandish in that year. So late as '27, he brought before the world his 'Non Angli sed Angeli.' Two of the angels are yonder in sea-green dresses — the Misses Gandish. The youth in Berlin gloves was the little male angelus of that piece."

"How came you to know all this, you strange man?" says Mr. Honeyman.

"Simply because Gandish has told me twenty times. He tells the story to everybody, every time he sees them. He told it today at dinner. Boadicea and the angels came afterwards."

"Satire! satire! Mr. Pendennis," says the divine, holding up a reproving finger of lavender kid, "beware of a wicked wit! — But when a man has that tendency, I know how difficult it is to restrain. My dear Colonel, good evening! You have a great reception to-night. That gentleman's bass voice is very fine; Mr. Pendennis and I were admiring it. 'The Wolf' is a song admirably adapted to show its capabilities."

Mr. Gandish's autobiography had occupied the whole time of the retirement of the ladies from Colonel Newcome's dinner-table. Mr. Hobson Newcome had been asleep during the performance; Sir Curry Baughton and one or two of the Colonel's professional and military guests, silent and puzzled. Honest Mr. Binnie, with his shrewd good-humoured face, sipping his claret as usual, and delivering a sly joke now and again to the gentlemen at his end of the table. Mrs. Newcome had sat by him in sulky dignity; was it that Lady Baughton's diamonds offended her? — her ladyship and her daughters being attired in great splendour for a Court ball, which they were to attend that evening. Was she hurt because she was not invited to that Royal Entertainment? As the festivities were to take place at an early hour, the ladies bidden were obliged to quit the Colonel's house before the evening part commenced, from which Lady Anne declared she was quite vexed to be obliged to run away.

Lady Anne Newcome had been as gracious on this occasion as her sister-inlaw had been out of humour. Everything pleased her in the house. She had no idea that there were such fine houses in that quarter of the town. She thought the dinner so very nice — that Mr Binnie such a good-humoured-looking gentleman. That stout gentleman with his collars turned down like Lord Byron, so exceedingly clever and full of information. A celebrated artist was he? (courtly Mr. Smee had his own opinion upon that point, but did not utter it). All those artists are so eccentric and amusing and clever. Before dinner she insisted upon seeing Clive's den with its pictures and casts and pipes. "You horrid young wicked creature, have you begun to smoke already?" she asks, as she admires his room. She admired everything. Nothing could exceed her satisfaction.

The sisters-inlaw kissed on meeting, with that cordiality so delightful to witness in sisters who dwell together in unity.

It was, "My dear Maria, what an age since I have seen you!" "My dear Anne, our occupations are so engrossing, our circles are so different," in a languid response from the other. "Sir Brian is not coming, I suppose? Now, Colonel," she turns in a frisky manner towards him, and taps her fan, "did I not tell you Sir Brian would not come?"

"He is kept at the House of Commons, my dear. Those dreadful committees. He was quite vexed at not being able to come."

"I know, I know, dear Anne, there are always excuses to gentlemen in Parliament; I have received many such. Mr. Shaloo and Mr. M'Sheny, the leaders of our party, often and often disappoint me. I knew Brian would not come. My husband came down from Marble Head on purpose this morning. Nothing would have induced us to give up our brother's party."

"I believe you. I did come down from Marble Head this morning, and I was four hours in the hay-field before I came away, and in the City till five, and I've been to look at a horse afterwards at Tattersall's, and I'm as hungry as a hunter, and as tired as a hodman," says Mr. Newcome, with his hands in his pockets. "How do you do, Mr. Pendennis? Maria, you remember Mr. Pendennis — don't you?"

"Perfectly," replies the languid Maria. Mrs. Gandish, Colonel Topham, Major M'Cracken. are announced, and then, in diamonds, feathers, and splendour, Lady Baughton and Miss Baughton, who are going to the Queen's ball, and Sir Curry Baughton, not quite in his deputy-lieutenant's uniform as yet, looking very shy in a pair of blue trousers, with a glittering stripe of silver down the seams. Clive looks with wonder and delight at these ravishing ladies, rustling in fresh brocades, with feathers, diamonds, and every magnificence. Aunt Anne has not her Court dress on as yet; and Aunt Maria blushes as she beholds the new comers, having thought fit to attire herself in a high dress, with a Quaker-like simplicity, and a pair of gloves more than ordinarily dingy. The pretty little foot she has, it is true, and sticks it out from habit; but what is Mrs. Newcome's foot compared with that sweet little chaussure which Miss Baughton exhibits and withdraws? The shiny white satin slipper, the pink stocking which ever and anon peeps from the rustling folds of her robe, and timidly retires into its covert — that foot, light as it is, crushes Mrs. Newcome.

No wonder she winces, and is angry; there are some mischievous persons who rather like to witness that discomfiture. All Mr. Smee's flatteries that day failed to soothe her. She was in the state in which his canvasses sometimes are, when he cannot paint on them.

What happened to her alone in the drawing-room, when the ladies invited to the dinner had departed, and those convoked to the soiree began to arrive — what happened to her or to them I do not like to think. The Gandishes arrived first. Boadicea and the angels. We judged from the fact that young Mr. Gandish came blushing in to the dessert. Name after name was announced of persons of whom Mrs. Newcome knew nothing. The young and the old, the pretty and homely, they were all in their best dresses, and no doubt stared at Mrs. Newcome, so obstinately plain in her attire. When we came upstairs from dinner, we found her seated entirely by herself, tapping her fan at the fireplace. Timid groups of persons were round about, waiting for the irruption of the gentlemen, until the pleasure should begin. Mr. Newcome, who came upstairs yawning, was heard to say to his wife, "Oh, dam, let's cut!" And they went downstairs, and waited until their carriage had arrived, when they quitted Fitzroy Square.

Mr. Barnes Newcome presently arrived, looking particularly smart and lively, with a large flower in his button-hole, and leaning on the arm of a friend. "How do you do, Pendennis?" he says, with a peculiarly dandified air. "Did you dine here? You look as if you dined here" (and Barnes, certainly, as if he had dined elsewhere). "I was only asked to the cold soiree. Who did you have for dinner? You had my mamma and the Baughtons, and my uncle and aunt, I know, for they are down below in the library, waiting for the carriage: he is asleep, and she is as sulky as a bear."

"Why did Mrs. Newcome say I should find nobody I knew up here?" asks Barnes's companion. "On the contrary, there are lots of fellows I know. There's Fred Bayham, dancing like a harlequin. There's old Gandish, who used to be my drawing-master; and my Brighton friends, your uncle and cousin, Barnes. What relations are they to me? must be some relations. Fine fellow your cousin."

"Hm," growls Barnes. "Very fine boy — not spirited at all — not fond of flattery — not surrounded by toadies — not fond of drink — delightful boy! See yonder, the young fellow is in conversation with his most intimate friend, a little crooked fellow, with long hair. Do you know who he is? he is the son of old Todmoreton's butler. Upon my life it's true."

"And suppose it is; what the deuce do I care!" cries Lord Kew. "Who can be more respectable than a butler? A man

must be somebody's son. When I am a middle-aged man, I hope humbly I shall look like a butler myself. Suppose you were to put ten of Gunter's men into the House of Lords, do you mean to say that they would not look as well as any average ten peers in the house? Look at Lord Westcot; he is exactly like a butler that's why the country has such confidence in him. I never dine with him but I fancy he ought to be at the sideboard. Here comes that insufferable little old Smee. How do you do, Mr. Smee?"

Mr. Smee smiles his sweetest smile. With his rings, diamond shirt-studs, and red velvet waistcoat, there are few more elaborate middle-aged bucks than Alfred Smee. "How do you do, my dear lord?" cries the bland one. "Who would ever have thought of seeing your lordship here?"

"Why the deuce not, Mr. Smee?" asks Lord Kew, abruptly. "Is it wrong to come here? I have been in the house only five minutes, and three people have said the same thing to me — Mrs. Newcome, who is sitting downstairs in a rage waiting for her carriage, the condescending Barnes, and yourself. Why do you come here, Since? How are you, Mr. Gandish? How do the fine arts go?"

"Your lordship's kindness in asking for them will cheer them if anything will," says Mr. Gandish. "Your noble family has always patronised them. I am proud to be reckoned by your lordship in this house, where the distinguished father of one of my pupils entertains us this evening. A most promising young man is young Mr. Clive — talents for a hamateur really most remarkable."

"Excellent, upon my word — excellent," cries Mr. Smee. "I'm not an animal painter myself, and perhaps don't think much of that branch of the profession; but it seems to me the young fellow draws horses with the most wonderful spirit. I hope Lady Walham is very well, and that she was satisfied with her son's portrait. Stockholm, I think, your brother is appointed to? I wish I might be allowed to paint the elder as well as the younger brother, my lord."

"I am an historical painter; but whenever Lord Kew is painted I hope his lordship will think of the old servant of his lordship's family, Charles Gandish," cries the Professor.

"I am like Susannah between the two Elders," says Lord Kew. "Let my innocence alone, Smee. Mr. Gandish, don't persecute my modesty with your addresses. I won't be painted. I am not a fit subject for a historical painter, Mr. Gandish."

"Halcibiades sat to Praxiteles, and Pericles to Phridjas," remarks Gandish.

"The cases are not quite similar," says Lord Kew, languidly. "You are no doubt fully equal to Praxiteles; but I don't see my resemblance to the other party. I should not look well as a hero, and Smee could not paint me handsome enough."

"I would try, my dear lord," cries Mr. Smee.

"I know you would, my dear fellow," Lord Kew answered, looking at the painter with a lazy scorn in his eyes. "Where is Colonel Newcome, Mr. Gandish?" Mr. Gandish replied that our gallant host was dancing a quadrille in the next room; and the young gentleman walked on towards that apartment to pay his respects to the giver of the evening's entertainment.

Newcome's behaviour to the young peer was ceremonious, but not in the least servile. He saluted the other's superior rank, not his person, as he turned the guard out for a general officer. He never could be brought to be otherwise than cold and grave in his behaviour to John James; nor was it without difficulty, when young Ridley and his son became pupils at Gandish's, he could be induced to invite the former to his parties. "An artist is any man's equal," he said. "I have no prejudice of that sort; and think that Sir Joshua Reynolds and Doctor Johnson were fit company for any person, of whatever rank. But a young man whose father may have had to wait behind me at dinner, should not be brought into my company." Clive compromises the dispute with a laugh. "First," says he, "I will wait till I am asked; and then I promise I will not go to dine with Lord Todmoreton."



CHAPTER XX

CONTAINS MORE PARTICULARS OF THE COLONEL AND HIS BRETHREN

Clive's amusements, studies, or occupations, such as they were, filled his day pretty completely, and caused the young gentleman's time to pass rapidly and pleasantly, his father, it must be owned, had no such resources, and the good Colonel's idleness hung heavily upon him. He submitted very kindly to this infliction, however, as he would have done to any other for Clive's sake; and though he may have wished himself back with his regiment again, and engaged in the pursuits in which his life had been spent, he chose to consider these desires as very selfish and blameable on his part, and sacrificed them resolutely for his son's welfare. The young fellow, I dare say, gave his parent no more credit for his long self-denial, than many other children award to theirs. We take such life-offerings as our due commonly. The old French satirist avers that, in a love affair, there is usually one person who loves, and the other, *qui se laisse aimer*; it is only in later days, perhaps, when the treasures of love are spent, and the kind hand cold which ministered them, that we remember how tender it was; how soft to soothe; how eager to shield; how ready to support and caress. The ears may no longer hear, which would have received our words of thanks so delightedly. Let us hope those fruits of love, though tardy, are yet not all too late; and though we bring our tribute of reverence and gratitude, it may be to a gravestone, there is an acceptance even there for the stricken heart's oblation of fond remorse, contrite memories, and pious tears. I am thinking of the love of Clive Newcome's father for him (and, perhaps, young reader, that of yours and mine for ourselves); how the old man lay awake, and devised kindnesses, and gave his all for the love of his son; and the young man took, and spent, and slept, and made merry. Did we not say at our tale's commencement that all stories were old? Careless prodigals and anxious elders have been from the beginning;— and so may love, and repentance, and forgiveness endure even till the end.

The stifling fogs, the slippery mud, the dun dreary November mornings, when the Regent's Park, where the Colonel took his early walk, was wrapped in yellow mist, must have been a melancholy exchange for the splendour of Eastern sunrise, and the invigorating gallop at dawn, to which, for so many years of his life, Thomas Newcome had accustomed himself. His obstinate habit of early waking accompanied him to England, and occasioned the despair of his London domestics, who, if master wasn't so awful early, would have found no fault with him; for a gentleman as gives less trouble to his servants; as scarcely ever rings the bell for his self; as will brush his own clothes; as will even boil his own shaving-water in the little *hetna* which he keeps up in his dressing-room; as pays so regular, and never looks twice at the accounts; such a man deserved to be loved by his household, and I dare say comparisons were made between him and his son, who do ring the bells, and scold if his boots ain't nice, and horder about like a young lord. But Clive, though imperious, was very liberal and good-humoured, and not the worse served because he insisted upon exerting his youthful authority. As for friend Binnie, he had a hundred pursuits of his own, which made his time pass very comfortably. He had all the Lectures at the British Institution; he had the Geographical Society, the Asiatic Society, and the Political Economy Club; and though he talked year after year of going to visit his relations in Scotland, the months and seasons passed away, and his feet still beat the London pavement.

In spite of the cold reception his brothers gave him, duty was duty, and Colonel Newcome still proposed, or hoped to be well with the female members of the Newcome family; and having, as we have said, plenty of time on his hands, and living at no very great distance from either of his brothers' town houses, when their wives were in London, the elder Newcome was for paying them pretty constant visits. But after the good gentleman had called twice or thrice upon his sister-inlaw in Bryanstone Square — bringing, as was his wont, a present for this little niece, or a book for that — Mrs. Newcome, with her usual virtue, gave him to understand that the occupation of an English matron, who, besides her multifarious family duties, had her own intellectual culture to mind, would not allow her to pass the mornings in idle gossips: and of course took great credit to herself for having so rebuked him. "I am not above instruction of any age," says she, thanking Heaven (or complimenting it, rather, for having created a being so virtuous and humble-minded). "When Professor Schroff comes, I sit with my children, and take lessons in German — and I say my verbs with Maria and Tommy in the same class!" Yes, with curtsies and fine speeches she actually bowed her brother out of doors; and the honest gentleman meekly left her, though with bewilderment, as he thought of the different hospitality to which he had been accustomed in the East, where no friend's house was ever closed to him, where no neighbour was so busy but he had time

to make Thomas Newcome welcome.

When Hobson Newcome's boys came home for the holidays, their kind uncle was for treating them to the sights of the town, but here Virtue again interposed and laid its interdict upon pleasure. "Thank you, very much, my dear Colonel," says Virtue, "there never was surely such a kind, affectionate, unselfish creature as you are, and so indulgent for children, but my boys and yours are brought up on a very different plan. Excuse me for saying that I do not think it is advisable that they should even see too much of each other. Clive's company is not good for them."

"Great heavens, Maria!" cries the Colonel, starting up, "do you mean that my boy's society is not good enough for any boy alive?"

Maria turned very red: she had said not more than she meant, but more than she meant to say. "My dear Colonel, how hot we are! how angry you Indian gentlemen become with us poor women! Your boy is much older than mine. He lives with artists, with all sorts of eccentric people. Our children are bred on quite a different plan. Hobson will succeed his father in the bank, and dear Samuel I trust will go into the Church. I told you, before, the views I had regarding the boys: but it was most kind of you to think of them — most generous and kind."

"That nabob of ours is a queer fish," Hobson Newcome remarked to his nephew Barnes. "He is as proud as Lucifer, he is always taking huff about one thing or the other. He went off in a fume the other night because your aunt objected to his taking the boys to the play. She don't like their going to the play. My mother didn't either. Your aunt is a woman who is uncommon wideawake, I can tell you."

"I always knew, sir, that my aunt was perfectly aware of the time of the day," says Barnes, with a bow.

"And then the Colonel flies out about his boy, and says that my wife insulted him! I used to like that boy. Before his father came he was a good lad enough — a jolly brave little fellow."

"I confess I did not know Mr. Clive at that interesting period of his existence," remarks Barnes.

"But since he has taken this madcap freak of turning painter," the uncle continues, "there is no understanding the chap. Did you ever see such a set of fellows as the Colonel had got together at his party the other night? Dirty chaps in velvet coats and beards? They looked like a set of mountebanks. And this young Clive is going to turn painter!"

"Very advantageous thing for the family. He'll do our pictures for nothing. I always said he was a darling boy," simpered Barnes.

"Darling jackass!" growled out the senior. "Confound it, why doesn't my brother set him up in some respectable business? I ain't proud. I have not married an earl's daughter. No offence to you, Barnes."

"Not at all, sir. I can't help it if my grandfather is a gentleman," says Barnes, with a fascinating smile.

The uncle laughs. "I mean I don't care what a fellow is if he is a good fellow. But a painter! hang it — a painter's no trade at all — I don't fancy seeing one of our family sticking up pictures for sale. I don't like it, Barnes."

"Hush! here comes his distinguished friend, Mr. Pendennis," whispers Barnes; and the uncle growling out, "Damn all literary fellows — all artists — the whole lot of them!" turns away. Barnes waves three languid fingers of recognition towards Pendennis: and when the uncle and nephew have moved out of the club newspaper room, little Tom Eaves comes up and tells the present reporter every word of their conversation.

Very soon Mrs. Newcome announced that their Indian brother found the society of Bryanstone Square very little to his taste, as indeed how should he? being a man of a good harmless disposition certainly, but of small intellectual culture. It could not be helped. She had done her utmost to make him welcome, and grieved that their pursuits were not more congenial. She heard that he was much more intimate in Park Lane. Possibly the superior rank of Lady Anne's family might present charms to Colonel Newcome, who fell asleep at her assemblies. His boy, she was afraid, was leading the most irregular life. He was growing a pair of mustachios, and going about with all sorts of wild associates. She found no fault; who was she, to find fault with any one? But she had been compelled to hint that her children must not be too intimate with him. And so, between one brother who meant no unkindness, and another who was all affection and goodwill, this undoubting woman created difference, distrust, dislike, which might one day possibly lead to open rupture. The wicked are wicked, no doubt, and they go astray and they fall, and they come by their deserts: but who can tell the mischief which the very virtuous do?

To her sister-in-law, Lady Anne, the Colonel's society was more welcome. The affectionate gentleman never tired of doing kindnesses to his brother's many children; and as Mr. Clive's pursuits now separated him a good deal from his

father, the Colonel, not perhaps without a sigh that fate should so separate him from the society which he loved best in the world, consoled himself as best he might with his nephews and nieces, especially with Ethel, for whom his belle passion conceived at first sight never diminished. If Uncle Newcome had a hundred children, Ethel said, who was rather jealous of disposition, he would spoil them all. He found a fine occupation in breaking a pretty little horse for her, of which he made her a present, and there was no horse in the Park that was so handsome, and surely no girl who looked more beautiful than Ethel Newcome with her broad hat and red ribbon, with her thick black locks waving round her bright face, galloping along the ride on Bhurtpore. Occasionally Clive was at their riding-parties, when the Colonel would fall back and fondly survey the young people cantering side by side over the grass: but by a tacit convention it was arranged that the cousins should be but seldom together; the Colonel might be his niece's companion and no one could receive him with a more joyous welcome, but when Mr. Clive made his appearance with his father at the Park Lane door, a certain gene was visible in Miss Ethel, who would never mount except with Colonel Newcome's assistance, and who, especially after Mr. Clive's famous mustachios made their appearance, rallied him, and remonstrated with him regarding those ornaments, and treated him with much distance and dignity. She asked him if he was going into the army? she could not understand how any but military men could wear mustachios; and then she looked fondly and archly at her uncle, and said she liked none that were not grey.

Clive set her down as a very haughty, spoiled, aristocratic young creature. If he had been in love with her, no doubt he would have sacrificed even those beloved new-born whiskers for the charmer. Had he not already bought on credit the necessary implements in a fine dressing-case, from young Moss? But he was not in love with her; otherwise he would have found a thousand opportunities of riding with her, walking with her, meeting her, in spite of all prohibitions tacit or expressed, all governesses, guardians, mamma's punctilios, and kind hints from friends. For a while, Mr. Clive thought himself in love with his cousin; than whom no more beautiful young girl could be seen in any park, ball, or drawing-room; and he drew a hundred pictures of her, and discoursed about her beauties to J. J., who fell in love with her on hearsay. But at this time Mademoiselle Saltarelli was dancing at Drury Lane Theatre, and it certainly may be said that Clive's first love was bestowed upon that beauty: whose picture of course he drew in most of her favourite characters; and for whom his passion lasted until the end of the season, when her night was announced, tickets to be had at the theatre, or of Mademoiselle Saltarelli, Buckingham Street, Strand. Then it was that with a throbbing heart and a five-pound note, to engage places for the hour's benefit, Clive beheld Madame Rogomme, Mademoiselle Saltarelli's mother, who entertained him in the French language in a dark parlour smelling of onions. And oh! issuing from the adjoining dining-room (where was a dingy vision of a feast and pewter pots upon a darkling tablecloth), could that lean, scraggy, old, beetle-browed yellow face, who cried, "Ou es tu donc, maman?" with such a shrill nasal voice — could that elderly vixen be that blooming and divine Saltarelli? Clive drew her picture as she was, and a likeness of Madame Rogomme, her mamma; a Mosaic youth, profusely jewelled, and scented at once with tobacco and eau-de-cologne, occupied Clive's stall on Mademoiselle Saltarelli's night. It was young Mr. Moss, of Gandish's to whom Newcome ceded his place, and who laughed (as he always did at Clive's jokes) when the latter told the story of his interview with the dancer. "Paid five pound to see that woman! I could have took you behind the scenes" (or "beide the seeds," Mr. Moss said) "and showed her to you for dothing." Did he take Clive behind the scenes? Over this part of the young gentleman's life, without implying the least harm to him — for have not others been behind the scenes; and can there be any more dreary object than those whitened and raddled old women who shudder at the slips? — over this stage of Clive Newcome's life we may surely drop the curtain.

It is pleasanter to contemplate that kind old face of Clive's father, that sweet young blushing lady by his side, as the two ride homewards at sunset. The grooms behind in quiet conversation about horses, as men never tire of talking about horses. Ethel wants to know about battles; about lovers' lamps, which she has read of in Lalla Rookh. "Have you ever seen them, uncle, floating down the Ganges of a night?" About Indian widows. "Did you actually see one burning, and hear her scream as you rode up?" She wonders whether he will tell her anything about Clive's mother: how she must have loved Uncle Newcome! Ethel can't bear, somehow, to think that her name was Mrs. Casey, perhaps he was very fond of her; though he scarcely ever mentions her name. She was nothing like that good old funny Miss Honeyman at Brighton. Who could the person be? — a person that her uncle knew ever so long ago — a French lady, whom her uncle says Ethel often resembles? That is why he speaks French so well. He can recite whole pages out of Racine. Perhaps it was the French lady who taught him. And he was not very happy at the Hermitage (though grandpapa was a very kind good man), and he upset papa in a little carriage, and was wild, and got into disgrace, and was sent to India? He could not have been very bad, Ethel

thinks, looking at him with her honest eyes. Last week he went to the Drawing-room, and papa presented him. His uniform of grey and silver was quite old, yet he looked much grander than Sir Brian in his new deputy-lieutenant's dress. "Next year, when I am presented, you must come too, sir," says Ethel. "I insist upon it, you must come too!"

"I will order a new uniform, Ethel," says her uncle.

The girl laughs. "When little Egbert took hold of your sword, uncle, and asked you how many people you had killed, do you know I had the same question in my mind; and I thought when you went to the Drawing-room, perhaps the King will knight him. But instead he knighted mamma's apothecary, Sir Danby Jilks: that horrid little man, and I won't have you knighted any more."

"I hope Egbert won't ask Sir Danby Jilks how many people HE has killed," says the Colonel, laughing; but thinking the joke too severe upon Sir Danby and the profession, he forthwith apologises by narrating many anecdotes he knows to the credit of surgeons. How, when the fever broke out on board the ship going to India, their surgeon devoted himself to the safety of the crew, and died himself, leaving directions for the treatment of the patients when he was gone! What heroism the doctors showed during the cholera in India; and what courage he had seen some of them exhibit in action: attending the wounded men under the hottest fire, and exposing themselves as readily as the bravest troops. Ethel declares that her uncle always will talk of other people's courage, and never say a word about his own; "and the only reason," she says, "which made me like that odious Sir Thomas de Boots, who laughs so, and looks so red, and pays such horrid compliments to all ladies, was, that he praised you, uncle, at Newcome, last year, when Barnes and he came to us at Christmas. Why did you not come? Mamma and I went to see your old nurse; and we found her such a nice old lady." So the pair talk kindly on, riding homewards through the pleasant summer twilight. Mamma had gone out to dinner; and there were cards for three parties afterwards. "Oh, how I wish it was next year!" says Miss Ethel.

Many a splendid assembly, and many a brilliant next year, will the ardent and hopeful young creature enjoy; but in the midst of her splendour and triumphs, buzzing flatterers, conquered rivals, prostrate admirers, no doubt she will think sometimes of that quiet season before the world began for her, and that dear old friend, on whose arm she leaned while she was yet a young girl.

The Colonel comes to Park Street early in the forenoon, when the mistress of the house, surrounded by her little ones, is administering dinner to them. He behaves with splendid courtesy to Miss Quigley, the governess, and makes a point of taking wine with her, and of making a most profound bow during that ceremony. Miss Quigley cannot help thinking Colonel Newcome's bow very fine. She has an idea that his late Majesty must have bowed in that way: she flutteringly imparts this opinion to Lady Anne's maid; who tells her mistress, who tells Miss Ethel, who watches the Colonel the next time he takes wine with Miss Quigley, and they laugh, and then Ethel tells him; so that the gentleman and the governess have to blush ever after when they drink wine together. When she is walking with her little charges in the Park, or in that before-mentioned paradise nigh to Apsley House, faint signals of welcome appear on her wan cheeks. She knows the dear Colonel amongst a thousand horsemen. If Ethel makes for her uncle purses, guard-chains, antimacassars, and the like beautiful and useful articles, I believe it is in reality Miss Quigley who does four-fifths of the work, as she sits alone in the schoolroom, high, high up in that lone house, when the little ones are long since asleep, before her dismal little tea-tray, and her little desk containing her mother's letters and her mementos of home.

There are, of course, numberless fine parties in Park Lane, where the Colonel knows he would be very welcome. But if there be grand assemblies, he does not care to come. "I like to go to the club best," he says to Lady Anne. "We talk there as you do here about persons, and about Jack marrying, and Tom dying, and so forth. But we have known Jack and Tom all our lives, and so are interested in talking about them. Just as you are in speaking of your own friends and habitual society. They are people whose names I have sometimes read in the newspaper, but whom I never thought of meeting until I came to your house. What has an old fellow like me to say to your young dandies or old dowagers?"

"Mamma is very odd and sometimes very captious, my dear Colonel," said Lady Anne, with a blush; "she suffers so frightfully from tic that we are all bound to pardon her."

Truth to tell, old Lady Kew had been particularly rude to Colonel Newcome and Clive. Ethel's birthday befell in the spring, on which occasion she was wont to have a juvenile assembly, chiefly of girls of her own age and condition; who came, accompanied by a few governesses, and they played and sang their little duets and choruses together, and enjoyed a gentle refection of sponge-cakes, jellies, tea, and the like. — The Colonel, who was invited to this little party, sent a fine

present to his favourite Ethel; and Clive and his friend J. J. made a funny series of drawings, representing the life of a young lady as they imagined it, and drawing her progress from her cradle upwards: now engaged with her doll, then with her dancing-master; now marching in her back-board; now crying over her German lessons: and dressed for her first ball finally, and bestowing her hand upon a dandy, of preternatural ugliness, who was kneeling at her feet as the happy man. This picture was the delight of the laughing happy girls; except, perhaps, the little cousins from Bryanstone Square, who were invited to Ethel's party, but were so overpowered by the prodigious new dresses in which their mamma had attired them, that they could admire nothing but their rustling pink frocks, their enormous sashes, their lovely new silk stockings.

Lady Kew coming to London attended on the party, and presented her granddaughter with a sixpenny pincushion. The Colonel had sent Ethel a beautiful little gold watch and chain. Her aunt had complimented her with that refreshing work, Alison's History of Europe, richly bound. — Lady Kew's pincushion made rather a poor figure among the gifts, whence probably arose her ladyship's ill-humour.

Ethel's grandmother became exceedingly testy when, the Colonel arriving, Ethel ran up to him and thanked him for the beautiful watch, in return for which she gave him a kiss, which, I dare say, amply repaid Colonel Newcome; and shortly after him Mr. Clive arrived, looking uncommonly handsome, with that smart little beard and mustachio with which nature had recently gifted him. As he entered, all the girls, who had been admiring his pictures, began to clap their hands. Mr. Clive Newcome blushed, and looked none the worse for that indication of modesty.

Lady Kew had met Colonel Newcome a half-dozen times at her daughter's house: but on this occasion she had quite forgotten him, for when the Colonel made her a bow, her ladyship regarded him steadily, and beckoning her daughter to her, asked who the gentleman was who has just kissed Ethel? Trembling as she always did before her mother, Lady Anne explained. Lady Kew said "Oh!" and left Colonel Newcome blushing and rather *embarrasse de sa personne* — before her.

With the clapping of hands that greeted Clive's arrival, the Countess was by no means more good-humoured. Not aware of her wrath, the young fellow, who had also previously been presented to her, came forward presently to make her his compliments. "Pray, who are you?" she said, looking at him very earnestly in the face. He told her his name.

"Hm," said Lady Kew, "I have heard of you, and I have heard very little good of you."

"Will your ladyship please to give me your informant?" cried out Colonel Newcome.

Barnes Newcome, who had condescended to attend his sister's little fete, and had been languidly watching the frolics of the young people, looked very much alarmed.



CHAPTER XXI

IS SENTIMENTAL, BUT SHORT

Without wishing to disparage the youth of other nations, I think a well-bred English lad has this advantage over them, that his bearing is commonly more modest than theirs. He does not assume the tail-coat and the manners of manhood too early: he holds his tongue, and listens to his elders: his mind blushes as well as his cheeks: he does not know how to make bows and pay compliments like the young Frenchman: nor to contradict his seniors as I am informed American striplings do. Boys, who learn nothing else at our public schools, learn at least good manners, or what we consider to be such; and with regard to the person at present under consideration, it is certain that all his acquaintances, excepting perhaps his dear cousin Barnes Newcome, agreed in considering him as a very frank, manly, modest, and agreeable young fellow. — My friend Warrington found a grim pleasure in his company; and his bright face, droll humour, and kindly laughter were always welcome in our chambers. Honest Fred Bayham was charmed to be in his society; and used pathetically to aver that he himself might have been such a youth, had he been blest with a kind father to watch, and good friends to guide, his early career. In fact, Fred was by far the most didactic of Clive's bachelor acquaintances, pursued the young man with endless advice and sermons, and held himself up as a warning to Clive, and a touching example of the evil consequences of early idleness and dissipation. Gentlemen of much higher rank in the world took a fancy to the lad. Captain Jack Belsize introduced him to his own mess, as also to the Guard dinner at St. James's; and my Lord Kew invited him to Kewbury, his lordship's house in Oxfordshire, where Clive enjoyed hunting, shooting, and plenty of good company. Mrs. Newcome groaned in spirit when she heard of these proceedings; and feared, feared very much that that unfortunate young man was going to ruin; and Barnes Newcome amiably disseminated reports amongst his family that the lad was plunged in all sorts of debaucheries: that he was tipsy every night: that he was engaged, in his sober moments, with dice, the turf, or worse amusements: and that his head was so turned by living with Kew and Belsize, that the little rascal's pride and arrogance were perfectly insufferable. Ethel would indignantly deny these charges; then perhaps credit a few of them; and she looked at Clive with melancholy eyes when he came to visit his aunt; and I hope prayed that Heaven might mend his wicked ways. The truth is, the young fellow enjoyed life, as one of his age and spirit might be expected to do; but he did very little harm, and meant less; and was quite unconscious of the reputation which his kind friends were making for him.

There had been a long-standing promise that Clive and his father were to go to Newcome at Christmas: and I dare say Ethel proposed to reform the young prodigal, if prodigal he was, for she busied herself delightedly in preparing the apartments which they were to inhabit during their stay — speculated upon it in a hundred pleasant ways, putting off her visit to this pleasant neighbour, or that pretty scene in the vicinage, until her uncle should come and they should be enabled to enjoy the excursion together. And before the arrival of her relatives, Ethel, with one of her young brothers, went to see Mrs. Mason; and introduced herself as Colonel Newcome's niece; and came back charmed with the old lady, and eager once more in defence of Clive (when that young gentleman's character happened to be called in question by her brother Barnes), for had she not seen the kindest letter, which Clive had written to old Mrs. Mason, and the beautiful drawing of his father on horseback and in regimentals, waving his sword in front of the gallant the Bengal Cavalry, which the lad had sent down to the good old woman? He could not be very bad, Ethel thought, who was so kind and thoughtful for the poor. His father's son could not be altogether a reprobate. When Mrs. Mason, seeing how good and beautiful Ethel was, and thinking in her heart nothing could be too good or beautiful for Clive, nodded her kind old head at Miss Ethel, and said she should like to find a husband for her, Miss Ethel blushed, and looked handsomer than ever; and at home, when she was describing the interview, never mentioned this part of her talk with Mrs. Mason.

But the enfant terrible, young Alfred, did: announcing to all the company at dessert, that Ethel was in love with Clive — that Clive was coming to marry her — that Mrs. Mason, the old woman at Newcome, had told him so.

"I dare say she has told the tale all over Newcome!" shrieked out Mr. Barnes. "I dare say it will be in the Independent next week. By Jove, it's a pretty connexion — and nice acquaintances this uncle of ours brings us!" A fine battle ensued upon the receipt and discussion of this intelligence: Barnes was more than usually bitter and sarcastic: Ethel haughtily recriminated, losing her temper, and then her firmness, until, fairly bursting into tears, she taxed Barnes with meanness

and malignity in for ever uttering stories to his cousin's disadvantage, and pursuing with constant slander and cruelty one of the very best of men. She rose and left the table in great tribulation — she went to her room and wrote a letter to her uncle, blistered with tears, in which she besought him not to come to Newcome. — Perhaps she went and looked at the apartments which she had adorned and prepared for his reception. It was for him and for his company that she was eager. She had met no one so generous and gentle, so honest and unselfish, until she had seen him.

Lady Anne knew the ways of women very well; and when Ethel that night, still in great indignation and scorn against Barnes, announced that she had written a letter to her uncle, begging the Colonel not to come at Christmas, Ethel's mother soothed the wounded girl, and treated her with peculiar gentleness and affection; and she wisely gave Mr. Barnes to understand, that if he wished to bring about that very attachment, the idea of which made him so angry, he could use no better means than those which he chose to employ at present, of constantly abusing and insulting poor Clive, and awakening Ethel's sympathies by mere opposition. And Ethel's sad little letter was extracted from the post-bag: and her mother brought it to her, sealed, in her own room, where the young lady burned it: being easily brought by Lady Anne's quiet remonstrances to perceive that it was best no allusion should take place to the silly dispute which had occurred that evening; and that Clive and his father should come for the Christmas holidays, if they were so minded. But when they came, there was no Ethel at Newcome. She was gone on a visit to her sick aunt, Lady Julia. Colonel Newcome passed the holidays sadly without his young favourite, and Clive consoled himself by knocking down pheasants with Sir Brian's keepers: and increased his cousin's attachment for him by breaking the knees of Barnes's favourite mare out hunting. It was a dreary entertainment; father and son were glad enough to get away from it, and to return to their own humbler quarters in London.

Thomas Newcome had now been for three years in the possession of that felicity which his soul longed after; and had any friend of his asked him if he was happy, he would have answered in the affirmative no doubt, and protested that he was in the enjoyment of everything a reasonable man could desire. And yet, in spite of his happiness, his honest face grew more melancholy: his loose clothes hung only the looser on his lean limbs: he ate his meals without appetite: his nights were restless: and he would sit for hours silent in the midst of his family, so that Mr. Binnie first began jocularly to surmise that Tom was crossed in love; then seriously to think that his health was suffering and that a doctor should be called to see him; and at last to agree that idleness was not good for the Colonel, and that he missed the military occupation to which he had been for so many years accustomed.

The Colonel insisted that he was perfectly happy and contented. What could he want more than he had — the society of his son, for the present; and a prospect of quiet for his declining days? Binnie vowed that his friend's days had no business to decline as yet; that a sober man of fifty ought to be at his best; and that Newcome had grown older in three years in Europe, than in a quarter of a century in the East — all which statements were true, though the Colonel persisted in denying them.

He was very restless. He was always finding business in distant quarters of England. He must go visit Tom Barker who was settled in Devonshire, or Harry Johnson who had retired and was living in Wales. He surprised Mrs. Honeyman by the frequency of his visits to Brighton, and always came away much improved in health by the sea air, and by constant riding with the harriers there. He appeared at Bath and at Cheltenham, where, as we know, there are many old Indians. Mr. Binnie was not indisposed to accompany him on some of these jaunts — "provided," the civilian said, "you don't take young Hopeful, who is much better without us; and let us two old fogies enjoy ourselves together."

Clive was not sorry to be left alone. The father knew that only too well. The young man had occupations, ideas, associates, in whom the elder could take no interest. Sitting below in his blank, cheerless bedroom, Newcome could hear the lad and his friends talking, singing, and making merry overhead. Something would be said in Clive's well-known tones, and a roar of laughter would proceed from the youthful company. They had all sorts of tricks, bywords, waggeries, of which the father could not understand the jest nor the secret. He longed to share in it, but the party would be hushed if he went in to join it — and he would come away sad at heart, to think that his presence should be a signal for silence among them; and that his son could not be merry in his company.

We must not quarrel with Clive and Clive's friends, because they could not joke and be free in the presence of the worthy gentleman. If they hushed when he came in, Thomas Newcome's sad face would seem to look round — appealing to one after another of them, and asking, "Why don't you go on laughing?" A company of old comrades shall be merry and laughing together, and the entrance of a single youngster will stop the conversation — and if men of middle age feel this

restraint with our juniors, the young ones surely have a right to be silent before their elders. The boys are always mum under the eyes of the usher. There is scarce any parent, however friendly or tender with his children, but must feel sometimes that they have thoughts which are not his or hers; and wishes and secrets quite beyond the parental control: and, as people are vain, long after they are fathers, ay; or grandfathers, and not seldom fancy that mere personal desire of domination is overweening anxiety and love for their family, no doubt that common outcry against thankless children might often be shown to prove, not that the son is disobedient, but the father too exacting. When a mother (as fond mothers often will) vows that she knows every thought in her daughter's heart, I think she pretends to know a great deal too much; nor can there be a wholesomer task for the elders, as our young subjects grow up, naturally demanding liberty and citizen's rights, than for us gracefully to abdicate our sovereign pretensions and claims of absolute control. There's many a family chief who governs wisely and gently, who is loth to give the power up when he should. Ah, be sure, it is not youth alone that has need to learn humility! By their very virtues, and the purity of their lives, many good parents create flatterers for themselves, and so live in the midst of a filial court of parasites — and seldom without a pang of unwillingness, and often not at all, will they consent to forgo their autocracy, and exchange the tribute they have been wont to exact of love and obedience for the willing offering of love and freedom.

Our good Colonel was not of the tyrannous, but of the loving order of fathers: and having fixed his whole heart upon this darling youth, his son, was punished, as I suppose such worldly and selfish love ought to be punished (so Mr. Honeyman says, at least, in his pulpit), by a hundred little mortifications, disappointments, and secret wounds, which stung not the less severely though never mentioned by their victim.

Sometimes he would have a company of such gentlemen as Messrs. Warrington, Honeyman, and Pendennis, when haply a literary conversation would ensue after dinner; and the merits of our present poets and writers would be discussed with the claret. Honeyman was well enough read in profane literature, especially of the lighter sort; and, I dare say, could have passed a satisfactory examination in Balzac, Dumas, and Paul de Kock himself, of all whose works our good host was entirely ignorant, — as indeed he was of graver books, and of earlier books, and of books in general — except those few which we have said formed his travelling library. He heard opinions that amazed and bewildered him. He heard that Byron was no great poet, though a very clever man. He heard that there had been a wicked persecution against Mr. Pope's memory and fame, and that it was time to reinstate him that his favourite, Dr. Johnson, talked admirably, but did not write English: that young Keats was a genius to be estimated in future days with young Raphael: and that a young gentleman of Cambridge who had lately published two volumes of verses, might take rank with the greatest poets of all. Doctor Johnson not write English! Lord Byron not one of the greatest poets of the world! Sir Walter a poet of the second order! Mr. Pope attacked for inferiority and want of imagination; Mr. Keats and this young Mr. Tennyson of Cambridge, the chief of modern poetic literature! What were these new dicta, which Mr. Warrington delivered with a puff of tobacco-smoke: to which Mr. Honeyman blandly assented and Clive listened with pleasure? Such opinions were not of the Colonel's time. He tried in vain to construe Oenone, and to make sense of Lamia. Ulysses he could understand; but what were these prodigious laudations bestowed on it? And that reverence for Mr. Wordsworth, what did it mean? Had he not written Peter Bell, and been turned into deserved ridicule by all the reviews? Was that dreary Excursion to be compared to Goldsmith's Traveller, or Doctor Johnson's Imitation of the Tenth Satire of Juvenal? If the young men told the truth, where had been the truth in his own young days, and in what ignorance had our forefathers been brought up? — Mr. Addison was only an elegant essayist, and shallow trifler! All these opinions were openly uttered over the Colonel's claret, as he and Mr. Binnie sate wondering at the speakers, who were knocking the gods of their youth about their ears. To Binnie the shock was not so great; the hard-headed Scotchman had read Hume in his college days, and sneered at some of the gods even at that early time. But with Newcome the admiration for the literature of the last century was an article of belief: and the incredulity of the young men seemed rank blasphemy. "You will be sneering at Shakspeare next," he said: and was silenced, though not better pleased, when his youthful guests told him, that Doctor Goldsmith sneered at him too; that Dr. Johnson did not understand him, and that Congreve, in his own day and afterwards, was considered to be, in some points, Shakspeare's superior. "What do you think a man's criticism is worth, sir," cries Mr. Warrington, "who says those lines of Mr. Congreve, about a church —

'How reverend is the face of yon tall pile,
Whose ancient pillars rear their marble heads,
To bear aloft its vast and ponderous roof,
By its own weight made steadfast and immovable;

Looking tranquillity. It strikes an awe
And terror on my aching sight'— et caetera

what do you think of a critic who says those lines are finer than anything Shakspeare ever wrote?"

A dim consciousness of danger for Clive, a terror that his son had got into the society of heretics and unbelievers, came over the Colonel — and then presently, as was the wont with his modest soul, a gentle sense of humility. He was in the wrong, perhaps, and these younger men were right. Who was he, to set up his judgment against men of letters, educated at college? It was better that Clive should follow them than him, who had had but a brief schooling, and that neglected, and who had not the original genius of his son's brilliant companions. We particularise these talks, and the little incidental mortifications which one of the best of men endured, not because the conversations are worth the remembering or recording, but because they presently very materially influenced his own and his son's future history. In the midst of the artists and their talk the poor Colonel was equally in the dark. They assaulted this Academician and that; laughed at Mr. Haydon, or sneered at Mr. Eastlake, or the contrary; deified Mr. Turner on one side of the table, and on the other scorned him as a madman — nor could Newcome comprehend a word of their jargon. Some sense there must be in their conversation: Clive joined eagerly in it and took one side or another. But what was all this rapture about a snuffy brown picture called Titian, this delight in three flabby nymphs by Rubens, and so forth? As for the vaunted Antique, and the Elgin Marbles — it might be that that battered torso was a miracle, and that broken-nosed bust a perfect beauty. He tried and tried to see that they were. He went away privily and worked at the National Gallery with a catalogue: and passed hours in the Museum before the ancient statues, desperately praying to comprehend them, and puzzled before them as he remembered he was puzzled before the Greek rudiments as a child when he cried over o kai hae alaethaes kai to alaethaes. Whereas when Clive came to look at these same things his eyes would lighten up with pleasure, and his cheeks flush with enthusiasm. He seemed to drink in colour as he would a feast of wine. Before the statues he would wave his finger, following the line of grace, and burst into ejaculations of delight and admiration. "Why can't I love the things which he loves?" thought Newcome; "why am I blind to the beauties which he admires so much — and am I unable to comprehend what he evidently understands at his young age?" So, as he thought what vain egotistical hopes he used to form about the boy when he was away in India — how in his plans for the happy future, Clive was to be always at his side; how they were to read, work, play, think, be merry together — a sickening and humiliating sense of the reality came over him: and he sadly contrasted it with the former fond anticipations. Together they were, yet he was alone still. His thoughts were not the boy's: and his affections rewarded but with a part of the young man's heart. Very likely other lovers have suffered equally. Many a man and woman has been incensed and worshipped, and has shown no more feeling than is to be expected from idols. There is yonder statue in St. Peter's, of which the toe is worn away with kisses, and which sits, and will sit eternally, prim and cold. As the young man grew, it seemed to the father as if each day separated them more and more. He himself became more melancholy and silent. His friend the civilian marked the ennui, and commented on it in his laughing way. Sometimes he announced to the club that Tom Newcome was in love: then he thought it was not Tom's heart but his liver that was affected, and recommended blue pill. O thou fond fool! who art thou, to know any man's heart save thine alone? Wherefore were wings made, and do feathers grow, but that birds should fly? The instinct that bids you love your nest, leads the young ones to seek a tree and a mate of their own. As if Thomas Newcome by poring over poems or pictures ever so much could read them with Clive's eyes! — as if by sitting mum over his wine, but watching till the lad came home with his latchkey (when the Colonel crept back to his own room in his stockings), by prodigal bounties, by stealthy affection, by any schemes or prayers, he could hope to remain first in his son's heart! One day going into Clive's study where the lad was so deeply engaged that he did not hear the father's steps advancing, Thomas Newcome found his son, pencil in hand, poring over a paper, which, blushing, he thrust hastily into his breast-pocket, as soon as he saw his visitor. The father was deeply smitten and mortified. "I— I am sorry you have any secrets from me, Clive," he gasped out at length. The boy's face lighted up with humour. "Here it is, father, if you would like to see:"— and he pulled out a paper which contained neither more nor less than a copy of very flowery verses, about a certain young lady, who had succeeded (after I know not how many predecessors) to the place of prima-donna assoluta in Clive's heart. And be pleased, madam, not to be too eager with your censure, and fancy that Mr. Clive or his chronicler would insinuate anything wrong. I dare say you felt a flame or two before you were married yourself: and that the Captain or the Curate, and the interesting young foreigner with whom you danced, caused your heart to beat, before you bestowed that treasure on Mr. Candour. Clive was doing no more than your own son will do when he is eighteen or nineteen years old himself — if he is a lad of any spirit and a worthy son of so charming a lady as yourself.

CHAPTER XXII

DESCRIBES A VISIT TO PARIS; WITH ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS IN LONDON

Mr. Clive, as we have said, had now begun to make acquaintances of his own; and the chimney-glass in his study was decorated with such a number of cards of invitation, as made his ex-fellow-student of Gandish's, young Moss, when admitted into that sanctum, stare with respectful astonishment. "Lady Bary Rowe at obe," the young Hebrew read out; "Lady Baughton at obe, dadsig! By eyes! what a tip-top swell you're a gettid to be, Newcome! I guess this is a different sort of business to the hops at old Levison's, where you first learned the polka; and where we had to pay a shilling a glass for negus!"

"We had to pay! You never paid anything, Moss," cries Clive, laughing; and indeed the negus imbibed by Mr. Moss did not cost that prudent young fellow a penny.

"Well, well; I suppose at these swell parties you 'ave as bush champade as ever you like," continues Moss. "Lady Kicklebury at obe — small early party. Why, I declare you know the whole peerage! I say, if any of these swells want a little tip-top lace, a real bargain, or diamonds, you know, you might put in a word for us, and do us a good turn."

"Give me some of your cards," says Clive; "I can distribute them about at the balls I go to. But you must treat my friends better than you serve me. Those cigars which you sent me were abominable, Moss; the groom in the stable won't smoke them."

"What a regular swell that Newcome has become!" says Mr. Moss to an old companion, another of Clive's fellow-students: "I saw him riding in the Park with the Earl of Kew, and Captain Belsize, and a whole lot of 'em — I know 'em all — and he'd hardly nod to me. I'll have a horse next Sunday, and then I'll see whether he'll cut me or not. Confound his airs! For all he's such a count, I know he's got an aunt who lets lodgings at Brighton, and an uncle who'll be preaching in the Bench if he don't keep a precious good look-out."

"Newcome is not a bit of a count," answers Moss's companion, indignantly. "He don't care a straw whether a fellow's poor or rich; and he comes up to my room just as willingly as he would go to a duke's. He is always trying to do a friend a good turn. He draws the figure capitally: he looks proud, but he isn't, and is the best-natured fellow I ever saw."

"He ain't been in our place this eighteen months," says Mr. Moss: "I know that."

"Because when he came you were always screwing him with some bargain or other," cried the intrepid Hicks, Mr. Moss's companion for the moment. "He said he couldn't afford to know you: you never let him out of your house without a pin, or a box of eau-de-cologne, or a bundle of cigars. And when you cut the arts for the shop, how were you and Newcome to go on together, I should like to know?"

"I know a relative of his who comes to our 'ouse every three months, to renew a little bill," says Mr. Moss, with a grin: "and I know this, if I go to the Earl of Kew in the Albany, or the Honourable Captain Belsize, Knightsbridge Barracks, they let me in soon enough. I'm told his father ain't got much money."

"How the deuce should I know? or what do I care?" cries the young artist, stamping the heel of his blucher on the pavement. "When I was sick in that confounded Clipstone Street, I know the Colonel came to see me, and Newcome too, day after day, and night after night. And when I was getting well, they sent me wine and jelly, and all sorts of jolly things. I should like to know how often you came to see me, Moss, and what you did for a fellow?"

"Well, I kep away because I thought you wouldn't like to be reminded of that two pound three you owe me, Hicks: that's why I kep away," says Mr. Moss, who, I dare say, was good-natured too. And when young Moss appeared at the billiard-room that night, it was evident that Hicks had told the story; for the Wardour Street youth was saluted with a roar of queries, "How about that two pound three that Hicks owes you?"

The artless conversation of the two youths will enable us to understand how our hero's life was speeding. Connected in one way or another with persons in all ranks, it never entered his head to be ashamed of the profession which he had chosen. People in the great world did not in the least trouble themselves regarding him, or care to know whether Mr. Clive Newcome followed painting or any other pursuit: and though Clive saw many of his schoolfellows in the world, these entering into the army, others talking with delight of college, and its pleasures or studies; yet, having made up his mind

that art was his calling, he refused to quit her for any other mistress, and plied his easel very stoutly. He passed through the course of study prescribed by Mr. Gandish, and drew every cast and statue in that gentleman's studio. Grindley, his tutor, getting a curacy, Clive did not replace him; but he took a course of modern languages, which he learned with considerable aptitude and rapidity. And now, being strong enough to paint without a master, it was found that there was no good light in the house in Fitzroy Square; and Mr. Clive must needs have an atelier hard by, where he could pursue his own devices independently.

If his kind father felt any pang even at this temporary parting, he was greatly soothed and pleased by a little mark of attention on the young man's part, of which his present biographer happened to be a witness; for having walked over with Colonel Newcome to see the new studio, with its tall centre window, and its curtains, and carved wardrobes, china jars, pieces of armour, and other artistical properties, the lad, with a very sweet smile of kindness and affection lighting up his honest face, took one of two Bramah's house-keys with which he was provided, and gave it to his father: "That's your key, sir," he said to the Colonel; "and you must be my first sitter, please, father; for though I'm a historical painter, I shall condescend to do a few portraits, you know." The Colonel took his son's hand, and grasped it; as Clive fondly put the other hand on his father's shoulder. Then Colonel Newcome walked away into the next room for a minute or two, and came back wiping his moustache with his handkerchief, and still holding the key in the other hand. He spoke about some trivial subject when he returned; but his voice quite trembled; and I thought his face seemed to glow with love and pleasure. Clive has never painted anything better than that head, which he executed in a couple of sittings; and wisely left without subjecting it to the chances of further labour.

It is certain the young man worked much better after he had been inducted into this apartment of his own. And the meals at home were gayer; and the rides with his father more frequent and agreeable. The Colonel used his key once or twice, and found Clive and his friend Ridley engaged in depicting a life-guardsmen — or a muscular negro — or a Malay from a neighbouring crossing, who would appear as Othello, conversing with a Clipstone Street nymph, who was ready to represent Desdemona, Diana, Queen Ellinor (sucking poison from the arm of the Plantagenet of the Blues), or any other model of virgin or maiden excellence.

Of course our young man commenced as a historical painter, deeming that the highest branch of art; and declining (except for preparatory studies) to operate on any but the largest canvasses. He painted a prodigious battle-piece of Assaye, with General Wellesley at the head of the 19th Dragoons charging the Mahratta Artillery, and sabring them at their guns. A piece of ordnance was dragged into the back-yard, and the Colonel's stud put into requisition to supply studies for this enormous picture. Fred Bayham (a stunning likeness) appeared as the principal figure in the foreground, terrifically wounded, but still of undaunted courage, slashing about amidst a group of writhing Malays, and bestriding the body of a dead cab-horse, which Clive painted, until the landlady and rest of the lodgers cried out, and for sanitary reasons the knackers removed the slaughtered charger. So large was this picture that it could only be got out of the great window by means of artifice and coaxing; and its transport caused a shout of triumph among the little boys in Charlotte Street. Will it be believed that the Royal Academicians rejected the "Battle of Assaye"? The masterpiece was so big that Fitzroy Square could not hold it; and the Colonel had thoughts of presenting it to the Oriental Club; but Clive (who had taken a trip to Paris with his father, as a *delassement* after the fatigues incident on this great work), when he saw it, after a month's interval, declared the thing was rubbish, and massacred Britons, Malays, Dragoons, Artillery and all.

"Hotel de la Terrasse, Rue de Rivoli,

"April 27 — May 1, 183-.

"My Dear Pendennis — You said I might write you a line from Paris; and if you find in my correspondence any valuable hints for the Pall Mall Gazette, you are welcome to use them gratis. Now I am here, I wonder I have never been here before, and that I have seen the Dieppe packet a thousand times at Brighton pier without thinking of going on board her. We had a rough little passage to Boulogne. We went into action as we cleared Dover pier — when the first gun was fired, and a stout old lady was carried off by a steward to the cabin; half a dozen more dropped immediately, and the crew bustled about, bringing basins for the wounded. The Colonel smiled as he saw them fall. 'I'm an old sailor,' says he to a gentleman on board. 'I was coming home, sir, and we had plenty of rough weather on the voyage, I never thought of being unwell. My boy here, who made the voyage twelve years ago last May, may have lost his sea-legs; but for me, sir —' Here a great wave dashed over the three of us; and would you believe it? in five minutes after, the dear old governor was as ill as all the rest of the passengers. When we arrived, we went through a line of ropes to the custom-house, with a crowd of snobs

jeering at us on each side; and then were carried off by a bawling commissioner to an hotel, where the Colonel, who speaks French beautifully, you know, told the waiter to get us a *petit déjeuner soigné*; on which the fellow, grinning, said, a 'nice fried sole, sir — nice mutton-chop, sir,' in regular Temple Bar English; and brought us Harvey sauce with the chops, and the last Bell's Life to amuse us after our luncheon. I wondered if all the Frenchmen read Bell's Life, and if all the inns smell so of brandy-and-water!

"We walked out to see the town, which I dare say you know, and therefore shan't describe. We saw some good studies of fishwomen with bare legs, and remarked that the soldiers were very dumpy and small. We were glad when the time came to set off by the diligence; and having the coupe to ourselves, made a very comfortable journey to Paris. It was jolly to hear the postillions crying to their horses, and the bells of the team, and to feel ourselves really in France. We took in provender at Abbeville and Amiens, and were comfortably landed here after about six-and-twenty hours of coaching. Didn't I get up the next morning and have a good walk in the Tuileries! The chestnuts were out, and the statues all shining, and all the windows of the palace in a blaze. It looks big enough for the king of the giants to live in. How grand it is! I like the barbarous splendour of the architecture, and the ornaments profuse and enormous with which it is overlaid. Think of Louis XVI. with a thousand gentlemen at his back, and a mob of yelling ruffians in front of him, giving up his crown without a fight for it; leaving his friends to be butchered, and himself sneaking into prison! No end of little children were skipping and playing in the sunshiny walks, with dresses as bright and cheeks as red as the flowers and roses in the parterres. I couldn't help thinking of Barbaroux and his bloody pikemen swarming in the gardens, and fancied the Swiss in the windows yonder; where they were to be slaughtered when the King had turned his back. What a great man that Carlyle is! I have read the battle in his History so often, that I knew it before I had seen it. Our windows look out on the obelisk where the guillotine stood. The Colonel doesn't admire Carlyle. He says Mrs. Graham's Letters from Paris are excellent, and we bought Scott's Visit to Paris, and Paris Re-visited, and read them in the diligence. They are famous good reading; but the Palais Royal is very much altered since Scott's time: no end of handsome shops; I went there directly — the same night we arrived, when the Colonel went to bed. But there is none of the fun going on which Scott describes. The laquais de place says Charles X. put an end to it all.

"Next morning the governor had letters to deliver after breakfast, and left me at the Louvre door. I shall come and live here, I think. I feel as if I never want to go away. I had not been ten minutes in the place before I fell in love with the most beautiful creature the world has ever seen. She was standing silent and majestic in the centre of one of the rooms of the statue-gallery; and the very first glimpse of her struck one breathless with the sense of her beauty. I could not see the colour of her eyes and hair exactly, but the latter is light, and the eyes I should think are grey. Her complexion is of a beautiful warm marble tinge. She is not a clever woman, evidently; I do not think she laughs or talks much — she seems too lazy to do more than smile. She is only beautiful. This divine creature has lost an arm, which has been cut off at the shoulder, but she looks none the less lovely for the accident. She maybe some two-and-thirty years old; and she was born about two thousand years ago. Her name is the Venus of Milo. O Victrix! O lucky Paris! (I don't mean this present Lutetia, but Priam's son.) How could he give the apple to any else but this enslaver — this joy of gods and men? at whose benign presence the flowers spring up, and the smiling ocean sparkles, and the soft skies beam with serene light! I wish we might sacrifice. I would bring a spotless kid, snowy-coated, and a pair of doves and a jar of honey — yea, honey from Morel's in Piccadilly, thyme-flavoured, narbonian, and we would acknowledge the Sovereign Loveliness, and adjure the Divine Aphrodite. Did you ever see my pretty young cousin, Miss Newcome, Sir Brian's daughter? She has a great look of the huntress Diana. It is sometimes too proud and too cold for me. The blare of those horns is too shrill and the rapid pursuit through bush and bramble too daring. O thou generous Venus! O thou beautiful bountiful calm! At thy soft feet let me kneel — on cushions of Tyrian purple. Don't show this to Warrington, please: I never thought when I began that Pegasus was going to run away with me.

"I wish I had read Greek a little more at school: it's too late at my age; I shall be nineteen soon, and have got my own business; but when we return I think I shall try and read it with Cribs. What have I been doing, spending six months over a picture of sepoys and dragoons cutting each other's throats? Art ought not to be a fever. It ought to be a calm; not a screaming bull-fight or a battle of gladiators, but a temple for placid contemplation, rapt worship, stately rhythmic ceremony, and music solemn and tender. I shall take down my Snyders and Rubens when I get home; and turn quietist. To think I have spent weeks in depicting bony life-guardsmen delivering cut one, or Saint George, and painting black beggars off a crossing!

“What a grand thing it is to think of half a mile of pictures at the Louvre! Not but that there are a score under the old pepper-boxes in Trafalgar Square as fine as the best here. I don’t care for any Raphael here, as much as our own St. Catharine. There is nothing more grand. Could the Pyramids of Egypt or the Colossus of Rhodes be greater than our Sebastian? and for our Bacchus and Ariadne, you cannot beat the best you know. But if we have fine jewels, here there are whole sets of them: there are kings and all their splendid courts round about them. J. J. and I must come and live here. Oh, such portraits of Titian! Oh, such swells by Vandyke! I’m sure he must have been as fine a gentleman as any he painted! It’s a shame they haven’t got a Sir Joshua or two. At a feast of painters he has a right to a place, and at the high table too. Do you remember Tom Rogers, of Gandish’s? He used to come to my rooms — my other rooms in the Square. Tom is here with a fine carrotty beard, and a velvet jacket, cut open at the sleeves, to show that Tom has a shirt. I dare say it was clean last Sunday. He has not learned French yet, but pretends to have forgotten English; and promises to introduce me to a set of the French artists his camarades. There seems to be a scarcity of soap among these young fellows; and I think I shall cut off my mustachios; only Warrington will have nothing to laugh at when I come home.

“The Colonel and I went to dine at the Cafe de Paris, and afterwards to the opera. Ask for huitres de Marenne when you dine here. We dined with a tremendous French swell, the Vicomte de Florac, officier d’ordonnance to one of the princes, and son of some old friends of my father’s. They are of very high birth, but very poor. He will be a duke when his cousin, the Duc d’Ivry, dies. His father is quite old. The vicomte was born in England. He pointed out to us no end of famous people at the opera — a few of the Fauxbourg St. Germain, and ever so many of the present people:— M. Thiers, and Count Mole, and Georges Sand, and Victor Hugo, and Jules Janin — I forget half their names. And yesterday we went to see his mother, Madame de Florac. I suppose she was an old flame of the Colonel’s, for their meeting was uncommonly ceremonious and tender. It was like an elderly Sir Charles Grandison saluting a middle-aged Miss Byron. And only fancy! the Colonel has been here once before since his return to England! It must have been last year, when he was away for ten days, whilst I was painting that rubbishy picture of the Black Prince waiting on King John. Madame de F. is a very grand lady, and must have been a great beauty in her time. There are two pictures by Gerard in her salon — of her and M. de Florac. M. de Florac, old swell, powder, thick eyebrows, hooked nose; no end of stars, ribbons, and embroidery. Madame also in the dress of the Empire — pensive, beautiful, black velvet, and a look something like my cousin’s. She wore a little old-fashioned brooch yesterday, and said, ‘Voila, la reconnoissez-vous? Last year when you were here, it was in the country;’ and she smiled at him: and the dear old boy gave a sort of groan and dropped his head in his hand. I know what it is. I’ve gone through it myself. I kept for six months an absurd ribbon of that infernal little flirt Fanny Freeman. Don’t you remember how angry I was when you abused her?

“‘Your father and I knew each other when we were children, my friend,’ the Countess said to me (in the sweetest French accent). He was looking into the garden of the house where they live, in the Rue Saint Dominique. ‘You must come and see me often, always. You remind me of him,’ and she added, with a very sweet kind smile, ‘Do you like best to think that he was better-looking than you, or that you excel him?’ I said I should like to be like him. But who is? There are cleverer fellows, I dare say; but where is there such a good one? I wonder whether he was very fond of Madame de Florac? The old Count does not show. He is quite old, and wears a pigtail. We saw it bobbing over his garden chair. He lets the upper part of his house; Major-General the Honourable Zeno F. Pokey, of Cincinnati, U.S., lives in it. We saw Mrs. Pokey’s carriage in the court, and her footmen smoking cigars there; a tottering old man with feeble legs, as old as old Count de Florac, seemed to be the only domestic who waited on the family below.

“Madame de Florac and my father talked about my profession. The Countess said it was a belle carriere. The Colonel said it was better than the army. ‘Ah oui, monsieur,’ says she very sadly. And then he said, ‘that presently I should very likely come to study at Paris, when he knew there would be a kind friend to watch over son garcon.’

“‘But you will be here to watch over him yourself, mon ami?’ says the French lady.

“Father shook his head. ‘I shall very probably have to go back to India,’ he said. ‘My furlough is expired. I am now taking my extra leave. If I can get my promotion, I need not return. Without that I cannot afford to live in Europe. But my absence in all probability will be but very short,’ he said. ‘And Clive is old enough now to go on without me.’

“Is this the reason why father has been so gloomy for some months past? I thought it might have been some of my follies which made him uncomfortable; and you know I have been trying my best to amend — I have not half such a tailor’s bill this year as last. I owe scarcely anything. I have paid off Moss every halfpenny for his confounded rings and gimcracks. I asked father about this melancholy news as we walked away from Madame de Florac.

"He is not near so rich as we thought. Since he has been at home he says he has spent greatly more than his income, and is quite angry at his own extravagance. At first he thought he might have retired from the army altogether; but after three years at home, he finds he cannot live upon his income. When he gets his promotion as full Colonel, he will be entitled to a thousand a year; that, and what he has invested in India, and a little in this country, will be plenty for both of us. He never seems to think of my making money by my profession. Why, suppose I sell the 'Battle of Assaye' for 500 pounds? that will be enough to carry me on ever so long, without dipping into the purse of the dear old father.

"The Viscount de Florac called to dine with us. The Colonel said he did not care about going out: and so the Viscount and I went together. Trois Freres Provencaux — he ordered the dinner and of course I paid. Then we went to a little theatre, and he took me behind the scenes — such a queer place! We went to the loge of Mademoiselle Fine who acted the part of 'Le petit Tambour,' in which she sings a famous song with a drum. He asked her and several literary fellows to supper at the Cafe Anglais. And I came home ever so late, and lost twenty napoleons at a game called bouillotte. It was all the change out of a twenty-pound note which dear old Binnie gave me before we set out, with a quotation out of Horace, you know, about Neque tu choreas sperne puer. O me! how guilty I felt as I walked home at ever so much o'clock to the Hotel de la Terrasse, and sneaked into our apartment! But the Colonel was sound asleep. His dear old boots stood sentries at his bedroom door, and I slunk into mine as silently as I could.

"P.S. — Wednesday. — There's just one scrap of paper left. I have got J. J.'s letter. He has been to the private view of the Academy (so that his own picture is in), and the 'Battle of Assaye' is refused. Smee told him it was too big. I dare say it's very bad. I'm glad I'm away, and the fellows are not condoling with me.

"Please go and see Mr. Binnie. He has come to grief. He rode the Colonel's horse; came down on the pavement and wrenched his leg, and I'm afraid the grey's. Please look at his legs; we can't understand John's report of them. He, I mean Mr. B., was going to Scotland to see his relations when the accident happened. You know he has always been going to Scotland to see his relations. He makes light of the business, and says the Colonel is not to think of coming to him: and I don't want to go back just yet, to see all the fellows from Gandish's and the Life Academy, and have them grinning at my misfortune.

"The governor would send his regards, I dare say, but he is out, and I am always yours affectionately, Clive Newcome."

"P.S. — He tipped me himself this morning; isn't he a kind, dear old fellow?"

Arthur Pendennis, Esq., to Clive Newcome, Esq.

"Pall Mall Gazette,' Journal of Politics, Literature and Fashion, 225 Catherine Street, Strand,

"Dear Clive — I regret very much for Fred Bayham's sake (who has lately taken the responsible office of Fine Arts Critic for the P. G.) that your extensive picture of the 'Battle of Assaye' has not found a place in the Royal Academy Exhibition. F. B. is at least fifteen shillings out of pocket by its rejection, as he had prepared a flaming eulogium of your work, which of course is so much waste paper in consequence of this calamity. Never mind. Courage, my son. The Duke of Wellington you know was best back at Seringapatam before he succeeded at Assaye. I hope you will fight other battles, and that fortune in future years will be more favourable to you. The town does not talk very much of your discomfiture. You see the parliamentary debates are very interesting just now, and somehow the 'Battle of Assaye' did not seem to excite the public mind.

"I have been to Fitzroy Square; both to the stables and the house. The Houyhnhnm's legs are very well; the horse slipped on his side and not on his knees, and has received no sort of injury. Not so Mr. Binnie; his ankle is much wrenched and inflamed. He must keep his sofa for many days, perhaps weeks. But you know he is a very cheerful philosopher, and endures the evils of life with much equanimity. His sister has come to him. I don't know whether that may be considered as a consolation of his evil or an aggravation of it. You know he uses the sarcastic method in his talk, and it was difficult to understand from him whether he was pleased or bored by the embraces of his relative. She was an infant when he last beheld her, on his departure to India. She is now (to speak with respect) a very brisk, plump, pretty little widow; having, seemingly, recovered from her grief at the death of her husband, Captain Mackenzie in the West Indies. Mr. Binnie was just on the point of visiting his relatives, who reside at Musselburgh, near Edinburgh, when he met with the fatal accident which prevented his visit to his native shores. His account of his misfortune and his lonely condition was so pathetic that Mrs. Mackenzie and her daughter put themselves into the Edinburgh steamer, and rushed to console his sofa. They occupy your bedroom and sitting-room, which latter Mrs. Mackenzie says no longer smells of tobacco smoke, as it did when she

took possession of your den. If you have left any papers about, any bills, any billets-doux, I make no doubt the ladies have read every single one of them, according to the amiable habits of their sex. The daughter is a bright little blue-eyed fair-haired lass, with a very sweet voice, in which she sings (unaided by instrumental music, and seated on a chair in the middle of the room) the artless ballads of her native country. I had the pleasure of hearing the ‘Bonnets of Bonny Dundee’ and ‘Jack of Hazeldean’ from her ruby lips two evenings since; not indeed for the first time in my life, but never from such a pretty little singer. Though both ladies speak our language with something of the tone usually employed by the inhabitants of the northern part of Britain, their accent is exceedingly pleasant, and indeed by no means so strong as Mr. Binnie’s own; for Captain Mackenzie was an Englishman, for whose sake his lady modified her native Musselburgh pronunciation. She tells many interesting anecdotes of him, of the West Indies, and of the distinguished regiment of infantry to which the captain belonged. Miss Rosa is a great favourite with her uncle, and I have had the good fortune to make their stay in the metropolis more pleasant, by sending them orders, from the Pall Mall Gazette, for the theatres, panoramas, and the principal sights in town. For pictures they do not seem to care much; they thought the National Gallery a dreary exhibition, and in the Royal Academy could be got to admire nothing but the picture of M’Collop of M’Collop, by our friend of the like name; but they think Madame Tussaud’s interesting exhibition of waxwork the most delightful in London; and there I had the happiness of introducing them to our friend Mr. Frederick Bayham; who, subsequently, on coming to this office with his valuable contributions on the Fine Arts, made particular inquiries as to their pecuniary means, and expressed himself instantly ready to bestow his hand upon the mother or daughter, provided old Mr. Binnie would make a satisfactory settlement. I got the ladies a box at the opera, whither they were attended by Captain Goby of their regiment, godfather to Miss, and where I had the honour of paying them a visit. I saw your fair young cousin Miss Newcome in the lobby with her grandmamma Lady Kew. Mr. Bayham with great eloquence pointed out to the Scotch ladies the various distinguished characters in the house. The opera delighted them, but they were astounded at the ballet, from which mother and daughter retreated in the midst of a fire of pleasantries of Captain Goby. I can fancy that officer at mess, and how brilliant his anecdotes must be when the company of ladies does not restrain his genial flow of humour.

“Here comes Mr. Baker with the proofs. In case you don’t see the P. G. at Galignani’s, I send you an extract from Bayham’s article on the Royal Academy, where you will have the benefit of his opinion on the works of some of your friends:—

“617. ‘Moses Bringing Home the Gross of Green Spectacles,’ Smith, R.A. — Perhaps poor Goldsmith’s exquisite little work has never been so great a favourite as in the present age. We have here, in a work by one of our most eminent artists, an homage to the genius of him ‘who touched nothing which he did not adorn:’ and the charming subject is handled in the most delicious manner by Mr. Smith. The chiaroscuro is admirable: the impasto is perfect. Perhaps a very captious critic might object to the foreshortening of Moses’s left leg; but where there is so much to praise justly, the Pall Mall Gazette does not care to condemn.

“420. Our (and the public’s) favourite, Brown, R.A., treats us to a subject from the best of all stories, the tale ‘which laughed Spain’s chivalry away,’ the ever new Don Quixote. The incident which Brown has selected is the ‘Don’s Attack on the Flock of Sheep;’ the sheep are in his best manner, painted with all his well-known facility and brio. Mr. Brown’s friendly rival, Hopkins, has selected Gil Blas for an illustration this year; and the ‘Robber’s Cavern’ is one of the most masterly of Hopkins’ productions.

“Great Rooms. 33. ‘Portrait of Cardinal Cospetto,’ O’Gogstay, A.R.A.; and ‘Neighbourhood of Corpodibacco — Evening — a Contadina and a Trasteverino dancing at the door of a Locanda to the music of a Pifferaro.’ — Since his visit to Italy Mr. O’Gogstay seems to have given up the scenes of Irish humour with which he used to delight us; and the romance, the poetry, the religion of ‘Italia la bella’ form the subjects of his pencil. The scene near Corpodibacco (we know the spot well, and have spent many a happy month in its romantic mountains) is most characteristic. Cardinal Cospetto, we must say, is a most truculent prelate, and not certainly an ornament to his church.

“49, 210, 311. Smee, R.A. — Portraits which a Reynolds might be proud of — a Vandyke or Claude might not disown. ‘Sir Brian Newcome, in the costume of a Deputy-Lieutenant,’ ‘Major-General Sir Thomas de Boots, K.C.B.,’ painted for the 50th Dragoons, are triumphs, indeed, of this noble painter. Why have we no picture of the Sovereign and her august consort from Smee’s brush? When Charles II. picked up Titian’s mahl-stick, he observed to a courtier, ‘A king you can always have; a genius comes but rarely.’ While we have a Smee among us, and a monarch whom we admire — may the one be employed to transmit to posterity the beloved features of the other! We know our lucubrations are read in high places,

and respectfully insinuate verbum sapienti.

“1906. ‘The M’Collop of M’Collop,’— A. M’Collop — is a noble work of a young artist, who, in depicting the gallant chief of a hardy Scottish clan, has also represented a romantic Highland landscape, in the midst of which, ‘his foot upon his native heath,’ stands a man of splendid symmetrical figure and great facial advantages. We shall keep our eye on Mr. M’Collop.

“1367. ‘Oberon and Titania.’ Ridley. — This sweet and fanciful little picture draws crowds round about it, and is one of the most charming and delightful works of the present exhibition. We echo the universal opinion in declaring that it shows not only the greatest promise, but the most delicate and beautiful performance. The Earl of Kew, we understand, bought the picture at the private view; and we congratulate the young painter heartily upon his successful debut. He is, we understand, a pupil of Mr. Gandish. Where is that admirable painter? We miss his bold canvasses and grand historic outline.’

“I shall alter a few inaccuracies in the composition of our friend F. B., who has, as he says, ‘drawn it uncommonly mild in the above criticism.’ In fact, two days since, he brought in an article of quite a different tendency, of which he retains only the two last paragraphs; but he has, with great magnanimity, recalled his previous observations; and, indeed, he knows as much about pictures as some critics I could name.

“Good-bye, my dear Clive! I send my kindest regards to your father; and think you had best see as little as possible of your bouillotte-playing French friend and his friends. This advice I know you will follow, as young men always follow the advice of their seniors and well-wishers. I dine in Fitzroy Square today with the pretty widow and her daughter, and am yours always, dear Clive, A. P.”



CHAPTER XXIII

IN WHICH WE HEAR A SOPRANO AND A CONTRALTO

The most hospitable and polite of Colonels would not hear of Mrs. Mackenzie and her daughter quitting his house when he returned to it, after six weeks' pleasant sojourn in Paris; nor, indeed, did his fair guest show the least anxiety or intention to go away. Mrs. Mackenzie had a fine merry humour of her own. She was an old soldier's wife, she said and knew when her quarters were good; and I suppose, since her honeymoon, when the captain took her to Harrogate and Cheltenham, stopping at the first hotels, and travelling in a chaise-and-pair the whole way, she had never been so well off as in that roomy mansion near Tottenham Court Road. Of her mother's house at Musselburgh she gave a ludicrous but dismal account. "Eh, James," she said, "I think if you had come to mamma, as you threatened, you would not have staid very long. It's a wearisome place. Dr. M'Craw boards with her; and it's sermon and psalm-singing from morning till night. My little Josey takes kindly to the life there, and I left her behind, poor little darling! It was not fair to bring three of us to take possession of your house, dear James; but my poor little Rosey was just withering away there. It's good for the dear child to see the world a little, and a kind uncle, who is not afraid of us now he sees us, is he?" Kind Uncle James was not at all afraid of little Rosey; whose pretty face and modest manners, and sweet songs, and blue eyes, cheered and soothed the old bachelor. Nor was Rosey's mother less agreeable and pleasant. She had married the captain (it was a love-match, against the will of her parents, who had destined her to be the third wife of old Dr. M'Mull) when very young. Many sorrows she had had, including poverty, the captain's imprisonment for debt, and his demise; but she was of a gay and lightsome spirit. She was but three-and-thirty years old, and looked five-and-twenty. She was active, brisk, jovial, and alert; and so good-looking, that it was a wonder she had not taken a successor to Captain Mackenzie. James Binnie cautioned his friend the Colonel against the attractions of the buxom siren; and laughingly would ask Clive how he would like Mrs. Mackenzie for a mamaw?

Colonel Newcome felt himself very much at ease regarding his future prospects. He was very glad that his friend James was reconciled to his family, and hinted to Clive that the late Captain Mackenzie's extravagance had been the cause of the rupture between him and his brother-inlaw, who had helped that prodigal captain repeatedly during his life; and, in spite of family quarrels, had never ceased to act generously to his widowed sister and her family. "But I think, Mr. Clive," said he, "that as Miss Rosa is very pretty, and you have a spare room at your studio, you had best take up your quarters in Charlotte Street as long as the ladies are living with us." Clive was nothing loth to be independent; but he showed himself to be a very good home-loving youth. He walked home to breakfast every morning, dined often, and spent the evenings with the family. Indeed, the house was a great deal more cheerful for the presence of the two pleasant ladies. Nothing could be prettier than to see the two ladies tripping downstairs together, mamma's pretty arm round Rosey's pretty waist. Mamma's talk was perpetually of Rosey. That child was always gay, always good, always happy! That darling girl woke with a smile on her face, it was sweet to see her! Uncle James, in his dry way, said, he dared to say it was very pretty. "Go away, you droll, dear old kind Uncle James!" Rosey's mamma would cry out. "You old bachelors are wicked old things!" Uncle James used to kiss Rosey very kindly and pleasantly. She was as modest, as gentle, as eager to please Colonel Newcome as any little girl could be. It was pretty to see her tripping across the room with his coffee-cup, or peeling walnuts for him after dinner with her white plump little fingers.

Mrs. Irons, the housekeeper, naturally detested Mrs. Mackenzie, and was jealous of her: though the latter did everything to soothe and coax the governess of the two gentlemen's establishment. She praised her dinners, delighted in her puddings, must beg Mrs. Irons to allow her to see one of those delicious puddings made, and to write the receipt for her, that Mrs. Mackenzie might use it when she was away. It was Mrs. Irons' belief that Mrs. Mackenzie never intended to go away. She had no idee of ladies, as were ladies, coming into her kitchen. The maids vowed that they heard Miss Rosa crying, and mamma scolding in her bedroom for all she was so soft-spoken. How was that jug broke, and that chair smashed in the bedroom, that day there was such a awful row up there?

Mrs. Mackenzie played admirably, in the old-fashioned way, dances, reels, and Scotch and Irish tunes, the former, of which filled James Binnie's soul with delectation. The good mother naturally desired that her darling should have a few good lessons of the piano while she was in London. Rosey was eternally strumming upon an instrument which had been

taken upstairs for her special practice; and the Colonel, who was always seeking to do harmless jobs of kindness for his friends, bethought him of little Miss Cann, the governess at Ridley's, whom he recommended as an instructress. "Anybody whom you recommend I'm sure, dear Colonel, we shall like," said Mrs. Mackenzie, who looked as black as thunder, and had probably intended to have Monsieur Quatremains or Signor Twankeydillo; and the little governess came to her pupil. Mrs. Mackenzie treated her very gruffly and haughtily at first; but as soon as she heard Miss Cann play, the widow was pacified — nay, charmed. Monsieur Quatremains charged a guinea for three-quarters of an hour; while Miss Cann thankfully took five shillings for an hour and a half; and the difference of twenty lessons, for which dear Uncle James paid, went into Mrs. Mackenzie's pocket, and thence probably on to her pretty shoulders and head in the shape of a fine silk dress and a beautiful French bonnet, in which Captain Goby said, upon his life, she didn't look twenty.

The little governess trotting home after her lesson would often look in to Clive's studio in Charlotte Street, where her two boys, as she called Clive and J. J., were at work each at his easel. Clive used to laugh, and tell us, who joked him about the widow and her daughter, what Miss Cann said about them. Mrs. Mack was not all honey, it appeared. If Rosey played incorrectly, mamma flew at her with prodigious vehemence of language, and sometimes with a slap on poor Rosey's back. She must make Rosey wear tight boots, and stamp on her little feet if they refused to enter into the slipper. I blush for the indiscretion of Miss Cann; but she actually told J. J., that mamma insisted upon lacing her so tight, as nearly to choke the poor little lass. Rosey did not fight: Rosey always yielded; and the scolding over and the tears dried, would come simpering downstairs with mamma's arm round her waist, and her pretty artless happy smile for the gentlemen below. Besides the Scottish songs without music, she sang ballads at the piano very sweetly. Mamma used to cry at these ditties. "That child's voice brings tears into my eyes, Mr. Newcome," she would say. "She has never known a moment's sorrow yet! Heaven grant, heaven grant, she may be happy! But what shall I be when I lose her?"

"Why, my dear, when ye lose Rosey, ye'll console yourself with Josey," says droll Mr. Binnie from the sofa, who perhaps saw the manoeuvre of the widow.

The widow laughs heartily and really. She places a handkerchief over her mouth. She glances at her brother with a pair of eyes full of knowing mischief. "Ah, dear James," she says, "you don't know what it is to have a mother's feelings."

"I can partly understand them," says James. "Rosey, sing me that pretty little French song." Mrs. Mackenzie's attention to Clive was really quite affecting. If any of his friends came to the house, she took them aside and praised Clive to them. The Colonel she adored. She had never met with such a man or seen such a manner. The manners of the Bishop of Tobago were beautiful, and he certainly had one of the softest and finest hands in the world; but not finer than Colonel Newcome's. "Look at his foot!" (and she put out her own, which was uncommonly pretty, and suddenly withdrew it, with an arch glance meant to represent a blush)—"my shoe would fit it! When we were at Coventry Island, Sir Peregrine Blandy, who succeeded poor dear Sir Rawdon Crawley — I saw his dear boy was gazetted to a lieutenant-colonelcy in the Guards last week — Sir Peregrine, who was one of the Prince of Wales's most intimate friends, was always said to have the finest manner and presence of any man of his day; and very grand and noble he was, but I don't think he was equal to Colonel Newcome — I don't really think so. Do you think so, Mr. Honeyman? What a charming discourse that was last Sunday! I know there were two pair of eyes not dry in the church. I could not see the other people just for crying myself. Oh, but I wish we could have you at Musselburgh! I was bred a Presbyterian, of course; but in much travelling through the world with my dear husband, I came to love his church. At home we sit under Dr M'Craw, of course; but he is so awfully long! Four hours every Sunday at least, morning and afternoon! It nearly kills poor Rosey. Did you hear her voice at your church? The dear girl is delighted with the chants. Rosey, were you not delighted with the chants?"

If she is delighted with the chants, Honeyman is delighted with the chantress and her mamma. He dashes the fair hair from his brow: he sits down to the piano, and plays one or two of them, warbling a faint vocal accompaniment, and looking as if he would be lifted off the screw music-stool, and flutter up to the ceiling.

"Oh, it's just seraphic!" says the widow. "It's just the breath of incense and the pealing of the organ at the Cathedral at Montreal. Rosey doesn't remember Montreal. She was a wee wee child. She was born on the voyage out, and christened at sea. You remember, Goby."

"Gad, I promised and vowed to teach her her catechism; 'gad, but I haven't," says Captain Goby. "We were between Montreal and Quebec for three years with the Hundredth, and the Hundred Twentieth Highlanders, and the Thirty-third Dragoon Guards a part of the time; Fipley commanded them, and a very jolly time we had. Much better than the West Indies, where a fellow's liver goes to the deuce with hot pickles and sangaree. Mackenzie was a dev'lish wild fellow,"

whispers Captain Goby to his neighbour (the present biographer, indeed), "and Mrs. Mack was as pretty a little woman as ever you set eyes on." (Captain Goby winks, and looks peculiarly sly as he makes this statement.) "Our regiment wasn't on your side of India, Colonel."

And in the interchange of such delightful remarks, and with music and song, the evening passes away. "Since the house had been adorned by the fair presence of Mrs. Mackenzie and her daughter," Honeyman said, always gallant in behaviour and flowery in expression, "it seemed as if spring had visited it. Its hospitality was invested with a new grace; its ever welcome little reunions were doubly charming. But why did these ladies come, if they were to go away again? How — how would Mr. Binnie console himself (not to mention others) if they left him in solitude?"

"We have no wish to leave my brother James in solitude," cries Mrs. Mackenzie, frankly laughing. "We like London a great deal better than Musselburgh."

"Oh, that we do!" ejaculates the blushing Rosey.

"And we will stay as long as ever my brother will keep us," continues the widow.

"Uncle James is so kind and dear," says Rosey. "I hope he won't send me and mamma away."

"He were a brute — a savage, if he did!" cries Binnie, with glances of rapture towards the two pretty faces. Everybody liked them. Binnie received their caresses very good-humouredly. The Colonel liked every woman under the sun. Clive laughed and joked and waltzed alternately with Rosey and her mamma. The latter was the briskest partner of the two. The unsuspecting widow, poor dear innocent, would leave her girl at the painting-room, and go shopping herself; but little J. J. also worked there, being occupied with his second picture: and he was almost the only one of Clive's friends whom the widow did not like. She pronounced the quiet little painter a pert, little, obtrusive, underbred creature.

In a word, Mrs. Mackenzie was, as the phrase is, "setting her cap" so openly at Clive, that none of us could avoid seeing her play: and Clive laughed at her simple manoeuvres as merrily as the rest. She was a merry little woman. We gave her and her pretty daughter a luncheon in Lamb Court, Temple; in Sibwright's chambers — luncheon from Dick's Coffee House — ices and dessert from Partington's in the Strand. Miss Rosey, Mr. Sibwright, our neighbour in Lamb Court, and the Reverend Charles Honeyman sang very delightfully after lunch; there was quite a crowd of porters, laundresses, and boys to listen in the court; Mr. Paley was disgusted with the noise we made — in fact, the party was perfectly successful. We all liked the widow, and if she did set her pretty ribbons at Clive, why should not she? We all liked the pretty, fresh, modest Rosey. Why, even the grave old benchers in the Temple church, when the ladies visited it on Sunday, winked their reverend eyes with pleasure, as they looked at those two uncommonly smart, pretty, well-dressed, fashionable women. Ladies, go to the Temple church. You will see more young men, and receive more respectful attention there than in any place, except perhaps at Oxford or Cambridge. Go to the Temple church — not, of course, for the admiration which you will excite and which you cannot help; but because the sermon is excellent, the choral services beautifully performed, and the church so interesting as a monument of the thirteenth century, and as it contains the tombs of those dear Knights Templars!

Mrs. Mackenzie could be grave or gay, according to her company: nor could any woman be of more edifying behaviour when an occasional Scottish friend bringing a letter from darling Josey, or a recommendatory letter from Josey's grandmother, paid a visit in Fitzroy Square. Little Miss Cann used to laugh and wink knowingly, saying, "You will never get back your bedroom, Mr. Clive. You may be sure that Miss Josey will come in a few months; and perhaps old Mrs. Binnie, only no doubt she and her daughter do not agree. But the widow has taken possession of Uncle James; and she will carry off somebody else if I am not mistaken. Should you like a stepmother, Mr. Clive, or should you prefer a wife?"

Whether the fair lady tried her wiles upon Colonel Newcome the present writer has no certain means of ascertaining: but I think another image occupied his heart: and this Circe tempted him no more than a score of other enchantresses who had tried their spells upon him. If she tried she failed. She was a very shrewd woman, quite frank in her talk when such frankness suited her. She said to me, "Colonel Newcome has had some great passion, once upon a time, I am sure of that, and has no more heart to give away. The woman who had his must have been a very lucky woman: though I daresay she did not value what she had; or did not live to enjoy it — or — or something or other. You see tragedies in some people's faces. I recollect when we were in Coventry Island — there was a chaplain there — a very good man — a Mr. Bell, and married to a pretty little woman who died. The first day I saw him I said, 'I know that man has had a great grief in life. I am sure that he left his heart in England.' You gentlemen who write books, Mr. Pendennis, and stop at the third volume, know very well that the real story often begins afterwards. My third volume ended when I was sixteen, and was married to my

poor husband. Do you think all our adventures ended then, and that we lived happy ever after? I live for my darling girls now. All I want is to see them comfortable in life. Nothing can be more generous than my dear brother James has been. I am only his half-sister, you know, and was an infant in arms when he went away. He had differences with Captain Mackenzie, who was headstrong and imprudent, and I own my poor dear husband was in the wrong. James could not live with my poor mother. Neither could by possibility suit the other. I have often, I own, longed to come and keep house for him. His home, the society he sees, of men of talents like Mr. Warrington and — and I won't mention names, or pay compliments to a man who knows human nature so well as the author of *Walter Lorraine*: this house is pleasanter a thousand times than Musselburgh — pleasanter for me and my dearest Rosey, whose delicate nature shrunk and withered up in poor mamma's society. She was never happy except in my room, the dear child! She's all gentleness and affection. She doesn't seem to show it: but she has the most wonderful appreciation of wit, of genius, and talent of all kinds. She always hides her feelings, except from her fond old mother. I went up into our room yesterday, and found her in tears. I can't bear to see her eyes red or to think of her suffering. I asked her what ailed her, and kissed her. She is a tender plant, Mr. Pendennis! Heaven knows with what care I have nurtured her! She looked up smiling on my shoulder. She looked so pretty! 'Oh, mamma,' the darling child said, 'I couldn't help it. I have been crying over *Walter Lorraine*.' (Enter Rosey.) Rosey, darling! I have been telling Mr. Pendennis what a naughty, naughty child you were yesterday, and how you read a book which I told you you shouldn't read; for it is a very wicked book; and though it contains some sad sad truths, it is a great deal too misanthropic (is that the right word? I'm a poor soldier's wife, and no scholar, you know), and a great deal too bitter; and though the reviews praise it, and the clever people — we are poor simple country people — we won't praise it. Sing, dearest, that little song" (profuse kisses to Rosey), "that pretty thing that Mr. Pendennis likes."

"I am sure that I will sing anything that Mr. Pendennis likes," says Rosey, with her candid bright eyes — and she goes to the piano and warbles "Batti, Batti," with her sweet fresh artless voice.

More caresses follow. Mamma is in a rapture. How pretty they look — the mother and daughter — two lilies twining together! The necessity of an entertainment at the Temple-lunch from Dick's (as before mentioned), dessert from Partington's, Sibwright's spoons, his boy to aid ours, nay, Sib himself, and his rooms, which are so much more elegant than ours, and where there is a piano and guitar: all these thoughts pass in rapid and brilliant combination in the pleasant Mr. Pendennis's mind. How delighted the ladies are with the proposal! Mrs. Mackenzie claps her pretty hands, and kisses Rosey again. If osculation is a mark of love, surely Mrs. Mack is the best of mothers. I may say, without false modesty, that our little entertainment was most successful. The champagne was iced to a nicety. The ladies did not perceive that our laundress, Mrs. Flanagan, was intoxicated very early in the afternoon. Percy Sibwright sang admirably, and with the greatest spirit, ditties in many languages. I am sure Miss Rosey thought him (as indeed he is) one of the most fascinating young fellows about town. To her mother's excellent accompaniment Rosey sang her favourite songs (by the way, her stock was very small — five, I think, was the number). Then the table was moved into a corner, where the quivering moulds of jelly seemed to keep time to the music; and whilst Percy played, two couple of waltzers actually whirled round the little room. No wonder that the court below was thronged with admirers, that Paley the reading man was in a rage, and Mrs. Flanagan in a state of excitement. Ah! pleasant days, happy gold dingy chambers illuminated by youthful sunshine! merry songs and kind faces — it is pleasant to recall you. Some of those bright eyes shine no more: some of those smiling lips do not speak. Some are not less kind, but sadder than in those days: of which the memories revisit us for a moment, and sink back into the grey past. The dear old Colonel beat time with great delight to the songs; the widow lit his cigar with her own fair fingers. That was the only smoke permitted during the entertainment — George Warrington himself not being allowed to use his cutty-pipe — though the gay little widow said that she had been used to smoking in the West Indies and I dare say spoke the truth. Our entertainment lasted actually until after dark: and a particularly neat cab being called from St. Clement's by Mr. Binnie's boy, you may be sure we all conducted the ladies to their vehicle: and many a fellow returning from his lonely club that evening into chambers must have envied us the pleasure of having received two such beauties.

The clerical bachelor was not to be outdone by the gentlemen of the bar; and the entertainment at the Temple was followed by one at Honeyman's lodgings, which, I must own, greatly exceeded ours in splendour, for Honeyman had his luncheon from Gunter's; and if he had been Miss Rosey's mother, giving a breakfast to the dear girl on her marriage, the affair could not have been more elegant and handsome. We had but two bouquets at our entertainment; at Honeyman's there were four upon the breakfast-table, besides a great pineapple, which must have cost the rogue three or four guineas, and which Percy Sibwright delicately cut up. Rosey thought the pineapple delicious. "The dear thing does not remember

the pineapples in the West Indies!" cries Mrs. Mackenzie; and she gave us many exciting narratives of entertainments at which she had been present at various colonial governors' tables. After luncheon, our host hoped we should have a little music. Dancing, of course, could not be allowed. "That," said Honeyman with his soft-bleating sigh, "were scarcely clerical. You know, besides, you are in a hermitage; and" (with a glance round the table) "must put up with Cenobite's fare." The fare was, as I have said, excellent. The wine was bad, as George, and I, and Sib agreed; and in so far we flattered ourselves that our feast altogether excelled the parson's. The champagne especially was such stuff, that Warrington remarked on it to his neighbour, a dark gentleman, with a tuft to his chin, and splendid rings and chains.

The dark gentleman's wife and daughter were the other two ladies invited by our host. The elder was splendidly dressed. Poor Mrs. Mackenzie's simple gimcracks, though she displayed them to the most advantage, and could make an ormolu bracelet go as far as another woman's emerald clasps, were as nothing compared to the other lady's gorgeous jewellery. Her fingers glittered with rings innumerable. The head of her smelling-bottle was as big as her husband's gold snuff box, and of the same splendid material. Our ladies, it must be confessed, came in a modest cab from Fitzroy Square; these arrived in a splendid little open carriage with white ponies, and harness all over brass, which the lady of the rings drove with a whip that was a parasol. Mrs. Mackenzie, standing at Honeyman's window, with her arm round Rosey's waist, viewed this arrival perhaps with envy. "My dear Mr. Honeyman, whose are those beautiful horses?" cries Rosey, with enthusiasm.

The divine says with a faint blush — "It is — ah — it is Mrs. Sherrick and Miss Sherrick who have done me the favour to come to luncheon."

"Wine-merchant. Oh!" thinks Mrs. Mackenzie, who has seen Sherrick's brass plate on the cellar door of Lady Whittlesea's Chapel; and hence, perhaps, she was a trifle more magniloquent than usual, and entertained us with stories of colonial governors and their ladies, mentioning no persons but those who "had handles to their names," as the phrase is.

Although Sherrick had actually supplied the champagne which Warrington abused to him in confidence, the wine-merchant was not wounded; on the contrary, he roared with laughter at the remark, and some of us smiled who understood the humour of the joke. As for George Warrington, he scarce knew more about the town than the ladies opposite to him; who, yet more innocent than George, thought the champagne very good. Mrs. Sherrick was silent during the meal, looking constantly up at her husband, as if alarmed and always in the habit of appealing to that gentleman, who gave her, as I thought, knowing glances and savage winks, which made me augur that he bullied her at home. Miss Sherrick was exceedingly handsome: she kept the fringed curtains of her eyes constantly down; but when she lifted them up towards Clive, who was very attentive to her (the rogue never sees a handsome woman but to this day he continues the same practice)— when she looked up and smiled, she was indeed a beautiful young creature to behold — with her pale forehead, her thick arched eyebrows, her rounded cheeks, and her full lips slightly shaded — how shall I mention the word? — slightly pencilled, after the manner of the lips of the French governess, Mademoiselle Lenoir.

Percy Sibwright engaged Miss Mackenzie with his usual grace and affability. Mrs. Mackenzie did her very utmost to be gracious, but it was evident the party was not altogether to her liking. Poor Percy, about whose means and expectations she had in the most natural way in the world asked information from me, was not perhaps a very eligible admirer for darling Rosey. She knew not that Percy can no more help gallantry than the sun can help shining. As soon as Rosey had done eating up her pineapple, artlessly confessing (to Percy Sibwright's inquiries) that she preferred it to the rasps and hinnyblobs in her grandmamma's garden, "Now, dearest Rosey," cries Mrs. Mack, "now, a little song. You promised Mr. Pendennis a little song." Honeyman whisks open the piano in a moment. The widow takes off her cleaned gloves (Mrs. Sherrick's were new, and of the best Paris make), and little Rosey sings No. 1, followed by No. 2, with very great applause. Mother and daughter entwine as they quit the piano. "Brava! brava!" says Percy Sibwright. Does Mr. Clive Newcome say nothing? His back is turned to the piano, and he is looking with all his might into the eyes of Miss Sherrick.

Percy sings a Spanish seguidilla, or a German lied, or a French romance, or a Neapolitan canzonet, which, I am bound to say, excites very little attention. Mrs. Ridley is sending in coffee at this juncture, of which Mrs. Sherrick partakes, with lots of sugar, as she has partaken of numberless things before. Chicken, plovers' eggs, prawns, aspics, jellies, creams, grapes, and what-not. Mr. Honeyman advances, and with deep respect asks if Mrs. Sherrick and Miss Sherrick will not be persuaded to sing? She rises and bows, and again takes off the French gloves, and shows the large white hands glittering with rings, and, summoning Emily her daughter, they go to the piano.

"Can she sing," whispers Mrs. Mackenzie, "can she sing after eating so much?" Can she sing, indeed! Oh, you poor

ignorant Mrs. Mackenzie! Why, when you were in the West Indies, if you ever read the English newspapers, you must have read of the fame of Miss Folthorpe. Mrs. Sherrick is no other than the famous artist, who, after three years of brilliant triumphs at the Scala, the Pergola, the San Carlo, the opera in England, forsook her profession, rejected a hundred suitors, and married Sherrick, who was Mr. Cox's lawyer, who failed, as everybody knows, as manager of Drury Lane. Sherrick, like a man of spirit, would not allow his wife to sing in public after his marriage; but in private society, of course, she is welcome to perform: and now with her daughter, who possesses a noble contralto voice, she takes her place royally at the piano, and the two sing so magnificently that everybody in the room, with one single exception, is charmed and delighted; and that little Miss Cann herself creeps up the stairs, and stands with Mrs. Ridley at the door to listen to the music.

Miss Sherrick looks doubly handsome as she sings. Clive Newcome is in a rapture; so is good-natured Miss Rosey, whose little heart beats with pleasure, and who says quite unaffectedly to Miss Sherrick, with delight and gratitude beaming from her blue eyes, "Why did you ask me to sing, when you sing so wonderfully, so beautifully, yourself? Do not leave the piano, please — do sing again!" And she puts out a kind little hand towards the superior artist, and, blushing, leads her back to the instrument. "I'm sure me and Emily will sing for you as much as you like, dear," says Mrs. Sherrick, nodding to Rosey good-naturedly. Mrs. Mackenzie, who has been biting her lips and drumming the time on a side-table, forgets at last the pain of being vanquished in admiration of the conquerors. "It was cruel of you not to tell us, Mr. Honeyman," she says, "of the — of the treat you had in store for us. I had no idea we were going to meet professional people; Mrs. Sherrick's singing is indeed beautiful."

"If you come up to our place in the Regent's Park, Mr. Newcome," Mr. Sherrick says, "Mrs. S. and Emily will give you as many songs as you like. How do you like the house in Fitzroy Square? Anything wanting doing there? I'm a good landlord to a good tenant. Don't care what I spend on my houses. Lose by 'em sometimes. Name a day when you'll come to us; and I'll ask some good fellows to meet you. Your father and Mr. Binnie came once. That was when you were a young chap. They didn't have a bad evening, I believe. You just come and try us — I can give you as good a glass of wine as most, I think," and he smiles, perhaps thinking of the champagne which Mr. Warrington had slighted. "I've ad the close carriage for my wife this evening," he continues, looking out of window at a very handsome brougham which has just drawn up there. "That little pair of horses steps prettily together, don't they? Fond of horses? I know you are. See you in the Park; and going by our house sometimes. The Colonel sits a horse uncommonly well: so do you, Mr. Newcome. I've often said, 'Why don't they get off their horses and say, Sherrick, we're come for a bit of lunch and a glass of Sherry?' Name a day, sir. Mr. P., will you be in it?"

Clive Newcome named a day, and told his father of the circumstance in the evening. The Colonel looked grave. "There was something which I did not quite like about Mr. Sherrick," said that acute observer of human nature. "It was easy to see that the man is not quite a gentleman. I don't care what a man's trade is, Clive. Indeed, who are we, to give ourselves airs upon that subject? But when I am gone, my boy, and there is nobody near you who knows the world as I do, you may fall into designing hands, and rogues may lead you into mischief: keep a sharp look-out, Clive. Mr. Pendennis, here, knows that there are designing fellows abroad" (and the dear old gentleman gives a very knowing nod as he speaks). "When I am gone, keep the lad from harm's way, Pendennis. Meanwhile Mr. Sherrick has been a very good and obliging landlord; and a man who sells wine may certainly give a friend a bottle. I am glad you had a pleasant evening, boys. Ladies, I hope you have had a pleasant afternoon. Miss Rosey, you are come back to make tea for the old gentlemen? James begins to get about briskly now. He walked to Hanover Square, Mrs. Mackenzie, without hurting his ankle in the least."

"I am almost sorry that he is getting well," says Mrs. Mackenzie sincerely. "He won't want us when he is quite cured."

"Indeed, my dear creature!" cries the Colonel, taking her pretty hand and kissing it; "he will want you, and he shall want you. James no more knows the world than Miss Rosey here; and if I had not been with him, would have been perfectly unable to take care of himself. When I am gone to India, somebody must stay with him; and — and my boy must have a home to go to," says the kind soldier, his voice dropping. "I had been in hopes that his own relatives would have received him more, but never mind about that," he cried more cheerfully. "Why, I may not be absent a year! I perhaps need not go at all — I am second for promotion. A couple of our old generals may drop any day; and when I get my regiment I come back to stay, to live at home. Meantime, whilst I am gone, my dear lady, you will take care of James; and you will be kind to my boy."

"That I will!" said the widow, radiant with pleasure, and she took one of Clive's hands and pressed it for an instant; and from Clive's father's kind face there beamed out that benediction which always made his countenance appear to me among the most beautiful of human faces.

CHAPTER XXIV

IN WHICH THE NEWCOME BROTHERS ONCE MORE MEET TOGETHER IN UNITY

His narrative, as the judicious reader no doubt is aware, is written maturely and at ease, long after the voyage is over, whereof it recounts the adventures and perils; the winds adverse and favourable; the storms, shoals, shipwrecks, islands, and so forth, which Clive Newcome met in his early journey in life. In such a history events follow each other without necessarily having a connection with one another. One ship crosses another ship, and after a visit from one captain to his comrade, they sail away each on his course. The Clive Newcome meets a vessel which makes signals that she is short of bread and water; and after supplying her, our captain leaves her to see her no more. One or two of the vessels with which we commenced the voyage together, part company in a gale, and founder miserably; others, after being wofully battered in the tempest, make port, or are cast upon surprising islands where all sorts of unlooked-for prosperity awaits the lucky crew. Also, no doubt, the writer of the book, into whose hands Clive Newcome's logs have been put, and who is charged with the duty of making two octavo volumes out of his friend's story, dresses up the narrative in his own way; utters his own remarks in place of Newcome's; makes fanciful descriptions of individuals and incidents with which he never could have been personally acquainted; and commits blunders, which the critics will discover. A great number of the descriptions in Cook's Voyages, for instance, were notoriously invented by Dr. Hawkesworth, who "did" the book: so in the present volumes, where dialogues are written down, which the reporter could by no possibility have heard, and where motives are detected which the persons actuated by them certainly never confided to the writer, the public must once for all be warned that the author's individual fancy very likely supplies much of the narrative; and that he forms it as best he may, out of stray papers, conversations reported to him, and his knowledge, right or wrong, of the characters of the persons engaged. And, as is the case with the most orthodox histories, the writer's own guesses or conjectures are printed in exactly the same type as the most ascertained patent facts. I fancy, for my part, that the speeches attributed to Clive, the Colonel, and the rest, are as authentic as the orations in Sallust or Livy, and only implore the truth-loving public to believe that incidents here told, and which passed very probably without witnesses, were either confided to me subsequently as compiler of this biography, or are of such a nature that they must have happened from what we know happened after. For example, when you read such words as QVE ROMANVS on a battered Roman stone, your profound antiquarian knowledge enables you to assert that SENATVS POPVLVS was also inscribed there at some time or other. You take a mutilated statue of Mars, Bacchus, Apollo, or Virorum, and you pop him on a wanting hand, an absent foot, or a nose which time or barbarians have defaced. You tell your tales as you can, and state the facts as you think they must have been. In this manner, Mr. James (historiographer to Her Majesty), Titus Livius, Professor Alison, Robinson Crusoe, and all historians proceeded. Blunders there must be in the best of these narratives, and more asserted than they can possibly know or vouch for.

To recur to our own affairs, and the subject at present in hand, I am obliged here to supply from conjecture a few points of the history, which I could not know from actual experience or hearsay. Clive, let us say, is Romanus, and we must add Senatus Populusque to his inscription. After Mrs. Mackenzie and her pretty daughter had been for a few months in London, which they did not think of quitting, although Mr. Binnie's wounded little leg was now as well and as brisk as ever it had been, a redintegration of love began to take place between the Colonel and his relatives in Park Lane. How should we know that there had ever been a quarrel, or at any rate a coolness? Thomas Newcome was not a man to talk at length of any such matter; though a word or two occasionally dropped in conversation by the simple gentleman might lead persons who chose to interest themselves about his family affairs to form their own opinions concerning them. After that visit of the Colonel and his son to Newcome, Ethel was constantly away with her grandmother. The Colonel went to see his pretty little favourite at Brighton, and once, twice, thrice, Lady Kew's door was denied to him. The knocker of that door could not be more fierce than the old lady's countenance, when Newcome met her in her chariot driving on the cliff. Once, forming the loveliest of a charming Amazonian squadron, led by Mr. Whiskin, the riding-master, when the Colonel encountered his pretty Ethel, she greeted him affectionately, it is true; there was still the sweet look of candour and love in her eyes; but when he rode up to her she looked so constrained, when he talked about Clive, so reserved, when he left her, so sad, that he could not but feel pain and commiseration. Back he went to London, having in a week only caught this single glance of his

darling.

This event occurred while Clive was painting his picture of the “Battle of Assaye” before mentioned, during the struggles incident on which composition he was not thinking much about Miss Ethel, or his papa, or any other subject but his great work. Whilst Assaye was still in progress, Thomas Newcome must have had an explanation with his sister-in-law, Lady Anne, to whom he frankly owned the hopes which he had entertained for Clive, and who must as frankly have told the Colonel that Ethel’s family had very different views for that young lady to those which the simple Colonel had formed. A generous early attachment, the Colonel thought, is the safeguard of a young man. To love a noble girl; to wait a while and struggle, and haply do some little achievement in order to win her; the best task to which his boy could set himself. If two young people so loving each other were to marry on rather narrow means, what then? A happy home was better than the finest house in Mayfair; a generous young fellow, such as, please God, his son was — loyal, upright, and a gentleman — might pretend surely to his kinswoman’s hand without derogation; and the affection he bore Ethel himself was so great, and the sweet regard with which she returned it, that the simple father thought his kindly project was favoured by Heaven, and prayed for its fulfilment, and pleased himself to think, when his campaigns were over, and his sword hung on the wall, what a beloved daughter he might have to soothe and cheer his old age. With such a wife for his son, and child for himself, he thought the happiness of his last years might repay him for friendless boyhood, lonely manhood, and cheerless exile; and he imparted his simple scheme to Ethel’s mother, who no doubt was touched as he told his story; for she always professed regard and respect for him, and in the differences which afterwards occurred in the family, and the quarrels which divided the brothers, still remained faithful to the good Colonel.

But Barnes Newcome, Esquire, was the head of the house, and the governor of his father and all Sir Brian’s affairs; and Barnes Newcome, Esquire, hated his cousin Clive, and spoke of him as a beggarly painter, an impudent snob, an infernal young puppy, and so forth; and Barnes with his usual freedom of language imparted his opinions to his Uncle Hobson at the bank, and Uncle Hobson carried them home to Mrs. Newcome in Bryanstone Square; and Mrs. Newcome took an early opportunity of telling the Colonel her opinion on the subject, and of bewailing that love for aristocracy which she saw actuated some folks; and the Colonel was brought to see that Barnes was his boy’s enemy, and words very likely passed between them, for Thomas Newcome took a new banker at this time, and, as Clive informed me, was in very great dudgeon because Hobson Brothers wrote to him to say that he had overdrawn his account. “I am sure there is some screw loose,” the sagacious youth remarked to me; “and the Colonel and the people in Park Lane are at variance, because he goes there very little now; and he promised to go to Court when Ethel was presented, and he didn’t go.”

Some months after the arrival of Mr. Binnie’s niece and sister in Fitzroy Square, the fraternal quarrel between the Newcomes must have come to an end — for that time at least — and was followed by a rather ostentatious reconciliation. And pretty little Rosey Mackenzie was the innocent and unconscious cause of this amiable change in the minds of the three brethren, as I gathered from a little conversation with Mrs. Newcome, who did me the honour to invite me to her table. As she had not vouchsafed this hospitality to me for a couple of years previously, and perfectly stifled me with affability when we met — as her invitation came quite at the end of the season, when almost everybody was out of town, and a dinner to a man is no compliment — I was at first for declining this invitation, and spoke of it with great scorn when Mr. Newcome orally delivered it to me at Bays’s Club.

“What,” said I, turning round to an old man of the world, who happened to be in the room at the time, “what do these people mean by asking a fellow to dinner in August, and taking me up after dropping me for two years?”

“My good fellow,” says my friend — it was my kind old Uncle Major Pendennis, indeed — “I have lived long enough about town never to ask myself questions of that sort. In the world people drop you and take you up every day. You know Lady Cheddar by sight? I have known her husband for forty years: I have stayed with them in the country, for weeks at a time. She knows me as well as she knows King Charles at Charing Cross, and a doosid deal better, and yet for a whole season she will drop me — pass me by, as if there was no such person in the world. Well, sir, what do I do? I never see her. I give you my word I am never conscious of her existence; and if I meet her at dinner, I’m no more aware of her than the fellows in the play are of Banquo. What’s the end of it? She comes round — only last Toosday she came round — and said Lord Cheddar wanted me to go down to Wiltshire. I asked after the family (you know Henry Churningham is engaged to Miss Rennet? — a doosid good match for the Cheddars). We shook hands and are as good friends as ever. I don’t suppose she’ll cry when I die, you know,” said the worthy old gentleman with a grin. “Nor shall I go into very deep mourning if anything happens to her. You were quite right to say to Newcome that you did not know whether you were free or not, and

would look at your engagements when you got home, and give him an answer. A fellow of that rank has no right to give himself airs. But they will, sir. Some of those bankers are as high and mighty as the oldest families. They marry noblemen's daughters, by Jove, and think nothing is too good for 'em. But I should go, if I were you, Arthur. I dined there a couple of months ago; and the bankeress said something about you: that you and her nephew were much together, that you were sad wild dogs, I think — something of that sort. 'Gad, ma'am,' says I, 'boys will be boys.' 'And they grow to be men!' says she, nodding her head. Queer little woman, devilish pompous. Dinner confoundedly long, stoopid, scientific."

The old gentleman was on this day inclined to be talkative and confidential, and I set down some more remarks which he made concerning my friends. "Your Indian Colonel," says he, "seems a worthy man." The Major quite forgot having been in India himself, unless he was in company with some very great personage. "He don't seem to know much of the world, and we are not very intimate. Fitzroy Square is a devilish long way off for a fellow to go for a dinner, and entre nous, the dinner is rather queer and the company still more so. It's right for you who are a literary man to see all sorts of people; but I'm different, you know, so Newcome and I are not very thick together. They say he wanted to marry your friend to Lady Anne's daughter, an exceedingly fine girl; one of the prettiest girls come out this season. I hear the young men say so. And that shows how monstrous ignorant of the world Colonel Newcome is. His son could no more get that girl than he could marry one of the royal princesses. Mark my words, they intend Miss Newcome for Lord Kew. Those banker fellows are wild after grand marriages. Kew will sow his wild oats, and they'll marry her to him; or if not to him, to some man of high rank. His father Walham was a weak young man; but his grandmother, old Lady Kew, is a monstrous clever old woman, too severe with her children, one of whom ran away and married a poor devil without a shilling. Nothing could show a more deplorable ignorance of the world than poor Newcome supposing his son could make such a match as that with his cousin. Is it true that he is going to make his son an artist? I don't know what the dooce the world is coming to. An artist! By gad, in my time a fellow would as soon have thought of making his son a hairdresser, or a pastrycook, by gad." And the worthy Major gives his nephew two fingers, and trots off to the next club in St. James's Street, of which he is a member.

The virtuous hostess of Bryanstone Square was quite civil and good-humoured when Mr. Pendennis appeared at her house; and my surprise was not inconsiderable when I found the whole party from Saint Pancras there assembled — Mr. Binnie; the Colonel and his son; Mrs. Mackenzie, looking uncommonly handsome and perfectly well-dressed; and Miss Rosey, in pink crape, with pearly shoulders and blushing cheeks, and beautiful fair ringlets — as fresh and comely a sight as it was possible to witness. Scarcely had we made our bows, and shaken our hands, and imparted our observations about the fineness of the weather, when, behold! as we look from the drawing-room windows into the cheerful square of Bryanstone, a great family coach arrives, driven by a family coachman in a family wig, and we recognise Lady Anne Newcome's carriage, and see her ladyship, her mother, her daughter, and her husband, Sir Brian, descend from the vehicle. "It is quite a family party," whispers the happy Mrs. Newcome to the happy writer conversing with her in the niche of the window. "Knowing your intimacy with our brother, Colonel Newcome, we thought it would please him to meet you here. Will you be so kind as to take Miss Newcome to dinner?"

Everybody was bent upon being happy and gracious. It was "My dear brother, how do you do?" from Sir Brian. "My dear Colonel, how glad we are to see you! how well you look!" from Lady Anne. Miss Newcome ran up to him with both hands out, and put her beautiful face so close to his that I thought, upon my conscience, she was going to kiss him. And Lady Kew, advancing in the frankest manner, with a smile, I must own, rather awful, playing round her many wrinkles, round her ladyship's hooked nose, and displaying her ladyship's teeth (a new and exceedingly handsome set), held out her hand to Colonel Newcome, and said briskly, "Colonel, it is an age since we met." She turns to Clive with equal graciousness and good-humour, and says, "Mr. Clive, let me shake hands with you; I have heard all sorts of good of you, that you have been painting the most beautiful things, that you are going to be quite famous." Nothing can exceed the grace and kindness of Lady Anne Newcome towards Mrs. Mackenzie: the pretty widow blushes with pleasure at this greeting; and now Lady Anne must be introduced to Mrs. Mackenzie's charming daughter, and whispers in the delighted mother's ear, "She is lovely!" Rosey comes up looking rosy indeed, and executes a pretty curtsey with a great deal of blushing grace.

Ethel has been so happy to see her dear uncle, that as yet she has had no eyes for any one else, until Clive advancing, those bright eyes become brighter still with surprise and pleasure as she beholds him. For being absent with his family in Italy now, and not likely to see this biography for many many months, I may say that he is a much handsomer fellow than our designer has represented; and if that wayward artist should take this very scene for the purpose of illustration, he is

requested to bear in mind that the hero of this story will wish to have justice done to his person. There exists in Mr. Newcome's possession a charming little pencil-drawing of Clive at this age, and which Colonel Newcome took with him when he went — whither he is about to go in a very few pages — and brought back with him to this country. A florid apparel becomes some men, as simple raiment suits others, and Clive in his youth was of the ornamental class of mankind — a customer to tailors, a wearer of handsome rings, shirt-studs, mustachios, long hair, and the like; nor could he help, in his costume or his nature, being picturesque and generous and splendid. He was always greatly delighted with that Scotch man-at-arms in Quentin Durward, who twists off an inch or two of his gold chain to treat a friend and pay for a bottle. He would give a comrade a ring or a fine jewelled pin, if he had no money. Silver dressing-cases and brocade morning-gowns were in him a sort of propriety at this season of his youth. It was a pleasure to persons of colder temperament to sun themselves in the warmth of his bright looks and generous humour. His laughter cheered one like wine. I do not know that he was very witty; but he was pleasant. He was prone to blush: the history of a generous trait moistened his eyes instantly. He was instinctively fond of children, and of the other sex from one year old to eighty. Coming from the Derby once — a merry party — and stopped on the road from Epsom in a lock of carriages, during which the people in the carriage ahead saluted us with many vituperative epithets, and seized the heads of our leaders — Clive in a twinkling jumped off the box, and the next minute we saw him engaged with a half-dozen of the enemy: his hat gone, his fair hair flying off his face, his blue eyes flashing with fire, his lips and nostrils quivering with wrath, his right and left hand hitting out, *que c'étoit un plaisir voir*. His father sat back in the carriage, looking with delight and wonder — indeed it was a great sight. Policeman X separated the warriors. Clive ascended the box again with a dreadful wound in the coat, which was gashed from the waist to the shoulder. I hardly ever saw the elder Newcome in such a state of triumph. The postboys quite stared at the gratuity he gave them, and wished they might drive his lordship to the Oaks.

All the time we have been making this sketch Ethel is standing, looking at Clive; and the blushing youth casts down his eyes before hers. Her face assumes a look of arch humour. She passes a slim hand over the prettiest lips and a chin with the most lovely of dimples, thereby indicating her admiration of Mr. Clive's mustachios and imperial. They are of a warm yellowish chestnut colour, and have not yet known the razor. He wears a low cravat; a shirt-front of the finest lawn, with ruby buttons. His hair, of a lighter colour, waves almost to his "manly shoulders broad." "Upon my word; my dear Colonel," says Lady Kew, after looking at him, and nodding her head shrewdly, "I think we were right."

"No doubt right in everything your ladyship does, but in what particularly?" asks the Colonel.

"Right to keep him out of the way. Ethel has been disposed of these ten years. Did not Anne tell you? How foolish of her! But all mothers like to have young men dying for their daughters. Your son is really the handsomest boy in London. Who is that conceited-looking young man in the window? Mr. Pen — what? has your son really been very wicked? I was told he was a sad scapegrace."

"I never knew him do, and I don't believe he ever thought, anything that was untrue, or unkind, or ungenerous," says the Colonel. "If any one has belied my boy to you, and I think I know who his enemy has been —"

"The young lady is very pretty," remarks Lady Kew, stopping the Colonel's further outbreak. "How very young her mother looks! Ethel, my dear! Colonel Newcome must present us to Mrs. Mackenzie and Miss Mackenzie;" and Ethel, giving a nod to Clive, with whom she has talked for a minute or two, again puts her hand in her uncle's, and walks towards Mrs. Mackenzie and her daughter.

And now let the artist, if he has succeeded in drawing Clive to his liking, cut a fresh pencil, and give us a likeness of Ethel. She is seventeen years old; rather taller than the majority of women; of a countenance somewhat grave and haughty, but on occasion brightening with humour or beaming with kindliness and affection. Too quick to detect affectation or insincerity in others, too impatient of dulness or pomposity, she is more sarcastic now than she became when after years of suffering had softened her nature. Truth looks out of her bright eyes, and rises up armed, and flashes scorn or denial, perhaps too readily, when she encounters flattery, or meanness, or imposture. After her first appearance in the world, if the truth must be told, this young lady was popular neither with many men, nor with most women. The innocent dancing youth who pressed round her, attracted by her beauty, were rather afraid, after a while, of engaging her. This one felt dimly that she despised him; another, that his simpering commonplaces (delights of how many well-bred maidens!) only occasioned Miss Newcome's laughter. Young Lord Croesus, whom all maidens and matrons were eager to secure, was astounded to find that he was utterly indifferent to her, and that she would refuse him twice or thrice in an evening, and dance as many times with poor Tom Spring, who was his father's ninth son, and only at home till he could get a ship and go

to sea again. The young women were frightened at her sarcasm. She seemed to know what fadaises they whispered to their partners as they paused in the waltzes; and Fanny, who was luring Lord Croesus towards her with her blue eyes, dropped them guiltily to the floor when Ethel's turned towards her; and Cecilia sang more out of time than usual; and Clara, who was holding Freddy, and Charley, and Tommy round her enchanted by her bright conversation and witty mischief, became dumb and disturbed when Ethel passed her with her cold face; and old Lady Hookham, who was playing off her little Minnie now at young Jack Gorget of the Guards, now at the eager and simple Bob Bateson of the Coldstreams, would slink off when Ethel made her appearance on the ground, whose presence seemed to frighten away the fish and the angler. No wonder that the other Mayfair nymphs were afraid of this severe Diana, whose looks were so cold and whose arrows were so keen.

But those who had no cause to heed Diana's shot or coldness might admire her beauty; nor could the famous Parisian marble, which Clive said she resembled, be more perfect in form than this young lady. Her hair and eyebrows were jet black (these latter may have been too thick according to some physiognomists, giving rather a stern expression to the eyes, and hence causing those guilty ones to tremble who came under her lash), but her complexion was as dazzlingly fair and her cheeks as red as Miss Rosey's own, who had a right to those beauties, being a blonde by nature. In Miss Ethel's black hair there was a slight natural ripple, as when a fresh breeze blows over the melan hudor — a ripple such as Roman ladies nineteen hundred years ago, and our own beauties a short time since, endeavoured to imitate by art, paper, and I believe crumpling-irons. Her eyes were grey; her mouth rather large; her teeth as regular and bright as Lady Kew's own; her voice low and sweet; and her smile, when it lighted up her face and eyes, as beautiful as spring sunshine; also they could lighten and flash often, and sometimes, though rarely, rain. As for her figure — but as this tall slender form is concealed in a simple white muslin robe (of the sort which I believe is called *demi-toilette*), in which her fair arms are enveloped, and which is confined at her slim waist by an azure ribbon, and descends to her feet — let us make a respectful bow to that fair image of Youth, Health, and Modesty, and fancy it as pretty as we will. Miss Ethel made a very stately curtsy to Mrs. Mackenzie, surveying that widow calmly, so that the elder lady looked up and fluttered; but towards Rosey she held out her hand, and smiled with the utmost kindness, and the smile was returned by the other; and the blushes with which Miss Mackenzie was always ready at this time, became her very much. As for Mrs. Mackenzie — the very largest curve that shall not be a caricature, and actually disfigure the widow's countenance — a smile so wide and steady, so exceedingly rident, indeed, as almost to be ridiculous, may be drawn upon her buxom face, if the artist chooses to attempt it as it appeared during the whole of this summer evening, before dinner came (when people ordinarily look very grave), when she was introduced to the company: when she was made known to our friends Julia and Maria — the darling child, lovely little dears! how like their papa and mamma! — when Sir Brian Newcome gave her his arm downstairs to the dining-room when anybody spoke to her: when John offered her meat, or the gentleman in the white waistcoat, wine; when she accepted or when she refused these refreshments; when Mr. Newcome told her a dreadfully stupid story; when the Colonel called cheerily from his end of the table, "My dear Mrs. Mackenzie, you don't take any wine today; may I not have the honour of drinking a glass of champagne with you?" when the new boy from the country upset some sauce upon her shoulder: when Mrs. Newcome made the sign for departure; and I have no doubt in the drawing-room, when the ladies retired thither. "Mrs. Mack is perfectly awful," Clive told me afterwards, "since that dinner in Bryanstone Square. Lady Kew and Lady Anne are never out of her mouth; she has had white muslin dresses made just like Ethel's for herself and her daughter. She has bought a Peerage, and knows the pedigree of the whole Kew family. She won't go out in a cab now without the boy on the box; and in the plate for the cards which she has established in the drawing-room, you know, Lady Kew's pasteboard always will come up to the top, though I poke it down whenever I go into the room. As for poor Lady Trotter, the governess of St. Kitt's, you know, and the Bishop of Tobago, they are quite bowled out: Mrs. Mack has not mentioned them for a week."

During the dinner it seemed to me that the lovely young lady by whom I sate cast many glances towards Mrs. Mackenzie, which did not betoken particular pleasure. Miss Ethel asked me several questions regarding Clive, and also respecting Miss Mackenzie: perhaps her questions were rather downright and imperious, and she patronised me in a manner that would not have given all gentlemen pleasure. I was Clive's friend, his schoolfellow? had I seen him a great deal? know him very well — very well indeed? Was it true that he had been very thoughtless? very wild? Who told her so? That was not her question (with a blush). It was not true, and I ought to know? He was not spoiled? He was very good-natured, generous, told the truth? He loved his profession very much, and had great talent? Indeed she was very glad. Why

do they sneer at his profession? It seemed to her quite as good as her father's and brother's. Were artists not very dissipated? Not more so, nor often so much as other young men? Was Mr. Binnie rich, and was he going to leave all his money to his niece? How long have you known them? Is Miss Mackenzie as good-natured as she looks? Not very clever, I suppose. Mrs. Mackenzie looks very — No, thank you, no more. Grandmamma (she is very deaf, and cannot hear) scolded me for reading the book you wrote, and took the book away. I afterwards got it, and read it all. I don't think there was any harm in it. Why do you give such bad characters of women? Don't you know any good ones? Yes, two as good as any in the world. They are unselfish: they are pious; they are always doing good; they live in the country? Why don't you put them into a book? Why don't you put my uncle into a book? He is so good, that nobody could make him good enough. Before I came out, I heard a young lady — (Lady Clavering's daughter, Miss Amory) sing a song of yours. I have never spoken to an author before. I saw Mr. Lyon at Lady Popinjoy's, and heard him speak. He said it was very hot, and he looked so, I am sure. Who is the greatest author now alive? You will tell me when you come upstairs after dinner; — and the young lady sails away, following the matrons, who rise and ascend to the drawing-room. Miss Newcome has been watching the behaviour of the author by whom she sate; curious to know what such a person's habits are; whether he speaks and acts like other people; and in what respect authors are different from persons "in society."

When we had sufficiently enjoyed claret and politics below-stairs, the gentlemen went to the drawing-room to partake of coffee and the ladies' delightful conversation. We had heard previously the tinkling of the piano above, and the well-known sound of a couple of Miss Rosey's five songs. The two young ladies were engaged over an album at a side-table, when the males of the party arrived. The book contained a number of Clive's drawings made in the time of his very early youth for the amusement of his little cousins. Miss Ethel seemed to be very much pleased with these performances, which Miss Mackenzie likewise examined with great good-nature and satisfaction. So she did the views of Rome, Naples, Marble Hill in the county of Sussex, etc., in the same collection: so she did the Berlin cockatoo and spaniel which Mrs. Newcome was working in idle moments: so she did the "Books of Beauty," "Flowers of Loveliness," and so forth. She thought the prints very sweet and pretty: she thought the poetry very pretty and sweet. Which did she like best, Mr. Niminy's "Lines to a bunch of violets," or Miss Piminy's "Stanzas to a wreath of roses"? Miss Mackenzie was quite puzzled to say which of these masterpieces she preferred; she found them alike so pretty. She appealed, as in most cases, to mamma. "How, my darling love, can I pretend to know?" mamma says. "I have been a soldier's wife, battling about the world. I have not had your advantages. I had no drawing-masters, nor music-masters as you have. You, dearest child, must instruct me in these things." This poses Rosey: who prefers to have her opinions dealt out to her like her frocks, bonnets, handkerchiefs, her shoes and gloves, and the order thereof; the lumps of sugar for her tea, the proper quantity of raspberry jam for breakfast; who trusts for all supplies corporeal and spiritual to her mother. For her own part, Rosey is pleased with everything in nature. Does she love music? Oh, yes. Bellini and Donizetti? Oh, yes. Dancing? They had no dancing at grandmamma's, but she adores dancing, and Mr. Clive dances very well indeed. (A smile from Miss Ethel at this admission.) Does she like the country? Oh, she is so happy in the country! London? London is delightful, and so is the seaside. She does not really know which she likes best, London or the country, for mamma is not near her to decide, being engaged listening to Sir Brian, who is laying down the law to her, and smiling, smiling with all her might. In fact, Mr. Newcome says to Mr. Pendennis in his droll, humorous way, "That woman grins like a Cheshire cat." Who was the naturalist who first discovered that peculiarity of the cats in Cheshire?

In regard to Miss Mackenzie's opinions, then, it is not easy to discover that they are decided, or profound, or original; but it seems pretty clear that she has a good temper, and a happy contented disposition. And the smile which her pretty countenance wears shows off to great advantage the two dimples on her pink cheeks. Her teeth are even and white, her hair of a beautiful colour, and no snow can be whiter than her fair round neck and polished shoulders. She talks very kindly and good-naturedly with Julia and Maria (Mrs. Hobson's precious ones) until she is bewildered by the statements which those young ladies make regarding astronomy, botany, and chemistry, all of which they are studying. "My dears, I don't know a single word about any of these abstruse subjects: I wish I did," she says. And Ethel Newcome laughs. She too is ignorant upon all these subjects. "I am glad there is some one else," says Rosey, with naivete, "who is as ignorant as I am." And the younger children, with a solemn air, say they will ask mamma leave to teach her. So everybody, somehow, great or small, seems to protect her; and the humble, simple, gentle little thing wins a certain degree of goodwill from the world, which is touched by her humility and her pretty sweet looks. The servants in Fitzroy Square waited upon her much more kindly than upon her smiling bustling mother. Uncle James is especially fond of his little Rosey. Her presence in his study never discomposes him; whereas his sister fatigues him with the exceeding activity of her gratitude, and her energy in pleasing. As I was going away, I thought I heard Sir Brian Newcome say, "It" (but what "it" was, of course I cannot conjecture)—"it will do very well. The mother seems a superior woman."

CHAPTER XXV

IS PASSED IN A PUBLIC-HOUSE

I had no more conversation with Miss Newcome that night, who had forgotten her curiosity about the habits of authors. When she had ended her talk with Miss Mackenzie, she devoted the rest of the evening to her uncle, Colonel Newcome; and concluded by saying, "And now you will come and ride with me tomorrow, uncle, won't you?" which the Colonel faithfully promised to do. And she shook hands with Clive very kindly: and with Rosey very frankly, but as I thought with rather a patronising air: and she made a very stately bow to Mrs. Mackenzie, and so departed with her father and mother. Lady Kew had gone away earlier. Mrs. Mackenzie informed us afterwards that the Countess had gone to sleep after her dinner. If it was at Mrs. Mack's story about the Governor's ball at Tobago, and the quarrel for precedence between the Lord Bishop's lady, Mrs. Rotchet, and the Chief Justice's wife, Lady Barwise, I should not be at all surprised.

A handsome fly carried off the ladies to Fitzroy Square, and the two worthy Indian gentlemen in their company; Clive and I walking, with the usual Havannah to light us home. And Clive remarked that he supposed there had been some difference between his father and the bankers: for they had not met for ever so many months before, and the Colonel always had looked very gloomy when his brothers were mentioned. "And I can't help thinking," says the astute youth, "that they fancied I was in love with Ethel (I know the Colonel would have liked me to make up to her), and that may have occasioned the row. Now, I suppose, they think I am engaged to Rosey. What the deuce are they in such a hurry to marry me for?"

Clive's companion remarked, "that marriage was a laudable institution: and an honest attachment an excellent conservator of youthful morals." On which Clive replied, "Why don't you marry yourself?"

This it was justly suggested was no argument, but a merely personal allusion foreign to the question, which was, that marriage was laudable, etc.

Mr. Clive laughed. "Rosey is as good a little creature as can be," he said. "She is never out of temper, though I fancy Mrs. Mackenzie tries her. I don't think she is very wise: but she is uncommonly pretty, and her beauty grows on you. As for Ethel, anything so high and mighty I have never seen since I saw the French giantess. Going to Court, and about to parties every night where a parcel of young fools flatter her, has perfectly spoiled her. By Jove, how handsome she is! How she turns with her long neck, and looks at you from under those black eyebrows! If I painted her hair, I think I should paint it almost blue, and then glaze over with lake. It is blue. And how finely her head is joined on to her shoulders!"— And he waves in the air an imaginary line with his cigar. "She would do for Judith, wouldn't she? Or how grand she would look as Herodias's daughter sweeping down a stair — in a great dress of cloth-of-gold like Paul Veronese — holding a charger before her with white arms, you know — with the muscles accented like that glorious Diana at Paris — a savage smile on her face and a ghastly solemn gory head on the dish. I see the picture, sir, I see the picture!" and he fell to curling his mustachios just like his brave old father.

I could not help laughing at the resemblance, and mentioning it to my friend. He broke, as was his wont, into a fond eulogium of his sire, wished he could be like him — worked himself up into another state of excitement, in which he averred "that if his father wanted him to marry, he would marry that instant. And why not Rosey? She is a dear little thing. Or why not that splendid Miss Sherrick? What ahead! — a regular Titian! I was looking at the difference of their colour at Uncle Honeyman's that day of the dejeuner. The shadows in Rosey's face, sir, are all pearly-tinted. You ought to paint her in milk, sir!" cries the enthusiast. "Have you ever remarked the grey round her eyes, and the sort of purple bloom of her cheek? Rubens could have done the colour: but I don't somehow like to think of a young lady and that sensuous old Peter Paul in company. I look at her like a little wild-flower in a field — like a little child at play, sir. Pretty little tender nursling! If I see her passing in the street, I feel as if I would like some fellow to be rude to her, that I might have the pleasure of knocking him down. She is like a little songbird, sir — a tremulous, fluttering little linnet that you would take into your hand, pavidam quaerentem matrem, and smooth its little plumes, and let it perch on your finger and sing. The Sherrick creates quite a different sentiment — the Sherrick is splendid, stately, sleepy —"

"Stupid," hints Clive's companion.

“Stupid! Why not? Some women ought to be stupid. What you call dulness I call repose. Give me a calm woman, a slow woman — a lazy, majestic woman. Show me a gracious virgin bearing a lily: not a leering giggler frisking a rattle. A lively woman would be the death of me. Look at Mrs. Mack, perpetually nodding, winking, grinning, throwing out signals which you are to be at the trouble to answer! I thought her delightful for three days; I declare I was in love with her — that is, as much as I can be after — but never mind that, I feel I shall never be really in love again. Why shouldn’t the Sherrick be stupid, I say? About great beauty there should always reign a silence. As you look at the great stars, the great ocean, any great scene of nature: you hush, sir. You laugh at a pantomime, but you are still in a temple. When I saw the great Venus of the Louvre, I thought — Wert thou alive, O goddess, thou shouldst never open those lovely lips but to speak lowly, slowly: thou shouldst never descend from that pedestal but to walk stately to some near couch, and assume another attitude of beautiful calm. To be beautiful is enough. If a woman can do that well: who shall demand more from her? You don’t want a rose to sing. And I think wit is out of place where there’s great beauty; as I wouldn’t have a Queen to cut jokes on her throne. I say, Pendennis,” — here broke off the enthusiastic youth — “have you got another cigar? Shall we go into Finch’s, and have a game at billiards? Just one — it’s quite early yet. Or shall we go in the Haunt? It’s Wednesday night, you know, when all the boys go.” We tap at a door in an old, old street in Soho: an old maid with a kind, comical face opens the door, and nods friendly, and says, “How do, sir? ain’t seen you this ever so long. How do, Mr. Noocom?” “Who’s here?” “Most everybody’s here.” We pass by a little snug bar, in which a trim elderly lady is seated by a great fire, on which boils an enormous kettle; while two gentlemen are attacking a cold saddle of mutton and West India pickles: hard by Mrs. Nokes the landlady’s elbow — with mutual bows — we recognise Hickson, the sculptor, and Morgan, the intrepid Irish chieftain, chief of the reporters of the Morning Press newspaper. We pass through a passage into a back room, and are received with a roar of welcome from a crowd of men, almost invisible in the smoke.

“I am right glad to see thee, boy!” cries a cheery voice (that will never troll a chorus more). “We spake anon of thy misfortune, gentle youth! and that thy warriors of Assaye have charged the Academy in vain. Mayhap thou frightenedst the courtly school with barbarous visages of grisly war. — Pendennis, thou dost wear a thirsty look! Resplendent swell! untwine thy choker white, and I will either stand a glass of grog, or thou shalt pay the like for me, my lad, and tell us of the fashionable world.” Thus spake the brave old Tom Sarjent — also one of the Press, one of the old boys: a good old scholar with a good old library of books, who had taken his seat any time these forty years by the chimney-fire in this old Haunt: where painters, sculptors, men of letters, actors, used to congregate, passing pleasant hours in rough kindly communion, and many a day seeing the sunrise lighting the rosy street ere they parted, and Betsy put the useless lamp out and closed the hospitable gates of the Haunt.

The time is not very long since, though today is so changed. As we think of it, the kind familiar faces rise up, and we hear the pleasant voices and singing. There are they met, the honest hearty companions. In the days when the Haunt was a haunt, stage-coaches were not yet quite over. Casinos were not invented: clubs were rather rare luxuries: there were sanded floors, triangular sawdust-boxes, pipes, and tavern parlours. Young Smith and Brown, from the Temple, did not go from chambers to dine at the Polyanthus, or the Megatherium, off potage a la Bisque, turbot au gratin, cotelettes a la What-do-you-call-’em, and a pint of St. Emilion; but ordered their beefsteak and pint of port from the “plump head-waiter at the Cock;” did not disdain the pit of the theatre; and for a supper a homely refectation at the tavern. How delightful are the suppers in Charles Lamb to read of even now! — the cards — the punch — the candles to be snuffed — the social oysters — the modest cheer! Whoever snuffs a candle now? What man has a domestic supper whose dinner-hour is eight o’clock? Those little meetings, in the memory of many of us yet, are gone quite away into the past. Five-and-twenty years ago is a hundred years off — so much has our social life changed in those five lustres. James Boswell himself, were he to revisit London, would scarce venture to enter a tavern. He would find scarce a respectable companion to enter its doors with him. It is an institution as extinct as a hackney-coach. Many a grown man who peruses this historic page has never seen such a vehicle, and only heard of rum-punch as a drink which his ancestors used to tipple.

Cheery old Tom Sarjent is surrounded at the Haunt by a dozen of kind boon companions. They toil all day at their avocations of art, or letters, or law, and here meet for a harmless night’s recreation and converse. They talk of literature, or politics, or pictures, or plays; socially banter one another over their cheap cups: sing brave old songs sometimes when they are especially jolly kindly ballads in praise of love and wine; famous maritime ditties in honour of Old England. I fancy I hear Jack Brent’s noble voice rolling out the sad, generous refrain of “The Deserter,” “Then for that reason and for a season we will be merry before we go,” or Michael Percy’s clear tenor carolling the Irish chorus of “What’s that to any one, whether

or no!" or Mark Wilder shouting his bottle-song of "Garryowen na gloria." These songs were regarded with affection by the brave old frequenters of the Haunt. A gentleman's property in a song was considered sacred. It was respectfully asked for: it was heard with the more pleasure for being old. Honest Tom Sarjent! how the times have changed since we saw thee! I believe the present chief of the reporters of the newspaper (which responsible office Tom filled) goes to Parliament in his brougham, and dines with the Ministers of the Crown.

Around Tom are seated grave Royal Academicians, rising gay Associates; writers of other journals besides the Pall Mall Gazette; a barrister maybe, whose name will be famous some day: a hewer of marble perhaps: a surgeon whose patients have not come yet; and one or two men about town who like this queer assembly better than haunts much more splendid. Captain Shandon has been here, and his jokes are preserved in the tradition of the place. Owlet, the philosopher, came once and tried, as his wont is, to lecture; but his metaphysics were beaten down by a storm of banter. Slatter, who gave himself such airs because he wrote in the ——— Review, tried to air himself at the Haunt, but was choked by the smoke, and silenced by the unanimous pooh-poohing of the assembly. Dick Walker, who rebelled secretly at Sarjent's authority, once thought to give himself consequence by bringing a young lord from the Blue Posts, but he was so unmercifully "chaffed" by Tom, that even the young lord laughed at him. His lordship has been heard to say he had been taken to a monsus queeah place, queeah set of folks, in a tap somewhere, though he went away quite delighted with Tom's affability, but he never came again. He could not find the place, probably. You might pass the Haunt in the daytime, and not know it in the least. "I believe," said Charley Ormond (A.R.A. he was then)—"I believe in the day there's no such place at all: and when Betsy turns the gas off at the door-lamp as we go away, the whole thing vanishes: the door, the house, the bar, the Haunt, Betsy, the beer-boy, Mrs. Nokes and all." It has vanished: it is to be found no more: neither by night nor by day — unless the ghosts of good fellows still haunt it.

As the genial talk and glass go round, and after Clive and his friend have modestly answered the various queries put to them by good old Tom Sarjent, the acknowledged Praeses of the assembly and Sachem of this venerable wigwam, the door opens and another well-known figure is recognised with shouts as it emerges through the smoke. "Bayham, all hail!" says Tom. "Frederick, I am right glad to see thee!"

Bayham says he is disturbed in spirit, and calls for a pint of beer to console him.

"Hast thou flown far, thou restless bird of night?" asks Father Tom, who loves speaking in blank verses.

"I have come from Cursitor Street," says Bayham, in a low groan. "I have just been to see a poor devil in quod there. Is that you, Pendennis? You know the man — Charles Honeyman."

"What!" cries Clive, starting up.

"O my prophetic soul, my uncle!" growls Bayham. "I did not see the young one; but 'tis true."

The reader is aware that more than the three years have elapsed, of which time the preceding pages contain the harmless chronicle; and while Thomas Newcome's leave has been running out and Clive's mustachios growing, the fate of other persons connected with our story has also had its development, and their fortune has experienced its natural progress, its increase or decay. Our tale, such as it has hitherto been arranged, has passed leisurely in scenes wherein the present tense is perforce adopted; the writer acting as chorus to the drama, and occasionally explaining, by hints or more open statements, what has occurred during the intervals of the acts; and how it happens that the performers are in such or such a posture. In the modern theatre, as the play-going critic knows, the explanatory personage is usually of quite a third-rate order. He is the two walking-gentlemen friends of Sir Harry Courtly, who welcome the young baronet to London, and discourse about the niggardliness of Harry's old uncle, the Nabob; and the depth of Courtly's passion for Lady Annabel the premiere amoureuse. He is the confidant in white linen to the heroine in white satin. He is "Tom, you rascal," the valet or tiger, more or less impudent and acute — that well-known menial in top-boots and a livery frock with red cuffs and collar, whom Sir Harry always retains in his service, addresses with scurrilous familiarity, and pays so irregularly: or he is Lucetta, Lady Annabel's waiting-maid, who carries the billets-doux and peeps into them; knows all about the family affairs; pops the lover under the sofa; and sings a comic song between the scenes. Our business now is to enter into Charles Honeyman's privacy, to peer into the secrets of that reverend gentleman, and to tell what has happened to him during the past months, in which he has made fitful though graceful appearances on our scene.

While his nephew's whiskers have been budding, and his brother-in-law has been spending his money and leave, Mr. Honeyman's hopes have been withering, his sermons growing stale, his once blooming popularity drooping and running to

seed. Many causes have contributed to bring him to his present melancholy strait. When you go to Lady Whittlesea's Chapel now, it is by no means crowded. Gaps are in the pews: there is not the least difficulty in getting a snug place near the pulpit, whence the preacher can look over his pocket-handkerchief and see Lord Dozeley no more: his lordship has long gone to sleep elsewhere and a host of the fashionable faithful have migrated too. The incumbent can no more cast his fine eyes upon the French bonnets of the female aristocracy and see some of the loveliest faces in Mayfair regarding him with expressions of admiration. Actual dowdy tradesmen of the neighbourhood are seated with their families in the aisles: Ridley and his wife and son have one of the very best seats. To be sure Ridley looks like a nobleman, with his large waistcoat, bald head, and gilt book: J. J. has a fine head; but Mrs. Ridley! cook and housekeeper is written on her round face. The music is by no means of its former good quality. That rebellious and ill-conditioned basso Bellew has seceded, and seduced the four best singing boys, who now perform glees at the Cave of Harmony. Honeyman has a right to speak of persecution, and to compare himself to a hermit in so far that he preaches in a desert. Once, like another hermit, St. Hierome, he used to be visited by lions. None such come to him now. Such lions as frequent the clergy are gone off to lick the feet of other ecclesiastics. They are weary of poor Honeyman's old sermons.

Rivals have sprung up in the course of these three years — have sprung up round about Honeyman and carried his flock into their folds. We know how such simple animals will leap one after another, and that it is the sheepish way. Perhaps a new pastor has come to the church of St. Jacob's hard by — bold, resolute, bright, clear, a scholar and no pedant: his manly voice is thrilling in their ears, he speaks of life and conduct, of practice as well as faith; and crowds of the most polite and most intelligent, and best informed, and best dressed, and most selfish people in the world come and hear him twice at least. There are so many well-informed and well-dressed etc. etc. people in the world that the succession of them keeps St. Jacob's full for a year or more. Then, it may be, a bawling quack, who has neither knowledge, nor scholarship, nor charity, but who frightens the public with denunciations and rouses them with the energy of his wrath, succeeds in bringing them together for a while till they tire of his din and curses. Meanwhile the good quiet old churches round about ring their accustomed bell: open their Sabbath gates: receive their tranquil congregations and sober priest, who has been busy all the week, at schools and sick-beds, with watchful teaching, gentle counsel, and silent alms.

Though we saw Honeyman but seldom, for his company was not altogether amusing, and his affectation, when one became acquainted with it, very tiresome to witness, Fred Bayham, from his garret at Mrs. Ridley's, kept constant watch over the curate, and told us of his proceedings from time to time. When we heard the melancholy news first announced, of course the intelligence damped the gaiety of Clive and his companion; and F. B., conducted all the affairs of life with great gravity, telling Tom Sarjent that he had news of importance for our private ear, Tom with still more gravity than F. B.'s, said, "Go, my children, you had best discuss this topic in a separate room, apart from the din and fun of a convivial assembly;" and ringing the bell he bade Betsy bring him another glass of rum-and-water, and one for Mr. Desborough, to be charged to him.

We adjourned to another parlour then, where gas was lighted up: and F. B. over a pint of beer narrated poor Honeyman's mishap. "Saving your presence, Clive," said Bayham, "and with every regard for the youthful bloom of your young heart's affections, your uncle Charles Honeyman, sir, is a bad lot. I have known him these twenty years, when I was at his father's as a private tutor. Old Miss Honeyman is one of those cards which we call trumps — so was old Honeyman a trump; but Charles and his sister —"

I stamped on F. B.'s foot under the table. He seemed to have forgotten that he was about to speak of Clive's mother.

"Hem! of your poor mother, I— hem — I may say *vidi tantum*. I scarcely knew her. She married very young: as I was when she left Borhambury. But Charles exhibited his character at a very early age — and it was not a charming one — no, by no means a model of virtue. He always had a genius for running into debt. He borrowed from every one of the pupils — I don't know how he spent it except in hardbake and alycompaine — and even from old Nosey's groom — pardon me, we used to call your grandfather by that playful epithet (boys will be boys, you know) — even from the doctor's groom he took money, and I recollect thrashing Charles Honeyman for that disgraceful action.

"At college, without any particular show, he was always in debt and difficulties. Take warning by him, dear youth! By him and by me, if you like. See me — me, F. Bayham, descended from the ancient kings that long the Tuscan sceptre swayed, dodge down a street to get out of sight of a boot-shop, and my colossal frame tremble if a chap puts his hand on my shoulder, as you did, Pendennis, the other day in the Strand, when I thought a straw might have knocked me down! I have had my errors, Clive. I know 'em. I'll take another pint of beer, if you please. Betsy, has Mrs. Nokes any cold meat in

the bar? and an accustomed pickle? Ha! Give her my compliments, and say F. B. is hungry. I resume my tale. Faults F. B. has, and knows it. Humbug he may have been sometimes; but I'm not such a complete humbug as Honeyman."

Clive did not know how to look at this character of his relative, but Clive's companion burst into a fit of laughter, at which F. B. nodded gravely, and resumed his narrative. "I don't know how much money he has had from your governor, but this I can say, the half of it would make F. B. a happy man. I don't know out of how much the reverend party has nobbled his poor old sister at Brighton. He has mortgaged his chapel to Sherrick, I suppose you know, who is master of it, and could turn him out any day. I don't think Sherrick is a bad fellow. I think he's a good fellow; I have known him do many a good turn to a chap in misfortune. He wants to get into society: what more natural? That was why you were asked to meet him the other day, and why he asked you to dinner. I hope you had a good one. I wish he'd ask me.

"Then Moss has got his bills, and Moss's brother-in-law in Cursitor Street has taken possession of his revered person. He's very welcome. One Jew has the chapel, another Hebrew has the clergyman. It's singular, ain't it? Sherrick might turn Lady Whittlesea into a synagogue and have the Chief Rabbi into the pulpit, where my uncle the Bishop has given out the text.

"The shares of that concern ain't at a premium. I have had immense fun with Sherrick about it. I like the Hebrew, sir. He maddens with rage when F. B. goes and asks him whether any more pews are let overhead. Honeyman begged and borrowed in order to buy out the last man. I remember when the speculation was famous, when all the boxes (I mean the pews) were taken for the season, and you couldn't get a place, come ever so early. Then Honeyman was spoilt, and gave his sermons over and over again. People got sick of seeing the old humbug cry, the old crocodile! Then we tried the musical dodge. F. B. came forward, sir, there. That was a coup: I did it, sir. Bellew wouldn't have sung for any man but me — and for two-and-twenty months I kept him as sober as Father Mathew. Then Honeyman didn't pay him: there was a row in the sacred building, and Bellew retired. Then Sherrick must meddle in it. And having heard a chap out Hampstead way who Sherrick thought would do, Honeyman was forced to engage him, regardless of expense. You recollect the fellow, sir? The Reverend Simeon Rawkins, the lowest of the Low Church, sir — a red-haired dumpy man, who gasped at his h's and spoke with a Lancashire twang — he'd no more do for Mayfair than Grimaldi for Macbeth. He and Honeyman used to fight like cat and dog in the vestry: and he drove away a third part of the congregation. He was an honest man and an able man too, though not a sound Churchman" (F. B. said this with a very edifying gravity): "I told Sherrick this the very day I heard him. And if he had spoken to me on the subject I might have saved him a pretty penny — a precious deal more than the paltry sum which he and I had a quarrel about at that time — a matter of business, sir — a pecuniary difference about a small three months' thing which caused a temporary estrangement between us. As for Honeyman, he used to cry about it. Your uncle is great in the lachrymatory line, Clive Newcome. He used to go with tears in his eyes to Sherrick, and implore him not to have Rawkins, but he would. And I must say for poor Charles that the failure of Lady Whittlesea's has not been altogether Charles's fault; and that Sherrick has kicked down that property.

"Well, then, sir, poor Charles thought to make it all right by marrying Mrs. Brumby; — and she was very fond of him and the thing was all but done, in spite of her sons, who were in a rage as you may fancy. But Charley, sir, has such a propensity for humbug that he will tell lies when there is no earthly good in lying. He represented his chapel at twelve hundred a year, his private means as so-and-so; and when he came to book up with Briggs the lawyer, Mrs. Brumby's brother, it was found that he lied and prevaricated so, that the widow in actual disgust would have nothing more to do with him. She was a good woman of business, and managed the hat-shop for nine years, whilst poor Brumby was at Dr. Tokelys. A first-rate shop it was, too. I introduced Charles to it. My uncle the Bishop had his shovels there: and they used for a considerable period to cover this humble roof with tiles," said F. B., tapping his capacious forehead; "I am sure he might have had Brumby," he added, in his melancholy tones, "but for those unlucky lies. She didn't want money. She had plenty. She longed to get into society, and was bent on marrying a gentleman.

"But what I can't pardon in Honeyman is the way in which he has done poor old Ridley and his wife. I took him there, you know, thinking they would send their bills in once a month: that he was doing a good business: in fact, that I had put 'em into a good thing. And the fellow has told me a score of times that he and the Ridleys were all right. But he has not only not paid his lodgings, but he has had money of them: he has given dinners: he has made Ridley pay for wine. He has kept paying lodgers out of the house, and he tells me all this with a burst of tears, when he sent for me to Lazarus's to-night, and I went to him, sir, because he was in distress — went into the lion's den, sir!" says F. B., looking round nobly. "I don't know how much he owes them: because of course you know the sum he mentions ain't the right one. He never does tell the truth

— does Charles. But think of the pluck of those good Ridleys never saying a single word to F. B. about the debt! ‘We are poor, but we have saved some money and can lie out of it. And we think Mr. Honeyman will pay us,’ says Mrs. Ridley to me this very evening. And she thrilled my heart-strings, sir; and I took her in my arms, and kissed the old woman,” says Bayham; “and I rather astonished little Miss Cann, and young J. J., who came in with a picture under his arm. But she said she had kissed Master Frederick long before J. J. was born — and so she had: that good and faithful servant — and my emotion in embracing her was manly, sir, manly.”

Here old Betsy came in to say that the supper was a-waitin’ for Mr. Bayham and it was a-getting’ very late; and we left F. B. to his meal; and bidding adieu to Mrs. Nokes, Clive and I went each to our habitation.



CHAPTER XXVI

IN WHICH COLONEL NEWCOME'S HORSES ARE SOLD

At an hour early the next morning I was not surprised to see Colonel Newcome at my chambers, to whom Clive had communicated Bayham's important news of the night before. The Colonel's object, as any one who knew him need scarcely be told, was to rescue his brother-in-law; and being ignorant of lawyers, sheriffs'-officers, and their proceedings, he bethought him that he would apply to Lamb Court for information, and in so far showed some prudence, for at least I knew more of the world and its ways than my simple client, and was enabled to make better terms for the unfortunate prisoner, or rather for Colonel Newcome, who was the real sufferer, than Honeyman's creditors might otherwise have been disposed to give.

I thought it would be more prudent that our good Samaritan should not see the victim of rogues whom he was about to succour; and left him to entertain himself with Mr. Warrington in Lamb Court, while I sped to the lock-up house, where the Mayfair pet was confined. A sickly smile played over his countenance as he beheld me when I was ushered to his private room. The reverent gentleman was not shaved; he had partaken of breakfast. I saw a glass which had once contained brandy on the dirty tray whereon his meal was placed: a greasy novel from a Chancery Lane library lay on the table: but he was at present occupied in writing one or more of those great long letters, those laborious, ornate, eloquent statements, those documents so profusely underlined, in which the machinations of villains are laid bare with italic fervour; the coldness, to use no harsher phrase, of friends on whom reliance might have been placed; the outrageous conduct of Solomons; the astonishing failure of Smith to pay a sum of money on which he had counted as on the Bank of England; finally, the infallible certainty of repaying (with what heartfelt thanks need not be said) the loan of so many pounds next Saturday week at farthest. All this, which some readers in the course of their experience have read no doubt in many handwritings, was duly set forth by poor Honeyman. There was a wafer in a wine-glass on the table, and the bearer no doubt below to carry the missive. They always sent these letters by a messenger, who is introduced in the postscript; he is always sitting in the hall when you get the letter, and is "a young man waiting for an answer, please."

No one can suppose that Honeyman laid a complete statement of his affairs before the negotiator who was charged to look into them. No debtor does confess all his debts, but breaks them gradually to his man of business, factor or benefactor, leading him on from surprise to surprise; and when he is in possession of the tailor's little account, introducing him to the bootmaker. Honeyman's schedule I felt perfectly certain was not correct. The detainees against him were trifling. "Moss of Wardour Street, one hundred and twenty — I believe I have paid him thousands in this very transaction," ejaculates Honeyman. "A heartless West End tradesman hearing of my misfortune — all these people a linked together, my dear Pendennis, and rush like vultures upon their prey! — Waddilove, the tailor, has another writ out for ninety-eight pounds; a man whom I have made by my recommendations! Tobbins, the bootmaker, his neighbour in Jermyn Street, forty-one pounds more, and that is all — I give you my word, all. In a few months, when my pew-rents will be coming in, I should have settled with those cormorants; otherwise, my total and irretrievable ruin, and the disgrace and humiliation of a prison attends me. I know it; I can bear it; I have been wretchedly weak, Pendennis: I can say mea culpa, mea maxima culpa, and I can — bear — my — penalty." In his finest moments he was never more pathetic. He turned his head away, and concealed it in a handkerchief not so white as those which veiled his emotions at Lady Whittlesea's.

How by degrees this slippery penitent was induced to make other confessions; how we got an idea of Mrs. Ridley's account from him, of his dealings with Mr. Sherrick, need not be mentioned here. The conclusion to which Colonel Newcome's ambassador came was, that to help such a man would be quite useless; and that the Fleet Prison would be a most wholesome retreat for this most reckless divine. Ere the day was out, Messrs. Waddilove and Tobbins had conferred with their neighbour in St. James's, Mr. Brace; and there came a detainer from that haberdasher for gloves, cravats, and pocket-handkerchiefs, that might have done credit to the most dandified young Guardsman. Mr. Warrington was on Mr. Pendennis's side, and urged that the law should take its course. "Why help a man," said he, "who will not help himself? Let the law sponge out the fellow's debts; set him going again with twenty pounds when he quits the prison, and get him a chaplaincy in the Isle of Man."

I saw by the Colonel's grave kind face that these hard opinions did not suit him. "At all events, sir, promise us," we

said, "that you will pay nothing yourself — that you won't see Honeyman's creditors, and let people, who know the world better, deal with him." "Know the world, young man!" cries Newcome; "I should think if I don't know the world at my age, I never shall." And if he had lived to be as old as Jahaleel, a boy could still have cheated him.

"I do not scruple to tell you," he said, after a pause during which a plenty of smoke was delivered from the council of three, "that I have — a fund — which I had set aside for mere purposes of pleasure, I give you my word, and a part of which I shall think it my duty to devote to poor Honeyman's distresses. The fund is not large. The money was intended, in fact:— however, there it is. If Pendennis will go round to these tradesmen, and make some composition with them, as their prices have been no doubt enormously exaggerated, I see no harm. Besides the tradesfolk, there is good Mrs. Ridley and Mr. Sherrick — we must see them; and, if we can, set this luckless Charles again on his legs. We have read of other prodigals who were kindly treated; and we may have debts of our own to forgive, boys."

Into Mr. Sherrick's account we had no need to enter. That gentleman had acted with perfect fairness by Honeyman. He laughingly said to us, "You don't imagine I would lend that chap a shilling without security? I will give him fifty or a hundred. Here's one of his notes, with What-do-you-call-'ems — that rum fellow Bayham's name as drawer. A nice pair, ain't they? Pooh! I shall never touch 'em. I lent some money on the shop overhead," says Sherrick, pointing to the ceiling (we were in his counting-house in the cellar of Lady Whittlesea's Chapel), "because I thought it was a good speculation. And so it was at first. The people liked Honeyman. All the nobs came to hear him. Now the speculation ain't so good. He's used up. A chap can't be expected to last for ever. When I first engaged Mademoiselle Bravura at my theatre, you couldn't get a place for three weeks together. The next year she didn't draw twenty pounds a week. So it was with Pottle and the regular drama humbug. At first it was all very well. Good business, good houses, our immortal bard, and that sort of game. They engaged the tigers and the French riding people over the way; and there was Pottle bellowing away in my place to the orchestra and the orders. It's all a speculation. I've speculated in about pretty much everything that's going: in theatres, in joint-stock jobs, in building-ground, in bills, in gas and insurance companies, and in this chapel. Poor old Honeyman! I won't hurt him. About that other chap I put in to do the first business — that red-haired chap, Rawkins — I think I was wrong. I think he injured the property. But I don't know everything, you know. I wasn't bred to know about parsons — quite the reverse. I thought, when I heard Rawkins at Hampstead, he was just the thing. I used to go about, sir, just as I did to the provinces, when I had the theatre — Camberwell, Islington, Kennington, Clapton, all about, and hear the young chaps. Have a glass of sherry; and here's better luck to Honeyman. As for that Colonel, he's a trump, sir! I never see such a man. I have to deal with such a precious lot of rogues, in the City and out of it, among the swells and all, you know, that to see such a fellow refreshes me; and I'd do anything for him. You've made a good thing of that Pall Mall Gazette! I tried papers too; but mine didn't do. I don't know why. I tried a Tory one, moderate Liberal, and out-and-out uncompromising Radical. I say, what d'ye think of a religious paper, the Catechism, or some such name? Would Honeyman do as editor? I'm afraid it's all up with the poor cove at the chapel." And I parted with Mr. Sherrick, not a little edified by his talk, and greatly relieved as to Honeyman's fate. The tradesmen of Honeyman's body were appeased; and as for Mr. Moss, when he found that the curate had no effects, and must go before the Insolvent Court, unless Moss chose to take the composition which we were empowered to offer him, he too was brought to hear reason, and parted with the stamped paper on which was poor Honeyman's signature. Our negotiation had like to have come to an end by Clive's untimely indignation, who offered at one stage of the proceedings to pitch young Moss out of window; but nothing came of this most ungentlemanlike behaviour on Noocob's part, further than remonstrance and delay in the proceedings; and Honeyman preached a lovely sermon at Lady Whittlesea's the very next Sunday. He had made himself much liked in the sponging-house, and Mr. Lazarus said, "if he hadn't a got out time enough, I'd a let him out for Sunday, and sent one of my men with him to show him the way ome, you know; for when a gentleman behaves as a gentleman to me, I behave as a gentleman to him."

Mrs. Ridley's account, and it was a long one, was paid without a single question, or the deduction of a farthing; but the Colonel rather sickened of Honeyman's expressions of rapturous gratitude, and received his professions of mingled contrition and delight very coolly. "My boy," says the father to Clive, "you see to what straits debt brings a man, to tamper with truth to have to cheat the poor. Think of flying before a washerwoman, or humbling yourself to a tailor, or eating a poor man's children's bread!" Clive blushed, I thought, and looked rather confused.

"Oh, father," says he, "I— I'm afraid I owe some money too — not much; but about forty pound, five-and-twenty for cigars, and fifteen I borrowed of Pendennis, and — and I've been devilish annoyed about it all this time."

"You stupid boy," says the father "I knew about the cigars bill, and paid it last week. Anything I have is yours, you

know. As long as there is a guinea, there is half for you. See that every shilling we owe is paid before — before a week is over. And go down and ask Binnie if I can see him in his study. I want to have some conversation with him.” When Clive was gone away, he said to me in a very sweet voice, “In God’s name, keep my boy out of debt when I am gone, Arthur. I shall return to India very soon.”

“Very soon, sir! You have another year’s leave,” said I.

“Yes, but no allowances, you know; and this affair of Honeyman’s has pretty nearly emptied the little purse I had set aside for European expenses. They have been very much heavier than I expected. As it is, I overdrew my account at my brother’s, and have been obliged to draw money from my agents in Calcutta. A year sooner or later (unless two of our senior officers had died, when I should have got my promotion and full colonel’s pay with it, and proposed to remain in this country)— a year sooner or later, what does it matter? Clive will go away and work at his art, and see the great schools of painting while I am absent. I thought at one time how pleasant it would be to accompany him. But l’homme propose, Pendennis. I fancy now a lad is not the better for being always tied to his parent’s apron-string. You young fellows are too clever for me. I haven’t learned your ideas or read your books. I feel myself very often an old damper in your company. I will go back, sir, where I have some friends, where I am somebody still. I know an honest face or two, white and brown, that will lighten up in the old regiment when they see Tom Newcome again. God bless you, Arthur. You young fellows in this country have such cold ways that we old ones hardly know how to like you at first. James Binnie and I, when we first came home, used to talk you over, and think you laughed at us. But you didn’t, I know. God Almighty bless you, and send you a good wife, and make a good man of you. I have bought a watch, which I would like you to wear in remembrance of me and my boy, to whom you were so kind when you were boys together in the old Grey Friars.” I took his hand, and uttered some incoherent words of affection and respect. Did not Thomas Newcome merit both from all who knew him?

His resolution being taken, our good Colonel began to make silent but effectual preparations for his coming departure. He was pleased during these last days of his stay to give me even more of his confidence than I had previously enjoyed, and was kind enough to say that he regarded me almost as a son of his own, and hoped I would act as elder brother and guardian to Clive. Ah! who is to guard the guardian? The younger brother had many nobler qualities than belonged to the elder. The world had not hardened Clive, nor even succeeded in spoiling him. I perceive I am diverging from his history into that of another person, and will return to the subject proper of the book.

Colonel Newcome expressed himself as being particularly touched and pleased with his friend Binnie’s conduct, now that the Colonel’s departure was determined. “James is one of the most generous of men, Pendennis, and I am proud to be put under an obligation to him, and to tell it too. I hired this house, as you are aware, of our speculative friend Mr. Sherrick, and am answerable for the payment of the rent till the expiry of the lease. James has taken the matter off my hands entirely. The place is greatly too large for him, but he says that he likes it, and intends to stay, and that his sister and niece shall be his housekeepers. Clive” (here, perhaps, the speaker’s voice drops a little) — “Clive will be the son of the house still, honest James says, and God bless him. James is richer than I thought by near a lakh of rupees — and here is a hint for you, Master Arthur. Mr. Binnie has declared to me in confidence that if his niece, Miss Rosey, shall marry a person of whom he approves, he will leave her a considerable part of his fortune.”

The Colonel’s confidant here said that his own arrangements were made in another quarter, to which statement the Colonel replied knowingly, “I thought so. A little bird has whispered to me the name of a certain Miss A. I knew her grandfather, an accommodating old gentleman, and I borrowed some money from him when I was a subaltern at Calcutta. I tell you in strict confidence, my dear young friend, that I hope and trust a certain young gentleman of your acquaintance may be induced to think how good and pretty and sweet-tempered a girl Miss Mackenzie is, and that she may be brought to like him. If you young men would marry in good time good and virtuous women — as I am sure — ahem! — Miss Amory is — half the temptations of your youth would be avoided. You would neither be dissolute, has many of you seem to me, or cold and selfish, which are worse vices still. And my prayer is, that my Clive may cast anchor early out of the reach of temptation, and mate with some such kind girl as Binnie’s niece. When I first came home I formed other plans for him which could not be brought to a successful issue; and knowing his ardent disposition, and having kept an eye on the young rogue’s conduct, I tremble lest some mischance with a woman should befall him, and long to have him out of danger.”

So the kind scheme of the two elders was, that their young ones should marry and be happy ever after, like the Prince and Princess of the Fairy Tale: and dear Mrs. Mackenzie (have I said that at the commencement of her visit to her brother she made almost open love to the Colonel?), dear Mrs. Mack was content to forgo her own chances so that her darling

Rosey might be happy. We used to laugh and say, that as soon as Clive's father was gone, Josey would be sent for to join Rosey. But little Josey being under her grandmother's sole influence took most gratifying and serious turn; wrote letters, in which she questioned the morality of operas, Towers of London, and waxworks; and, before a year was out, married Elder Bogie, of Mr. M'Craw's church.

Presently was to be read in the Morning Post an advertisement of the sale of three horses (the description and pedigree following), "the property of an officer returning to India. Apply to the groom, at the stables, 150 Fitzroy Square."

The Court of Directors invited Lieutenant-Colonel Newcome to an entertainment given to Major-General Sir Ralph Spurrier, K.C.B., appointed Commander-in-Chief at Madras. Clive was asked to this dinner too, "and the governor's health was drunk, sir," Clive said, "after dinner, and the dear old fellow made such a good speech, in returning thanks!"

He, Clive, and I made a pilgrimage to Grey Friars, and had the Green to ourselves, it being the Bartlemytide vacation, and the boys all away. One of the good old Poor Brothers whom we both recollected accompanied us round the place; and we sate for a while in Captain Scarsdale's little room (he had been a Peninsular officer, who had sold out, and was fain in his old age to retire into this calm retreat). And we talked, as old schoolmates and lovers talk, about subjects interesting to schoolmates and lovers only.

One by one the Colonel took leave of his friends, young and old; ran down to Newcome, and gave Mrs. Mason a parting benediction; slept a night at Tom Smith's, and passed a day with Jack Brown; went to all the boys' and girls' schools where his little proteges were, so as to be able to take the very last and most authentic account of the young folks to their parents in India; spent a week at Marble Hill, and shot partridges there, but for which entertainment, Clive said, the place would have been intolerable; and thence proceeded to Brighton to pass a little time with good Miss Honeyman. As for Sir Brian's family, when Parliament broke up, of course, they did not stay in town. Barnes, of course, had part of a moor in Scotland, whither his uncle and cousin did not follow him. The rest went abroad. Sir Brian wanted the waters of Aix-la-Chapelle. The brothers parted very good friends; Lady Anne, and all the young people, heartily wished him farewell. I believe Sir Brian even accompanied the Colonel downstairs from the drawing-room, in Park Lane, and actually came out and saw his brother into his cab (just as he would accompany old Lady Bagges when she came to look at her account at the bank, from the parlour to her carriage). But as for Ethel, she was not going to be put off with this sort of parting and the next morning a cab dashed up to Fitzroy Square, and a veiled lady came out thence, and was closeted with Colonel Newcome for five minutes, and when he led her back to the carriage there were tears in his eyes.

Mrs. Mackenzie joked about the transaction (having watched it from the dining-room windows), and asked the Colonel who his sweetheart was? Newcome replied very sternly, that he hoped no one would ever speak lightly of that young lady, whom he loved as his own daughter; and I thought Rosey looked vexed at the praises thus bestowed. This was the day before we all went down to Brighton. Miss Honeyman's lodgings were taken for Mr. Binnie and his ladies. Clive and her dearest Colonel had apartments next door. Charles Honeyman came dawn and preached one of his very best sermons. Fred Bayham was there, and looked particularly grand and noble on the pier and the cliff. I am inclined to think he had had some explanation with Thomas Newcome, which had placed F. B. in a state of at least temporary prosperity. Whom did he not benefit whom he knew, and what eye that saw him did not bless him? F. B. was greatly affected at Charles's sermon, of which our party of course could see the allusions. Tears actually rolled down his brown cheeks; for Fred was a man very easily moved, and, as it were, a softened sinner. Little Rosey and her mother sobbed audibly, greatly to the surprise of stout old Miss Honeyman, who had no idea of such watery exhibitions, and to the discomfiture of poor Newcome, who was annoyed to have his praises even hinted in that sacred edifice. Good Mr. James Binnie came for once to church; and, however variously their feelings might be exhibited or, repressed, I think there was not one of the little circle there assembled who did not bring to the place a humble prayer and a gentle heart. It was the last Sabbath-bell our dear friend was to hear for many a day on his native shore. The great sea washed the beach as we came out, blue with the reflection of the skies, and its innumerable waves crested with sunshine. I see the good man and his boy yet clinging to him, as they pace together by the shore.

The Colonel was very much pleased by a visit from Mr. Ridley and the communication which he made (my Lord Todmorden has a mansion and park in Sussex, whence Mr. Ridley came to pay his duty to Colonel Newcome). He said he "never could forget the kindness with which the Colonel have a treated him. His lordship have taken a young man, which Mr. Ridley had brought him up under his own eye, and can answer for him, Mr. R. says, with impunity; and which he is to be his lordship's own man for the future. And his lordship have appointed me his steward, and having, as he always hev

been, been most liberal in point of sellary. And me and Mrs. Ridley was thinking, sir, most respectfully, with regard to our son, Mr. John James Ridley — as good and honest a young man, which I am proud to say it, that if Mr. Clive goes abroad we should be most proud and happy if John James went with him. And the money which you have paid us so handsome, Colonel, he shall have it; which it was the excellent ideer of Miss Cann; and my lord have ordered a pictur of John James in the most libral manner, and have asked my son to dinner, sir, at his lordship's own table, which I have faithfully served him five-and-thirty years." Ridley's voice fairly broke down at this part of his speech, which evidently was a studied composition, and he uttered no more of it, for the Colonel cordially shook him by the hand, and Clive jumped up clapping his, and saying that it was the greatest wish of his heart that J. J. and he should be companions in France and Italy. "But I did not like to ask my dear old father," he said, "who has had so many calls on his purse, and besides, I knew that J. J. was too independent to come as my follower."

The Colonel's berth has been duly secured ere now. This time he makes the overland journey; and his passage is to Alexandria, taken in one of the noble ships of the Peninsular and Oriental Company. His kit is as simple as a subaltern's; I believe, but for Clive's friendly compulsion, he would have carried back no other than the old uniform which has served him for so many years. Clive and his father travelled to Southampton together by themselves. F. B. and I took the Southampton coach: we had asked leave to see the last of him, and say a "God bless you" to our dear old friend. So the day came when the vessel was to sail. We saw his cabin, and witnessed all the bustle and stir on board the good ship on a day of departure. Our thoughts, however, were fixed but on one person — the case, no doubt, with hundreds more on such a day. There was many a group of friends closing wistfully together on the sunny deck, and saying the last words of blessing and farewell. The bustle of the ship passes dimly round about them; the hurrying noise of crew and officers running on their duty; the tramp and song of the men at the capstan-bars; the bells ringing, as the hour for departure comes nearer and nearer, as mother and son, father and daughter, husband and wife, hold hands yet for a little while. We saw Clive and his father talking together by the wheel. Then they went below; and a passenger, her husband, asked me to give my arm to an almost fainting lady, and to lead her off the ship. Bayham followed us, carrying their two children in his arms, as the husband turned away and walked aft. The last bell was ringing, and they were crying, "Now for the shore." The whole ship had begun to throb ere this, and its great wheels to beat the water, and the chimneys had flung out their black signals for sailing. We were as yet close on the dock, and we saw Clive coming up from below, looking very pale; the plank was drawn after him as he stepped on land.

Then, with three great cheers from the dock, and from the crew in the bows, and from the passengers on the quarter-deck, the noble ship strikes the first stroke of her destined race, and swims away towards the ocean. "There he is, there he is," shouts Fred Bayham, waving his hat. "God bless him, God bless him!" I scarce perceived at the ship's side, beckoning an adieu, our dear old friend, when the lady, whose husband had bidden me to lead her away from the ship, fainted in my arms. Poor soul! Her, too, has fate stricken. Ah, pangs of hearts torn asunder, passionate regrets, cruel, cruel partings! Shall you not end one day, ere many years; when the tears shall be wiped from all eyes, and there shall be neither sorrow nor pain?



CHAPTER XXVII

YOUTH AND SUNSHINE

Although Thomas Newcome was gone back to India in search of more money, finding that he could not live upon his income at home, he was nevertheless rather a wealthy man; and at the moment of his departure from Europe had two lakhs of rupees invested in various Indian securities. "A thousand a year," he thought, "more, added to the interest accruing from my two lakhs, will enable us to live very comfortably at home. I can give Clive ten thousand pounds when he marries, and five hundred a year out of my allowances. If he gets a wife with some money, they may have every enjoyment of life; and as for his pictures, he can paint just as few or as many of those as he pleases." Newcome did not seem seriously to believe that his son would live by painting pictures, but considered Clive as a young prince who chose to amuse himself with painting. The Muse of Painting is a lady whose social station is not altogether recognised with us as yet. The polite world permits a gentleman to amuse himself with her; but to take her for better or for worse! forsake all other chances and cleave unto her! to assume her name! Many a respectable person would be as much shocked at the notion, as if his son had married an opera-dancer.

Newcome left a hundred a year in England, of which the principal sum was to be transferred to his boy as soon as he came of age. He endowed Clive further with a considerable annual sum, which his London bankers would pay: "And if these are not enough," says he kindly, "you must draw upon my agents, Messrs. Frank and Merryweather at Calcutta, who will receive your signature just as if it was mine." Before going away, he introduced Clive to F. and M.'s corresponding London house, Jolly and Baines, Fog Court — leading out of Leadenhall — Mr. Jolly, a myth as regarded the firm, now married to Lady Julia Jolly — a Park in Kent — evangelical interest — great at Exeter Hall meetings — knew Clive's grandmother — that is, Mrs. Newcome, a most admirable woman. Baines represents a house in the Regent's Park, with an emigrative tendency towards Belgravia — musical daughters — Herr Moscheles, Benedick, Ella — Osborne, constantly at dinner-sonatas in P flat (op. 936), composed and dedicated to Miss Euphemia Baines, by her most obliged, most obedient servant, Ferdinando Blitz. Baines hopes that his young friend will come constantly to York Terrace, where the most girls will be happy to see him; and mentions at home a singular whim of Colonel Newcome's, who can give his son twelve or fifteen hundred a year, and makes an artist of him. Euphemia and Flora adore artists; they feel quite interested about this young man. "He was scribbling caricatures all the time I was talking with his father in my parlour," says Mr. Baines, and produces a sketch of an orange-woman near the Bank, who had struck Clive's eyes, and been transferred to the blotting-paper in Fog Court. "He needn't do anything," said good-natured Mr. Baines. "I guess all the pictures he'll paint won't sell for much."

"Is he fond of music, papa?" asks Miss. "What a pity he had not come to our last evening; and now the season is over!"

"And Mr. Newcome is going out of town. He came to me, today for circular notes — says he's going through Switzerland and into Italy — lives in Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square. Queer place, ain't it? Put his name down in your book, and ask him to dinner next season."

Before Clive went away, he had an apparatus of easels, sketching-stools, umbrellas, and painting-boxes, the most elaborate and beautiful that Messrs. Soap and Isaac could supply. It made J. J.'s eyes glisten to see those lovely gimcracks of art; those smooth mill-boards, those slab-tinted sketching-blocks, and glistening rows of colour-tubes lying in their boxes, which seemed to cry, "Come, squeeze me." If painting-boxes made painters, if sketching-stools would but enable one to sketch, surely I would hasten this very instant to Messrs. Soap and Isaac! but, alas! these pretty toys no more make artists than cows make monks.

As a proof that Clive did intend to practise his profession, and to live by it too, at this time he took four sporting sketches to a printseller in the Haymarket, and disposed of them at the rate of seven shillings and sixpence per sketch. His exultation at receiving a sovereign and half a sovereign from Mr. Jones was boundless. "I can do half a dozen of these things easily in a morning," he says. "Two guineas a day is twelve guineas — say ten guineas a week, for I won't work on Sundays, and may take a holiday in the week besides. Ten guineas a week is five hundred a year. That is pretty nearly as much money as I shall want, and I need not draw the dear old governor's allowance at all." He wrote an ardent letter, full of happiness and affection, to the kind father, which he shall find a month after he has arrived in India, and read to his

friends in Calcutta and Barrackpore. Clive invited many of his artist friends to a grand feast in honour of the thirty shillings. The King's Arms, Kensington, was the hotel selected (tavern beloved of artists for many score years!). Gandish was there, and the Gandishites, and some chosen spirits from the Life Academy, Clipstone Street, and J. J. was vice-president, with Fred Bayham by his side, to make the speeches and carve the mutton; and I promise you many a merry song was sung, and many a health drunk in flowing bumpers; and as jolly a party was assembled as any London contained that day. The beau-monde had quitted it; the Park was empty as we crossed it; and the leaves of Kensington Gardens had begun to fall, dying after the fatigues of a London season. We sang all the way home through Knightsbridge and by the Park railings, and the Covent Garden carters halting at the Half-way House were astonished at our choruses. There is no half-way house now; no merry chorus at midnight.

Then Clive and J. J. took the steamboat to Antwerp; and those who love pictures may imagine how the two young men rejoiced in one of the most picturesque cities of the world; where they went back straightway into the sixteenth century; where the inn at which they stayed (delightful old Grand Laboureur, thine ancient walls are levelled! thy comfortable hospitalities exist no more!) seemed such a hostelry as that where Quentin Durward first saw his sweetheart; where knights of Velasquez or burgomasters of Rubens seemed to look from the windows of the tall-gabled houses and the quaint porches; where the Bourse still stood, the Bourse of three hundred years ago, and you had but to supply figures with beards and ruffs, and rapiers and trunk-hose, to make the picture complete; where to be awakened by the carillon of the bells was to waken to the most delightful sense of life and happiness; where nuns, actual nuns, walked the streets, and every figure in the Place de Meir, and every devotee at church, kneeling and draped in black, or entering the confessional (actually the confessional!), was a delightful subject for the new sketchbook. Had Clive drawn as much everywhere as at Antwerp, Messrs. Soap and Isaac might have made a little income by supplying him with materials.

After Antwerp, Clive's correspondent gets a letter dated from the Hotel de Suede at Brussels, which contains an elaborate eulogy of the cookery and comfort of that hotel, where the wines, according to the writer's opinion, are unmatched almost in Europe. And this is followed by a description of Waterloo, and a sketch of Hougomont, in which J. J. is represented running away in the character of a French grenadier, Clive pursuing him in the lifeguard's habit, and mounted on a thundering charger.

Next follows a letter from Bonn. Verses about Drachenfels of a not very superior style of versification; an account of Crichton, an old Grey Friars man, who has become a student at the university; of a commerz, a drunken bout, and a students' duel at Bonn. "And whom should I find here," says Mr. Clive, "but Aunt Anne, Ethel, Miss Quigley, and the little ones, the whole detachment under the command of Kuhn? Uncle Brian is staying at Aix. He is recovered from his attack. And, upon my conscience, I think my pretty cousin looks prettier every day.

"When they are not in London," Clive goes on to write, "or I sometimes think when Barnes or old Lady Kew are not looking over them, they are quite different. You know how cold they have latterly seemed to us, and how their conduct annoyed my dear old father. Nothing can be kinder than their behaviour since we have met. It was on the little hill at Godesberg: J. J. and I were mounting to the ruin, followed by the beggars who waylay you, and have taken the place of the other robbers who used to live there, when there came a procession of donkeys down the steep, and I heard a little voice cry, 'Hullo! it's Clive! hooray, Clive!' and an ass came pattering down the declivity, with a little pair of white trousers at an immensely wide angle over the donkey's back, and behold there was little Alfred grinning with all his might.

"He turned his beast and was for galloping up the hill again, I suppose to inform his relations; but the donkey refused with many kicks, one of which sent Alfred plunging amongst the stones, and we were rubbing him down just as the rest of the party came upon us. Miss Quigley looked very grim on an old white pony; my aunt was on a black horse that might have turned grey, he is so old. Then come two donkeysful of children, with Kuhn as supercargo; then Ethel on donkey-back, too, with a bunch of wildflowers in her hand, a great straw hat with a crimson ribbon, a white muslin jacket, you know, bound at the waist with a ribbon of the first, and a dark skirt, with a shawl round her feet which Kuhn had arranged. As she stopped, the donkey fell to cropping greens in the hedge; the trees there chequered her white dress and face with shadow. Her eyes, hair, and forehead were in shadow too — but the light was all upon her right cheek: upon her shoulder down to her arm, which was of a warmer white, and on the bunch of flowers which she held, blue, yellow, and red poppies, and so forth.

"J. J. says, 'I think the birds began to sing louder when she came.' We have both agreed that she is the handsomest woman in England. It's not her form merely, which is certainly as yet too thin and a little angular — it is her colour. I do

not care for woman or picture without colour. O ye carnations! O ye lilia mista rosis! O such black hair and solemn eyebrows! It seems to me the roses and carnations have bloomed again since we saw them last in London, when they were drooping from the exposure to night air, candle-light, and heated ballrooms.

“Here I was in the midst of a regiment of donkeys, bearing a crowd of relations; J. J. standing modestly in the background — beggars completing the group, and Kuhn ruling over them with voice and gesture, oaths and whip. Throw in the Rhine in the distance flashing by the Seven Mountains — but mind and make Ethel the principal figure: if you make her like, she certainly will be — and other lights will be only minor fires. You may paint her form, but you can’t paint her colour; that is what beats us in nature. A line must come right; you can force that into its place, but you can’t compel the circumambient air. There is no yellow I know of will make sunshine, and no blue that is a bit like sky. And so with pictures: I think you only get signs of colour, and formulas to stand for it. That brick-dust which we agree to receive as representing a blush, look at it — can you say it is in the least like the blush which flickers and varies as it sweeps over the down of the cheek — as you see sunshine playing over a meadow? Look into it and see what a variety of delicate blooms there are! a multitude of flowerets twining into one tint! We may break our colour-pots and strive after the line alone: that is palpable and we can grasp it — the other is impossible and beyond us.” Which sentiment I here set down, not on account of its worth (and I think it is contradicted — as well as asserted — in more than one of the letters I subsequently had from Mr. Clive, but it may serve to show the ardent and impulsive disposition of this youth), by whom all beauties of art and nature, animate or inanimate (the former especially), were welcomed with a gusto and delight whereof colder temperaments are incapable. The view of a fine landscape, a fine picture, a handsome woman, would make this harmless young sensualist tipsy with pleasure. He seemed to derive an actual hilarity and intoxication as his eye drank in these sights; and, though it was his maxim that all dinners were good, and he could eat bread and cheese and drink small beer with perfect good-humour, I believe that he found a certain pleasure in a bottle of claret, which most men’s systems were incapable of feeling.

This springtime of youth is the season of letter-writing. A lad in high health and spirits, the blood running briskly in his young veins, and the world, and life, and nature bright and welcome to him, looks out, perforce, for some companion to whom he may impart his sense of the pleasure which he enjoys, and which were not complete unless a friend were by to share it. I was the person most convenient for the young fellow’s purpose; he was pleased to confer upon me the title of friend en titre, and confidant in particular; to endow the confidant in question with a number of virtues and excellences which existed very likely only in the lad’s imagination; to lament that the confidant had no sister whom he, Clive, might marry out of hand; and to make me a thousand simple protests of affection and admiration, which are noted here as signs of the young man’s character, by no means as proofs of the goodness of mine. The books given to the present biographer by “his affectionate friend, Clive Newcome,” still bear on the titlepages the marks of that boyish hand and youthful fervour. He had a copy of Walter Lorraine bound and gilt with such splendour as made the author blush for his performance, which has since been seen at the bookstalls at a price suited to the very humblest purses. He fired up and fought a newspaper critic (whom Clive met at the Haunt one night) who had dared to write an article in which that work was slighted; and if, in the course of nature, his friendship has outlived that rapturous period, the kindness of the two old friends, I hope, is not the less because it is no longer romantic, and the days of white vellum and gilt edges have passed away. From the abundance of the letters which the affectionate young fellow now wrote, the ensuing portion of his youthful history is compiled. It may serve to recall passages of their early days to such of his seniors as occasionally turn over the leaves of a novel; and in the story of his faults, indiscretions, passions, and actions, young readers may be reminded of their own.

Now that the old Countess, and perhaps Barnes, were away, the barrier between Clive and this family seemed to be withdrawn. The young folks who loved him were free to see him as often as he would come. They were going to Baden: would he come too? Baden was on the road to Switzerland, he might journey to Strasbourg, Basle, and so on. Clive was glad enough to go with his cousins, and travel in the orbit of such a lovely girl as Ethel Newcome. J. J. performed the second part always when Clive was present: and so they all travelled to Coblenz, Mayence, and Frankfort together, making the journey which everybody knows, and sketching the mountains and castles we all of us have sketched. Ethel’s beauty made all the passengers on all the steamers look round and admire. Clive was proud of being in the suite of such a lovely person. The family travelled with a pair of those carriages which used to thunder along the Continental roads a dozen years since, and from interior, box, and rumble discharge a dozen English people at hotel gates.

The journey is all sunshine and pleasure and novelty: the circular notes with which Mr. Baines of Fog Court has supplied Clive Newcome, Esquire, enabled that young gentleman to travel with great ease and comfort. He has not yet

ventured upon engaging a valet-de-chambre, it being agreed between him and J. J. that two travelling artists have no right to such an aristocratic appendage; but he has bought a snug little britzska at Frankfort (the youth has very polite tastes, is already a connoisseur in wine, and has no scruple in ordering the best at the hotels), and the britzska travels in company with Lady Anne's caravan, either in its wake so as to be out of reach of the dust, or more frequently ahead of that enormous vehicle and its tender, in which come the children and the governess of Lady Anne Newcome, guarded by a huge and melancholy London footman, who beholds Rhine and Neckar, valley and mountain, village and ruin, with a like dismal composure. Little Alfred and little Egbert are by no means sorry to escape from Miss Quigley and the tender, and for a stage ride or two in Clive's britzska. The little girls cry sometimes to be admitted to that privilege. I dare say Ethel would like very well to quit her place in the caravan, where she sits, circumvented by mamma's dogs, and books, bags, dressing-boxes, and gimcrack cases, without which apparatus some English ladies of condition cannot travel; but Miss Ethel is grown up, she is out, and has been presented at Court, and is a person of too great dignity now to sit anywhere but in the place of state in the chariot corner. I like to think, for my part, of the gallant young fellow taking his pleasure and enjoying his holiday, and few sights are more pleasant than to watch a happy, manly English youth, free-handed and generous-hearted, content and good-humour shining in his honest face, pleased and pleasing, eager, active, and thankful for services, and exercising bravely his noble youthful privilege to be happy and to enjoy. Sing, cheery spirit, whilst the spring lasts; bloom whilst the sun shines, kindly flowers of youth! You shall be none the worse tomorrow for having been happy today, if the day brings no action to shame it. As for J. J., he too had his share of enjoyment; the charming scenes around him did not escape his bright eye, he absorbed pleasure in his silent way, he was up with the sunrise always, and at work with his eyes and his heart if not with his hands. A beautiful object too is such a one to contemplate, a pure virgin soul, a creature gentle, pious, and full of love, endowed with sweet gifts, humble and timid; but for truth's and justice's sake inflexible, thankful to God and man, fond, patient, and faithful. Clive was still his hero as ever, his patron, his splendid young prince and chieftain. Who was so brave, who was so handsome, generous, witty as Clive? To hear Clive sing, as the lad would whilst they were seated at their work, or driving along on this happy journey, through fair landscapes in the sunshine, gave J. J. the keenest pleasure; his wit was a little slow, but he would laugh with his eyes at Clive's sallies, or ponder over them and explode with laughter presently, giving a new source of amusement to these merry travellers, and little Alfred would laugh at J. J.'s laughing; and so, with a hundred harmless jokes to enliven, and the ever-changing, ever-charming smiles of nature to cheer and accompany it, the happy day's journey would come to an end.

So they travelled by the accustomed route to the prettiest town of all places where Pleasure has set up her tents; and where the gay, the melancholy, the idle or occupied, grave or haughty, come for amusement, or business, or relaxation; where London beauties, having danced and flirted all the season, may dance and flirt a little more; where well-dressed rogues from all quarters of the world assemble; where I have seen severe London lawyers, forgetting their wigs and the Temple, trying their luck against fortune and M. Benazet; where wistful schemers conspire and prick cards down, and deeply meditate the infallible coup; and try it, and lose it, and borrow a hundred francs to go home; where even virtuous British ladies venture their little stakes, and draw up their winnings with trembling rakes, by the side of ladies who are not virtuous at all, no, not even by name; where young prodigals break the bank sometimes, and carry plunder out of a place which Hercules himself could scarcely compel; where you meet wonderful countesses and princesses, whose husbands are almost always absent on their vast estates — in Italy, Spain, Piedmont — who knows where their lordships' possessions are? — while trains of suitors surround those wandering Penelopes their noble wives; Russian Boyars, Spanish Grandees of the Order of the Fleece, Counts of France, and Princes Polish and Italian innumerable, who perfume the gilded halls with their tobacco-smoke, and swear in all languages against the black and the red. The famous English monosyllable by which things, persons, luck, even eyes, are devoted to the infernal gods, we may be sure is not wanting in that Babel. Where does one not hear it? "D—— the luck," says Lord Kew, as the croupier sweeps off his lordship's rouleaux. "D—— the luck," says Brown the bagman, who has been backing his lordship with five-franc pieces. "Ah, body of Bacchus!" says Count Felice, whom we all remember a courier. "Ah, sacre coup," cries M. le Vicomte de Florac, as his last louis parts company from him — each cursing in his native tongue. Oh, sweet chorus!

That Lord Kew should be at Baden is no wonder. If you heard of him at the Finish, or at Buckingham Palace ball, or in a watch-house, or at the Third Cataract, or at a Newmarket meeting, you would not be surprised. He goes everywhere; does everything with all his might; knows everybody. Last week he won who knows how many thousand louis from the bank (it appears Brown has chosen one of the unlucky days to back his lordship). He will eat his supper as gaily after a great victory

as after a signal defeat; and we know that to win with magnanimity requires much more constancy than to lose. His sleep will not be disturbed by one event or the other. He will play skittles all the morning with perfect contentment, romp with children in the forenoon (he is the friend of half the children in the place), or he will cheerfully leave the green table and all the risk and excitement there, to take a hand at sixpenny whist with General Fogey, or to give the six Miss Fogeys a turn each in the ballroom. From H.R.H. the Prince Royal of — — who is the greatest guest at Baden, down to Brown the bagman, who does not consider himself the smallest, Lord Kew is hail fellow with everybody, and has a kind word from and for all.



CHAPTER XXVIII

IN WHICH CLIVE BEGINS TO SEE THE WORLD

In the company assembled at Baden, Clive found one or two old acquaintances; among them his friend of Paris, M. de Florac, not in quite so brilliant a condition as when Newcome had last met him on the Boulevard. Florac owned that Fortune had been very unkind to him at Baden; and, indeed, she had not only emptied his purse, but his portmanteaus, jewel-box, and linen-closet — the contents of all of which had ranged themselves on the red and black against Monsieur Benazet's crown-pieces: whatever side they took was, however, the unlucky one. "This campaign has been my Moscow, mon cher," Florac owned to Clive. "I am conquered by Benazet; I have lost in almost every combat. I have lost my treasure, my baggage, my ammunition of war, everything but my honour, which, au reste, Mons. Benazet will not accept as a stake; if he would, there are plenty here, believe me, who would set it on the trente-et-quarante. Sometimes I have had a mind to go home; my mother, who is an angel all forgiveness, would receive her prodigal, and kill the fatted veal for me. But what will you? He annoys me — the domestic veal. Besides, my brother the Abbe, though the best of Christians, is a Jew upon certain matters; a Benazet who will not troquer absolution except against repentance; and I have not for a sou of repentance in my pocket! I have been sorry, yes — but it was because odd came up in place of even, or the reverse. The accursed apres has chased me like a remorse, and when black has come up I have wished myself converted to red. Otherwise I have no repentance — I am joueur — nature has made me so, as she made my brother devout. The Archbishop of Strasbourg is of our parents; I saw his grandeur when I went lately to Strasbourg, on my last pilgrimage to the Mont de Piete. I owned to him that I would pawn his cross and ring to go play: the good prelate laughed, and said his chaplain should keep an eye on them. Will you dine with me? The landlord of my hotel was the intendant of our cousin, the Duc d'Ivry, and will give me credit to the day of judgment. I do not abuse his noble confidence. My dear! there are covers of silver put upon my table every day with which I could retrieve my fortune, did I listen to the suggestions of Satanas; but I say to him, Vade retro. Come and dine with me — Duluc's kitchen is very good."

These easy confessions were uttered by a gentleman who was nearly forty years of age, and who had indeed played the part of a young man in Paris and the great European world so long, that he knew or chose to perform no other. He did not want for abilities; had the best temper in the world; was well bred and gentlemanlike always; and was gay even after Moscow. His courage was known, and his character for bravery and another kind of gallantry probably exaggerated by his bad reputation. Had his mother not been alive, perhaps he would have believed in the virtue of no woman. But this one he worshipped, and spoke with tenderness and enthusiasm of her constant love and patience and goodness. "See her miniature!" he said, "I never separate myself from it — oh, never! It saved my life in an affair about — about a woman who was not worth the powder which poor Jules and I burned for her. His ball struck me here, upon the waistcoat, bruising my rib and sending me to my bed, which I never should have left alive but for this picture. Oh, she is an angel, my mother! I am sure that Heaven has nothing to deny that saint, and that her tears wash out my sins."

Olive smiled. "I think Madame de Florac must weep a good deal," he said.

"Enormement, my friend! My faith! I do not deny it! I give her cause, night and evening. I am possessed by demons! This little Affenthaler wine of this country has a little smack which is most agreeable. The passions tear me, my young friend! Play is fatal, but play is not so fatal as woman. Pass me the ecrevisses, they are most succulent. Take warning by me, and avoid both. I saw you roder round the green tables, and marked your eyes as they glistened over the heaps of gold, and looked at some of our beauties of Baden. Beware of such sirens, young man! and take me for your Mentor; avoiding what I have done — that understands itself. You have not played as yet? Do not do so; above all avoid a martingale, if you do. Play ought not to be an affair of calculation, but of inspiration. I have calculated infallibly, and what has been the effect? Gousset empty, tiroirs empty, necessaire parted for Strasbourg! Where is my fur pelisse, Frederic?"

"Parbleu, vous le savez bien, Monsieur le Vicomte," says Frederic, the domestic, who was waiting on Clive and his friend.

"A pelisse lined with true sable, and, worth three thousand francs, that I won of a little Russian at billiards. That pelisse at Strasbourg (where the infamous worms of the Mount of Piety are actually gnawing her). Two hundred francs and this reconnaissance, which Frederic receive, are all that now represent the pelisse. How many chemises have I, Frederic?"

“Eh, parbleu, Monsieur le Vicomte sait bien que nous avons toujours vingt-quatre chemises,” says Frederic, grumbling.

Monsieur le Vicomte springs up shrieking from the dinner-table. “Twenty-four shirts,” says he, “and I have been a week without a louis in my pocket! Belitre! Nigaud!” He flings open one drawer after another, but there are no signs of that — superfluity of linen of which the domestic spoke, whose countenance now changes from a grim frown to a grim smile.

“Ah, my faithful Frederic, I pardon thee! Mr. Newcome will understand my harmless supercherie. Frederic was in my company of the Guard, and remains with me since. He is Caleb Balderstone and I am Ravenswood. Yes, I am Edgard. Let us have coffee and a cigar, Balderstone.”

“Plait-il, Monsieur le Vicomte?” says the French Caleb.

“Thou comprehendest not English. Thou readest not Valtare Scott, thou!” cries the master. “I was recounting to Monsieur Newcome thy history and my misfortunes. Go seek coffee for us, nigaud.” And as the two gentlemen partake of that exhilarating liquor, the elder confides gaily to his guest the reason why he prefers taking coffee at the hotel to the coffee at the great Cafe of the Redoute, with a duris urgens in rebus egestass! pronounced in the true French manner.

Clive was greatly amused by the gaiety of the Viscount after his misfortunes and his Moscow; and thought that one of Mr. Baines’s circular notes might not be ill laid out in succouring this hero. It may have been to this end that Florac’s confessions tended; though, to do him justice, the incorrigible young fellow would confide his adventures to any one who would listen; and the exact state of his wardrobe, and the story of his pawned pelisse, dressing-case, rings and watches, were known to all Baden.

“You tell me to marry and range myself,” said Clive (to whom the Viscount was expatiating upon the charms of the superbe young Anglaise with whom he had seen Clive walking on the promenade). “Why do you not marry and range yourself too?”

“Eh, my dear! I am married already. You do not know it? I am married since the Revolution of July. Yes. We were poor in those days, as poor we remain. My cousins the Duc d’Ivry’s sons and his grandson were still alive. Seeing no other resource and pursued by the Arabs, I espoused the Vicomtesse de Florac. I gave her my name, you comprehend, in exchange for her own odious one. She was Miss Higg. Do you know the family Higg of Manchesterre in the comte of Lancastre? She was then a person of a ripe age. The Vicomtesse is now — ah! it is fifteen years since, and she dies not. Our union was not happy, my friend — Madame Paul de Florac is of the reformed religion — not of the Anglican Church, you understand — but a dissident I know not of what sort. We inhabited the Hotel de Florac for a while after our union, which was all of convenience, you understand. She filled her salon with ministers to make you die. She assaulted my poor father in his garden-chair, whence he could not escape her. She told my sainted mother that she was an idolatress — she who only idolatrised her children! She called us other poor Catholics who follow the rites of our fathers, des Romishes; and Rome, Babylon; and the Holy Father — a scarlet — eh! a scarlet abomination. She outraged my mother, that angel; essayed to convert the antechamber and the office; put little books in the Abbe’s bedroom. Eh, my friend! what a good king was Charles IX., and his mother what a wise sovereign! I lament that Madame de Florac should have escaped the St. Barthelemi, when no doubt she was spared on account of her tender age. We have been separated for many years; her income was greatly exaggerated. Beyond the payment of my debts I owe her nothing. I wish I could say as much of all the rest of the world. Shall we take a turn of promenade? Mauvais sujet! I see you are longing to be at the green table.”

Clive was not longing to be at the green table: but his companion was never easy at it or away from it. Next to winning, losing, M. de Florac said, was the best sport — next to losing, looking on. So he and Clive went down to the Redoute, where Lord Kew was playing with a crowd of awestruck amateurs and breathless punters admiring his valour and fortune; and Clive, saying that he knew nothing about the game, took out five Napoleons from his purse, and besought Florac to invest them in the most profitable manner at roulette. The other made some faint attempts at a scruple: but the money was speedily laid on the table, where it increased and multiplied amazingly too; so that in a quarter of an hour Florac brought quite a handful of gold pieces to his principal. Then Clive, I dare say blushing as he made the proposal, offered half the handful of Napoleons to M. de Florac, to be repaid when he thought fit. And fortune must have been very favourable to the husband of Miss Higg that night; for in the course of an hour he insisted on paying back Clive’s loan; and two days afterwards appeared with his shirt-studs (of course with his shirts also), released from captivity, his watch, rings, and chains, on the parade; and was observed to wear his celebrated fur pelisse as he drove back in a britzska from Strasbourg.

“As for myself,” wrote Clive, “I put back into my purse the five Napoleons with which I had begun; and laid down the whole mass of winnings on the table, where it was doubled and then quadrupled, and then swept up by the croupiers, greatly to my ease of mind. And then Lord Kew asked me to supper and we had a merry night.”

This was Mr. Clive’s first and last appearance as a gambler. J. J. looked very grave when he heard of these transactions. Clive’s French friend did not please his English companion at all, nor the friends of Clive’s French friend, the Russians, the Spaniards, the Italians, of sounding titles and glittering decorations, and the ladies who belonged to their society. He saw by chance Ethel, escorted by her cousin Lord Kew, passing through a crowd of this company one day. There was not one woman there who was not the heroine of some discreditable story. It was the Comtesse Calypso who had been jilted by the Duc Ulysse. It was the Marquise Ariane to whom the Prince Thesee had behaved so shamefully, and who had taken to Bacchus as a consolation. It was Madame Medee, who had absolutely killed her old father by her conduct regarding Jason: she had done everything for Jason: she had got him the toison d’or from the Queen Mother, and now had to meet him every day with his little blonde bride on his arm! J. J. compared Ethel, moving in the midst of these folks, to the Lady amidst the rout of Comus. There they were the Fauns and Satyrs: there they were, the merry Pagans: drinking and dancing, dicing and sporting; laughing out jests that never should be spoken; whispering rendezvous to be written in midnight calendars; jeering at honest people who passed under their palace windows — jolly rebels and repealers of the law. Ah, if Mrs. Brown, whose children are gone to bed at the hotel, knew but the history of that calm dignified-looking gentleman who sits under her, and over whose patient back she frantically advances and withdraws her two-franc piece, whilst his own columns of louis d’or are offering battle to fortune — how she would shrink away from the shoulder which she pushes! That man so calm and well bred, with a string of orders on his breast, so well dressed, with such white hands, has stabbed trusting hearts; severed family ties; written lying vows; signed false oaths; torn up pitilessly tender appeals for redress, and tossed away into the fire supplications blistered with tears; packed cards and cogged dice; or used pistol or sword as calmly and dexterously as he now ranges his battalions of gold pieces.

Ridley shrank away from such lawless people with the delicacy belonging to his timid and retiring nature, but it must be owned that Mr. Clive was by no means so squeamish. He did not know, in the first place, the mystery of their iniquities; and his sunny kindly spirit, undimmed by any of the cares which clouded it subsequently, was disposed to shine upon all people alike. The world was welcome to him: the day a pleasure: all nature a gay feast: scarce any dispositions discordant with his own (for pretension only made him laugh, and hypocrisy he will never be able to understand if he lives to be a hundred years old): the night brought him a long sleep, and the morning a glad waking. To those privileges of youth what enjoyments of age are comparable? what achievements of ambition? what rewards of money and fame? Clive’s happy friendly nature shone out of his face; and almost all who beheld it felt kindly towards him. As those guileless virgins of romance and ballad, who walk smiling through dark forests charming off dragons and confronting lions, the young man as yet went through the world harmless; no giant waylaid him as yet; no robbing ogre fed on him: and (greatest danger of all for one of his ardent nature) no winning enchantress or artful siren coaxed him to her cave, or lured him into her waters — haunts into which we know so many young simpletons are drawn, where their silly bones are picked and their tender flesh devoured.

The time was short which Clive spent at Baden, for it has been said the winter was approaching, and the destination of our young artists was Rome; but he may have passed some score of days here, to which he and another person in that pretty watering-place possibly looked back afterwards, as not the unhappiest period of their lives. Among Colonel Newcome’s papers to which the family biographer has had subsequent access, there are a couple of letters from Clive, dated Baden, at this time, and full of happiness, gaiety, and affection. Letter No. 1 says, “Ethel is the prettiest girl here. At the assemblies all the princes, counts, dukes, Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, are dying to dance with her. She sends her dearest love to her uncle.” By the side of the words “prettiest girl,” was written in a frank female hand the monosyllable “Stuff;” and as a note to the expression “dearest love,” with a star to mark the text and the note, are squeezed, in the same feminine characters, at the bottom of Clive’s page, the words, “That I do. E. N.”

In letter No. 2, the first two pages are closely written in Clive’s handwriting, describing his pursuits and studies, and giving amusing details of the life at Baden, and the company whom he met there — narrating his rencontre with their Paris friend, M. de Florac, and the arrival of the Duchesse d’Ivry, Florac’s cousin, whose titles the Vicomte will probably inherit. Not a word about Florac’s gambling propensities are mentioned in the letter; but Clive honestly confesses that he has staked five Napoleons, doubled them, quadrupled them, won ever so much, lost it all back again, and come away from the

table with his original five pounds in his pocket — proposing never to play any more. “Ethel,” he concluded, “is looking over my shoulder. She thinks me such a delightful creature that she is never easy without me. She bids me to say that I am the best of sons and cousins, and am, in a word, a darling du —” The rest of this important word is not given, but goose is added in the female hand. In the faded ink, on the yellow paper that may have crossed and recrossed oceans, that has lain locked in chests for years, and buried under piles of family archives, while your friends have been dying and your head has grown white — who has not disinterred mementos like these — from which the past smiles at you so sadly, shimmering out of Hades an instant but to sink back again into the cold shades, perhaps with a faint, faint sound as of a remembered tone — a ghostly echo of a once familiar laughter? I was looking of late at a wall in the Naples Museum, whereon a boy of Herculaneum eighteen hundred years ago had scratched with a nail the figure of a soldier. I could fancy the child turning round and smiling on me after having done his etching. Which of us that is thirty years old has not had his Pompeii? Deep under ashes lies the Life of Youth — the careless Sport, the Pleasure and Passion, the darling Joy. You open an old letter-box and look at your own childish scrawls, or your mother’s letters to you when you were at school; and excavate your heart. Oh me, for the day when the whole city shall be bare and the chambers unroofed — and every cranny visible to the Light above, from the Forum to the Lupanar!

Ethel takes up the pen. “My dear uncle,” she says, “while Clive is sketching out of window, let me write you a line or two on his paper, though I know you like to hear no one speak but him. I wish I could draw him for you as he stands yonder, looking the picture of good health, good spirits, and good humour. Everybody likes him. He is quite unaffected; always gay; always pleased. He draws more and more beautifully every day; and his affection for young Mr. Ridley, who is really a most excellent and astonishing young man, and actually a better artist than Clive himself, is most romantic, and does your son the greatest credit. You will order Clive not to sell his pictures, won’t you? I know it is not wrong, but your son might look higher than to be an artist. It is a rise for Mr. Ridley, but a fall for him. An artist, an organist, a pianist, all these are very good people, but you know not *de notre monde*, and Clive ought to belong to it.

“We met him at Bonn on our way to a great family gathering here; where, I must tell you, we are assembled for what I call the Congress of Baden! The chief of the house of Kew is here, and what time he does not devote to skittles, to smoking cigars, to the jeu in the evenings, to Madame d’Ivry, to Madame de Cruchecassee, and the foreign people (of whom there are a host here of the worst kind, as usual), he graciously bestows on me. Lord and Lady Dorking are here, with their meek little daughter, Clara Pulleyn; and Barnes is coming. Uncle Hobson has returned to Lombard Street to relieve guard. I think you will hear before very long of Lady Clara Newcome. Grandmamma, who was to have presided at the Congress of Baden, and still, you know, reigns over the house of Kew, has been stopped at Kissingen with an attack of rheumatism; I pity poor Aunt Julia, who can never leave her. Here are all our news. I declare I have filled the whole page; men write closer than we do. I wear the dear brooch you gave me, often and often; I think of you always, dear, kind uncle, as your affectionate Ethel.”

Besides roulette and trente-et-quarante, a number of amusing games are played at Baden, which are not performed, so to speak, *sur table*. These little diversions and jeux de societe can go on anywhere; in an alley in the park; in a picnic to this old schloss, or that pretty hunting-lodge; at a tea-table in a lodging-house or hotel; in a ball at the Redoute; in the play-rooms behind the backs of the gamblers, whose eyes are only cast upon rakes and rouleaux, and red and black; or on the broad walk in front of the conversation rooms, where thousands of people are drinking and chattering, lounging and smoking, whilst the Austrian brass band, in the little music pavilion, plays the most delightful mazurkas and waltzes. Here the widow plays her black suit and sets her bright eyes against the rich bachelor, elderly or young as may be. Here the artful practitioner, who has dealt in a thousand such games, engages the young simpleton with more money than wit; and knowing his weakness and her skill, we may safely take the odds, and back rouge et couleur to win. Here mamma, not having money, perhaps, but metal more attractive, stakes her virgin daughter against Count Fettacker’s forests and meadows; or Lord Lackland plays his coronet, of which the jewels have long since been in pawn, against Miss Bags’ three-per-cents. And so two or three funny little games were going on at Baden amongst our immediate acquaintance; besides that vulgar sport round the green table, at which the mob, with whom we have little to do, was elbowing each other. A hint of these domestic proflusions has been given to the reader in the foregoing extract from Miss Ethel Newcome’s letter: likewise some passions have been in play, of which a modest young English maiden could not be aware. Do not, however, let us be too prematurely proud of our virtue. That tariff of British virtue is wonderfully organised. Heaven help the society which made its laws! Gnats are shut out of its ports, or not admitted without scrutiny and repugnance, whilst herds of

camels are let in. The law professes to exclude some goods (or bads shall we call them?)— well, some articles of baggage, which are yet smuggled openly under the eyes of winking officers, and worn every day without shame. Shame! What is shame? Virtue is very often shameful according to the English social constitution, and shame honourable. Truth, if yours happens to differ from your neighbour's, provokes your friend's coldness, your mother's tears, the world's persecution. Love is not to be dealt in, save under restrictions which kill its sweet, healthy, free commerce. Sin in man is so light, that scarce the fine of a penny is imposed; while for woman it is so heavy that no repentance can wash it out. Ah! yes; all stories are old. You proud matrons in your Mayfair markets, have you never seen a virgin sold, or sold one? Have you never heard of a poor wayfarer fallen among robbers, and not a Pharisee to help him? of a poor woman fallen more sadly yet, abject in repentance and tears, and a crowd to stone her? I pace this broad Baden walk as the sunset is gilding the hills round about, as the orchestra blows its merry tunes, as the happy children laugh and sport in the alleys, as the lamps of the gambling-palace are lighted up, as the throngs of pleasure-hunters stroll, and smoke, and flirt, and hum: and wonder sometimes, is it the sinners who are the most sinful? Is it poor Prodigal yonder amongst the bad company, calling black and red and tossing the champagne; or brother Straitlace that grudges his repentance? Is it downcast Hagar that slinks away with poor little Ishmael in her hand; or bitter old virtuous Sarah, who scowls at her from my demure Lord Abraham's arm?

One day of the previous May, when of course everybody went to visit the Water-colour Exhibitions, Ethel Newcome was taken to see the pictures by her grandmother, that rigorous old Lady Kew, who still proposed to reign over all her family. The girl had high spirit, and very likely hot words had passed between the elder and the younger lady; such as I am given to understand will be uttered in the most polite families. They came to a piece by Mr. Hunt, representing one of those figures which he knows how to paint with such consummate truth and pathos — a friendless young girl cowering in a doorway, evidently without home or shelter. The exquisite fidelity of the details, and the plaintive beauty of the expression of the child, attracted old Lady Kew's admiration, who was an excellent judge of works of art; and she stood for some time looking at the drawing, with Ethel by her side. Nothing, in truth, could be more simple or pathetic; Ethel laughed, and her grandmother looking up from her stick on which she hobbled about, saw a very sarcastic expression in the girl's eyes.

"You have no taste for pictures, only for painters, I suppose," said Lady Kew.

"I was not looking at the picture," said Ethel, still with a smile, "but at the little green ticket in the corner."

"Sold," said Lady Kew. "Of course it is sold; all Mr. Hunt's pictures are sold. There is not one of them here on which you won't see the green ticket. He is a most admirable artist. I don't know whether his comedy or tragedy are the most excellent."

"I think, grandmamma," Ethel said, "we young ladies in the world, when we are exhibiting, ought to have little green tickets pinned on our backs, with 'Sold' written on them; it would prevent trouble and any future haggling, you know. Then at the end of the season the owner would come to carry us home."

Grandmamma only said, "Ethel, you are a fool," and hobbled on to Mr. Cattermole's picture hard by. "What splendid colour; what a romantic gloom; what a flowing pencil and dexterous hand!" Lady Kew could delight in pictures, applaud good poetry, and squeeze out a tear over a good novel too. That afternoon, young Dawkins, the rising water-colour artist, who used to come daily to the gallery and stand delighted before his own piece, was aghast to perceive that there was no green ticket in the corner of his frame, and he pointed out the deficiency to the keeper of the pictures. His landscape, however, was sold and paid for, so no great mischief occurred. On that same evening, when the Newcome family assembled at dinner in Park Lane, Ethel appeared with a bright green ticket pinned in the front of her white muslin frock, and when asked what this queer fancy meant, she made Lady Kew a curtsy, looking her full in the face, and turning round to her father, said, "I am a tableau-vivant, papa. I am Number 46 in the Exhibition of the Gallery of Painters in Water-colours."

"My love, what do you mean?" says mamma; and Lady Kew, jumping up on her crooked stick with immense agility, tore the card out of Ethel's bosom, and very likely would have boxed her ears, but that her parents were present and Lord Kew announced.

Ethel talked about pictures the whole evening, and would talk of nothing else. Grandmamma went away furious. "She told Barnes, and when everybody was gone there was a pretty row in the building," said Madam Ethel, with an arch look, when she narrated the story. "Barnes was ready to kill me and eat me; but I never was afraid of Barnes." And the biographer gathers from this little anecdote, narrated to him, never mind by whom, at a long subsequent period, that there had been great disputes in Sir Brian Newcome's establishment, fierce drawing-room battles, whereof certain pictures of a

certain painter might have furnished the cause, and in which Miss Newcome had the whole of the family forces against her. That such battles take place in other domestic establishments, who shall say or shall not say? Who, when he goes out to dinner, and is received by a bland host with a gay shake of the hand, and a pretty hostess with a gracious smile of welcome, dares to think that Mr. Johnson upstairs, half an hour before, was swearing out of his dressing-room at Mrs. Johnson, for having ordered a turbot instead of a salmon, or that Mrs. Johnson now talking to Lady Jones so nicely about their mutual darling children, was crying her eyes out as her maid was fastening her gown, as the carriages were actually driving up? The servants know these things, but not we in the dining-room. Hark with what a respectful tone Johnson begs the clergyman present to say grace!

Whatever these family quarrels may have been, let bygones be bygones, and let us be perfectly sure, that to whatever purpose Miss Ethel Newcome, for good or for evil, might make her mind up, she had quite spirit enough to hold her own. She chose to be Countess of Kew because she chose to be Countess of Kew; had she set her heart on marrying Mr. Kuhn, she would have had her way, and made the family adopt it, and called him dear Fritz, as by his godfathers and godmothers, in his baptism, Mr. Kuhn was called. Clive was but a fancy, if he had even been so much as that, not a passion, and she fancied a pretty four-pronged coronet still more.

So that the diatribe wherein we lately indulged, about the selling of virgins, by no means applies to Lady Anne Newcome, who signed the address to Mrs Stowe, the other day, along with thousands more virtuous British matrons; but should the reader haply say, "Is thy fable, O Poet, narrated concerning Tancred Pulleyn, Earl of Dorking, and Sigismunda, his wife?" the reluctant moralist is obliged to own that the cap does fit those noble personages, of whose lofty society you will, however, see but little.

For though I would like to go into an Indian Brahmin's house, and see the punkahs, and the purdahs and tattys, and the pretty brown maidens with great eyes, and great nose-rings, and painted foreheads, and slim waists cased in Cashmir shawls, Kincob scarfs, curly slippers, gilt trousers, precious anklets and bangles; and have the mystery of Eastern existence revealed to me (as who would not who has read the Arabian Nights in his youth?), yet I would not choose the moment when the Brahmin of the house was dead, his women howling, his priests doctoring his child of a widow, now frightening her with sermons, now drugging her with bang, so as to push her on his funeral pile at last, and into the arms of that carcase, stupefied, but obedient and decorous. And though I like to walk, even in fancy, in an earl's house, splendid, well ordered, where there are feasts and fine pictures and fair ladies and endless books and good company; yet there are times when the visit is not pleasant; and when the parents in that fine house are getting ready their daughter for sale, and frightening away her tears with threats, and stupefying her grief with narcotics, praying her and imploring her, and dramming her and coaxing her, and blessing her, and cursing her perhaps, till they have brought her into such a state as shall fit the poor young thing for that deadly couch upon which they are about to thrust her. When my lord and lady are so engaged I prefer not to call at their mansion, Number 1000 in Grosvenor Square, but to partake of a dinner of herbs rather than of that stalled ox which their cook is roasting whole. There are some people who are not so squeamish. The family comes, of course; the Most Reverend the Lord Arch-Brahmin of Benares will attend the ceremony; there will be flowers and lights and white favours; and quite a string of carriages up to the pagoda; and such a breakfast afterwards; and music in the street and little parish boys hurraing; and no end of speeches within and tears shed (no doubt), and His Grace the Arch-Brahmin will make a highly appropriate speech, just with a faint scent of incense about it as such a speech ought to have; and the young person will slip away unperceived, and take off her veils, wreaths, orange-flowers, bangles and finery, and will put on a plain dress more suited for the occasion, and the house-door will open — and there comes the SUTTEE in company of the body: yonder the pile is waiting on four wheels with four horses, the crowd hurrahs and the deed is done.

This ceremony amongst us is so stale and common that to be sure there is no need to describe its rites, and as women sell themselves for what you call an establishment every day; to the applause of themselves, their parents, and the world, why on earth should a man ape at originality and pretend to pity them? Never mind about the lies at the altar, the blasphemy against the godlike name of love, the sordid surrender, the smiling dishonour. What the deuce does a mariage de convenance mean but all this, and are not such sober Hymeneal torches more satisfactory often than the most brilliant love matches that ever flamed and burnt out? Of course. Let us not weep when everybody else is laughing: let us pity the agonised duchess when her daughter, Lady Atalanta, runs away with the doctor — of course, that's respectable; let us pity Lady Iphigenia's father when that venerable chief is obliged to offer up his darling child; but it is over her part of the business that a decorous painter would throw the veil now. Her ladyship's sacrifice is performed, and the less said about it

the better.

Such was the case regarding an affair which appeared in due subsequence in the newspapers not long afterwards under the fascinating title of "Marriage in High Life," and which was in truth the occasion of the little family Congress of Baden which we are now chronicling. We all know — everybody at least who has the slightest acquaintance with the army list — that, at the commencement of their life, my Lord Kew, my Lord Viscount Rooster, the Earl of Dorking's eldest son, and the Honourable Charles Belsize, familiarly called Jack Belsize, were subaltern officers in one of His Majesty's regiments of cuirassier guards. They heard the chimes at midnight like other young men, they enjoyed their fun and frolics as gentlemen of spirit will do; sowing their wild oats plentifully, and scattering them with boyish profusion. Lady Kew's luck had blessed him with more sacks of oats than fell to the lot of his noble young companions. Lord Dorking's house is known to have been long impoverished; an excellent informant, Major Pendennis, has entertained me with many edifying accounts of the exploits of Lord Rooster's grandfather "with the wild Prince and Pains," of his feats in the hunting-field, over the bottle, over the dice-box. He played two nights and two days at a sitting with Charles Fox, when they both lost sums awful to reckon. He played often with Lord Steyne, and came away, as all men did, dreadful sufferers from those midnight encounters. His descendants incurred the penalties of the progenitor's imprudence, and Chanticleere, though one of the finest castles in England, is splendid but for a month in the year. The estate is mortgaged up to the very castle windows. "Dorking cannot cut a stick or kill a buck in his own park," the good old Major used to tell with tragic accents, "he lives by his cabbages, grapes, and pineapples, and the fees which people give for seeing the place and gardens, which are still the show of the county, and among the most splendid in the island. When Dorking is at Chanticleere, Ballard, who married his sister, lends him the plate and sends three men with it. Four cooks inside, and four maids and six footmen on the roof, with a butler driving, come down from London in a trap, and wait the month. And as the last carriage of the company drives away, the servants' coach is packed, and they all bowl back to town again. It's pitiable, sir, pitiable."

In Lord Kew's youth, the names of himself and his two noble friends appeared on innumerable slips of stamped paper, conveying pecuniary assurances of a promissory nature; all of which promises, my Lord Kew singly and most honourably discharged. Neither of his two companions-in-arms had the means of meeting these engagements. Ballard, Rooster's uncle, was said to make his lordship some allowance. As for Jack Belsize: how he lived; how he laughed; how he dressed himself so well, and looked so fat and handsome; how he got a shilling to pay for a cab or a cigar; what ravens fed him; was a wonder to all. The young men claimed kinsmanship with one another, which those who are learned in the peerage may unravel.

When Lord Dorking's eldest daughter married the Honourable and Venerable Dennis Gallowglass, Archdeacon of Bullintubber (and at present Viscount Gallowglass and Killbrogue, and Lord Bishop of Ballyshannon), great festivities took place at Chanticleere, whither the relatives of the high contracting parties were invited. Among them came poor Jack Belsize, and hence the tears which are dropping at Baden at this present period of our history. Clara Pulleyn was then a pretty little maiden of sixteen, and Jack a handsome guardsman of six or seven and twenty. As she had been especially warned against Jack as a wicked young rogue, whose antecedents were wofully against him; as she was never allowed to sit near him at dinner, or to walk with him, or to play at billiards with him, or to waltz with him; as she was scolded if he spoke a word to her, or if he picked up her glove, or touched her hand in a round game, or caught him when they were playing at blindman's-buff; as they neither of them had a penny in the world, and were both very good-looking, of course Clara was always catching Jack at blindman's-buff; constantly lighting upon him in the shrubberies or corridors, etc. etc. She fell in love (she was not the first) with Jack's broad chest and thin waist; she thought his whiskers as indeed they were, the handsomest pair in all His Majesty's Brigade of Cuirassiers.

We know not what tears were shed in the vast and silent halls of Chanticleere, when the company were gone, and the four cooks, and four maids, six footmen, and temporary butler had driven back in their private trap to the metropolis, which is not forty miles distant from that splendid castle. How can we tell? The guests departed, the lodge-gates shut; all is mystery:— darkness with one pair of wax candles blinking dismally in a solitary chamber; all the rest dreary vistas of brown hollands, rolled Turkey carpets, gaunt ancestors on the walls scowling out of the twilight blank. The imagination is at liberty to depict his lordship, with one candle, over his dreadful endless tapes and papers; her ladyship with the other, and an old, old novel, wherein perhaps, Mrs. Radcliffe describes a castle as dreary as her own; and poor little Clara sighing and crying in the midst of these funereal splendours, as lonely and heart-sick as Oriana in her moated grange:— poor little Clara!

Lord Kew's drag took the young men to London; his lordship driving, and the servants sitting inside. Jack sat behind with the two grooms, and tooted on a cornet-a-piston in the most melancholy manner. He partook of no refreshment on the road. His silence at his clubs was remarked: smoking, billiards, military duties, and this and that, roused him a little, and presently Jack was alive again. But then came the season, Lady Clara Pulleyn's first season in London, and Jack was more alive than ever. There was no ball he did not go to; no opera (that is to say, no opera of certain operas) which he did not frequent. It was easy to see by his face, two minutes after entering a room, whether the person he sought was there or absent; not difficult for those who were in the secret to watch in another pair of eyes the bright kindling signals which answered Jack's fiery glances. Ah! how beautiful he looked on his charger on the birthday, all in a blaze of scarlet, and bullion, and steel. O Jack! tear her out of yon carriage, from the side of yonder livid, feathered, painted, bony dowager! place her behind you on the black charger; cut down the policeman, and away with you! The carriage rolls in through St. James's Park; Jack sits alone with his sword dropped to the ground, or only *atra cura* on the crupper behind him; and Snip, the tailor, in the crowd, thinks it is for fear of him Jack's head droops. Lady Clara Pulleyn is presented by her mother, the Countess of Dorking; and Jack is arrested that night as he is going out of White's to meet her at the Opera.

Jack's little exploits are known in the Insolvent Court, where he made his appearances as Charles Belsize, commonly called the Honourable Charles Belsize, whose dealings were smartly chronicled by the indignant moralists of the press of those days. The Scourge flogged him heartily. The Whip (of which the accomplished editor was himself in Whitecross Street prison) was especially virtuous regarding him; and the Penny Voice of Freedom gave him an awful dressing. I am not here to scourge sinners; I am true to my party; it is the other side this humble pen attacks; let us keep to the virtuous and respectable, for as for poor sinners they get the whipping-post every day. One person was faithful to poor Jack through all his blunders and follies and extravagance and misfortunes, and that was the pretty young girl of Chanticleere, round whose young affections his luxuriant whiskers had curled. And the world may cry out at Lord Kew for sending his brougham to the Queen's Bench prison, and giving a great feast at Grignon's to Jack on the day of his liberation, but I for one will not quarrel with his lordship. He and many other sinners had a jolly night. They said Kew made a fine speech, in hearing and acknowledging which Jack Belsize wept copiously. Barnes Newcome was in a rage at Jack's manumission, and sincerely hoped Mr. Commissioner would give him a couple of years longer; and cursed and swore with a great liberality on hearing of his liberty.

That this poor prodigal should marry Clara Pulleyn, and by way of a dowry lay his schedule at her feet, was out of the question. His noble father, Lord Highgate, was furious against him; his eldest brother would not see him; he had given up all hopes of winning his darling prize long ago, and one day there came to him a great packet bearing the seal of Chanticleere, containing a wretched little letter signed C. P., and a dozen sheets of Jack's own clumsy writing, delivered who knows how, in what crush-rooms, quadrilles, bouquets, balls, and in which were scrawled Jack's love and passion and ardour. How many a time had he looked into the dictionary at White's, to see whether eternal was spelt with an e, and adore with one a or two! There they were, the incoherent utterances of his brave longing heart; and those two wretched, wretched lines signed C., begging that C.'s little letters might too be returned or destroyed. To do him justice, he burnt them loyally every one along with his own waste paper. He kept not one single little token which she had given him or let him take. The rose, the glove, the little handkerchief which she had dropped to him, how he cried over them! The ringlet of golden hair — he burnt them all, all in his own fire in the prison, save a little, little bit of the hair, which might be any one's, which was the colour of his sister's. Kew saw the deed done; perhaps he hurried away when Jack came to the very last part of the sacrifice, and flung the hair into the fire, where he would have liked to fling his heart and his life too.

So Clara was free, and the year when Jack came out of prison and went abroad, she passed the season in London dancing about night after night, and everybody said she was well out of that silly affair with Jack Belsize. It was then that Barnes Newcome, Esq., a partner of the wealthy banking firm of Hobson Brothers and Newcome, son and heir of Sir Brian Newcome, of Newcome, Bart., and M. P., descended in right line from Bryan de Newcomyn, slain at Hastings, and barber-surgeon to Edward the Confessor, etc. etc., cast the eyes of regard on the Lady Clara Pulleyn, who was a little pale and languid certainly, but had blue eyes, a delicate skin, and a pretty person, and knowing her previous history as well as you who have just perused it, deigned to entertain matrimonial intentions towards her ladyship.

Not one of the members of these most respectable families, excepting poor little Clara perhaps, poor little fish (as if she had any call but to do her duty, or to ask a *quelle sauce elle serait mangée*), protested against this little affair of traffic; Lady Dorking had a brood of little chickens to succeed Clara. There was little Hennie, who was sixteen, and Biddy, who was

fourteen, and Adelaide, and who knows how many more? How could she refuse a young man, not very agreeable it is true, nor particularly amiable, nor of good birth, at least on his father's side, but otherwise eligible, and heir to so many thousands a year? The Newcomes, on their side, think it a desirable match. Barnes, it must be confessed, is growing rather selfish, and has some bachelor ways which a wife will reform. Lady Kew is strongly for the match. With her own family interest, Lord Steyne and Lord Kew, her nephews, and Barnes's own father-in-law, Lord Dorking, in the Peers, why shall not the Newcomes sit there too, and resume the old seat which all the world knows they had in the time of Richard III.? Barnes and his father had got up quite a belief about a Newcome killed at Bosworth, along with King Richard, and hated Henry VII. as an enemy of their noble race. So all the parties were pretty well agreed. Lady Anne wrote rather a pretty little poem about welcoming the white Fawn to the Newcome bowers, and "Clara" was made to rhyme with "fairer," and "timid does and antlered deer to dot the glades of Chanticleer," quite in a picturesque way. Lady Kew pronounced that the poem was very pretty indeed.

The year after Jack Belsize made his foreign tour he returned to London for the season. Lady Clara did not happen to be there; her health was a little delicate, and her kind parents took her abroad; so all things went on very smoothly and comfortably indeed.

Yes, but when things were so quiet and comfortable, when the ladies of the two families had met at the Congress of Baden, and liked each other so much, when Barnes and his papa the Baronet, recovered from his illness, were actually on their journey from Aix-la-Chapelle, and Lady Kew in motion from Kissingen to the Congress of Baden, why on earth should Jack Belsize, haggard, wild, having been winning great sums, it was said, at Hombourg, forsake his luck there, and run over frantically to Baden? He wore a great thick beard, a great slouched hat — he looked like nothing more or less than a painter or an Italian brigand. Unsuspecting Clive, remembering the jolly dinner which Jack had procured for him at the Guards' mess in St. James's, whither Jack himself came from the Horse Guards — simple Clive, seeing Jack enter the town, hailed him cordially, and invited him to dinner, and Jack accepted, and Clive told him all the news he had of the place; how Kew was there, and Lady Anne Newcome, and Ethel; and Barnes was coming. "I am not very fond of him either," says Clive, smiling, when Belsize mentioned his name. So Barnes was coming to marry that pretty little Lady Clara Pulleyn. The knowing youth! I dare say he was rather pleased with his knowledge of the fashionable world, and the idea that Jack Belsize would think he, too, was somebody.

Jack drank an immense quantity of champagne, and the dinner over, as they could hear the band playing from Clive's open windows in the snug clean little Hotel de France, Jack proposed they should go on the promenade. M. de Florac was of the party; he had been exceedingly jocular when Lord Kew's name was mentioned, and said, "*Ce petit Kiou! M. le Duc d'Ivry, mon oncle, l'honneur d'une amitie toute particuliere.*" These three gentlemen walked out; the promenade was crowded, the was band playing "Home, sweet Home" very sweetly, and the very first persons they met on the walk were the Lords of Kew and Dorking, on the arm of which latter venerable peer his daughter Lady Clara was hanging.

Jack Belsize, in a velvet coat, with a sombrero slouched over his face, with a beard reaching to his waist, was, no doubt, not recognised at first by the noble lord of Dorking, for he was greeting the other two gentlemen with his usual politeness and affability; when, of a sudden, Lady Clara looking up, gave a little shriek and fell down lifeless on the gravel walk. Then the old earl recognised Mr. Belsize, and Clive heard him say, "You villain, how dare you come here?"

Belsize had flung himself down to lift up Clara, calling her frantically by her name, when old Dorking sprang to seize him.

"Hands off, my lord," said the other, shaking the old man from his back. "Confound you, Jack, hold your tongue," roars out Kew. Clive runs for a chair, and a dozen were forthcoming. Florac skips back with a glass of water. Belsize runs towards the awakening girl: and the father, for an instant losing all patience and self-command, trembling in every limb, lifts his stick, and says again, "Leave her, you ruffian." "Lady Clara has fainted again, sir," says Captain Belsize. "I am staying at the Hotel de France. If you touch me, old man" (this in a very low voice), "by Heaven I shall kill you. I wish you good morning;" and taking a last long look at the lifeless girl, he lifts his hat and walks away. Lord Dorking mechanically takes his hat off, and stands stupidly gazing after him. He beckoned Clive to follow him, and a crowd of the frequenters of the place are by this time closed round the fainting young lady.

Here was a pretty incident in the Congress of Baden!

CHAPTER XXIX

IN WHICH BARNES COMES A-WOOING

Ethel had all along known that her holiday was to be a short one, and that, her papa and Barnes arrived, there was to be no more laughing and fun and sketching and walking with Clive; so she took the sunshine while it lasted, determined to bear with a stout heart the bad weather.

Sir Brian Newcome and his eldest born arrived at Baden on the very night of Jack Belsize's performance upon the promenade; of course it was necessary to inform the young bridegroom of the facts. His acquaintances of the public, who by this time know his temper, and are acquainted with his language, can imagine the explosions of the one and the vehemence of the other; it was a perfect feu d'artifice of oaths which he sent up. Mr. Newcome only fired off these volleys of curses when he was in a passion, but then he was in a passion very frequently.

As for Lady Clara's little accident, he was disposed to treat that very lightly. "Poor dear Clara, of course, of course," he said, "she's been accustomed to fainting fits; no wonder she was agitated on the sight of that villain, after his infernal treatment of her. If I had been there" (a volley of oaths comes here along the whole line) "I should have strangled the scoundrel; I should have murdered him."

"Mercy, Barnes!" cries Lady Anne.

"It was a mercy Barnes was not there," says Ethel, gravely; "a fight between him and Captain Belsize would have been awful indeed."

"I am afraid of no man, Ethel," says Barnes fiercely, with another oath.

"Hit one of your own size, Barnes," says Miss Ethel (who had a number of school-phrases from her little brothers, and used them on occasions skilfully). "Hit Captain Belsize, he has no friends."

As Jack Belsize from his height and strength was fitted to be not only an officer but actually a private in his former gallant regiment, and brother Barnes was but a puny young gentleman, the idea of a personal conflict between them was rather ridiculous. Some notion of this sort may have passed through Sir Brian's mind, for the Baronet said with his usual solemnity, "It is the cause, Ethel, it is the cause, my dear, which gives strength; in such a cause as Barnes's, with a beautiful young creature to protect from a villain, any man would be strong, any man would be strong." "Since his last attack," Barnes used to say, "my poor old governor is exceedingly shaky, very groggy about the head;" which was the fact. Barnes was already master at Newcome and the bank, and awaiting with perfect composure the event which was to place the blood-red hand of the Newcome baronetcy on his own brougham.

Casting his eyes about the room, a heap of drawings, the work of a well-known hand which he hated, met his eye. There were a half-dozen sketches of Baden; Ethel on horseback again; the children and the dogs just in the old way. "D—— him, is he here?" screams out Barnes. "Is that young pothouse villain here? and hasn't Kew knocked his head off? Is Clive Newcome here, sir," he cries out to his father. "The Colonel's son. I have no doubt they met by ——"

"By what, Barnes?" says Ethel.

"Clive is here, is he?" says the Baronet; "making caricatures, hey? You did not mention him in your letters, Lady Anne."

Sir Brian was evidently very much touched by his last attack.

Ethel blushed; it was a curious fact, but there had been no mention of Clive in the ladies' letters to Sir Brian.

"My dear, we met him by the merest chance, at Bonn, travelling with a friend of his; and he speaks a little German, and was very useful to us, and took one of the boys in his britzka the whole way."

"Boys always crowd in a carriage," says Sir Brian. "Kick your shins; always in the way. I remember, when we used to come in the carriage from Clapham, when we were boys, I used to kick my brother Tom's shins. Poor Tom, he was a devilish wild fellow in those days. You don't recollect Tom, my Lady Anne?"

Further anecdotes from Sir Brian are interrupted by Lord Kew's arrival. "How dydo, Kew!" cries Barnes. "How's Clara?" and Lord Kew walking up with great respect to shake hands with Sir Brian, says, "I am glad to see you looking so

well, sir," and scarcely takes any notice of Barnes. That Mr. Barnes Newcome was an individual not universally beloved, is a point of history of which there can be no doubt.

"You have not told me how Clara is, my good fellow," continues Barnes. "I have heard all about her meeting with that villain, Jack Belsize."

"Don't call names, my good fellow," says Lord Kew. "It strikes me you don't know Belsize well enough to call him by nicknames or by other names. Lady Clara Pulleyn, I believe, is very unwell indeed."

"Confound the fellow! How dared he to come here?" cries Barnes, backing from this little rebuff.

"Dare is another ugly word. I would advise you not to use it to the fellow himself."

"What do you mean?" says Barnes, looking very serious in an instant.

"Easy, my good friend. Not so very loud. It appears, Ethel, that poor Jack — I know him pretty well, you see, Barnes, and may call him by what names I like — had been dining today with cousin Clive; he and M. de Florac; and that they went with Jack to the promenade, not in the least aware of Mr. Jack Belsize's private affairs, or of the shindy that was going to happen."

"By Jove, he shall answer for it," cries out Barnes in a loud voice.

"I dare say he will, if you ask him," says the other drily; "but not before ladies. He'd be afraid of frightening them. Poor Jack was always as gentle as a lamb before women. I had some talk with the Frenchman just now," continued Lord Kew gaily, as if wishing to pass over this side of the subject. "Mi Lord Kiou," says he, "we have made your friend Jac to hear reason. He is a little fou, your friend Jack. He drank champagne at dinner like an ogre. How is the charmante Miss Clara? Florac, you see, calls her Miss Clara, Barnes; the world calls her Lady Clara. You call her Clara. You happy dog, you."

"I don't see why that infernal young cub of a Clive is always meddling in our affairs," cries out Barnes, whose rage was perpetually being whipped into new outcries. "Why has he been about this house? Why is he here?"

"It is very well for you that he was, Barnes," Lord Kew said. "The young fellow showed great temper and spirit. There has been a famous row, but don't be alarmed, it is all over. It is all over, everybody may go to bed and sleep comfortably. Barnes need not get up in the morning to punch Jack Belsize's head. I'm sorry for your disappointment, you Fenchurch Street fire-eater. Come away. It will be but proper, you know, for a bridegroom elect to go and ask news of la charmante Miss Clara."

"As we went out of the house," Lord Kew told Clive, "I said to Barnes that every word I had uttered upstairs with regard to the reconciliation was a lie. That Jack Belsize was determined to have his blood, and was walking under the lime-trees by which we had to pass with a thundering big stick. You should have seen the state the fellow was in, sir. The sweet youth started back, and turned as yellow as a cream cheese. Then he made a pretext to go into his room, and said it was for his pocket-handkerchief, but I know it was for a pistol; for he dropped his hand from my arm into his pocket, every time I said 'Here's Jack,' as we walked down the avenue to Lord Dorking's apartment."

A great deal of animated business had been transacted during the two hours subsequent to poor Lady Clara's mishap. Clive and Belsize had returned to the former's quarters, while gentle J. J. was utilising the last rays of the sun to tint a sketch which he had made during the morning. He fled to his own apartment on the arrival of the fierce-looking stranger, whose glaring eyes, pallid looks, shaggy beard, clutched hands, and incessant gasps and mutterings as he strode up and down, might well scare a peaceable person. Very terrible must Jack have looked as he trampled those boards in the growing twilight, anon stopping to drink another tumbler of champagne, then groaning expressions of inarticulate wrath, and again sinking down on Clive's bed with a dropping head and breaking voice, crying, "Poor little thing, poor little devil."

"If the old man sends me a message, you will stand by me, won't you, Newcome? He was a fierce old fellow in his time, and I have seen him shoot straight enough at Chanticleere. I suppose you know what the affair is about?"

"I never heard of it before, but I think I understand," says Clive, gravely.

"I can't ask Kew, he is one of the family; he is going to marry Miss Newcome. It is no use asking him."

All Clive's blood tingled at the idea that any man was going to marry Miss Newcome. He knew it before — a fortnight since, and it was nothing to him to hear it. He was glad that the growing darkness prevented his face from being seen. "I am of the family, too," said Clive, "and Barnes Newcome and I had the same grandfather."

"Oh, yes, old boy — old banker, the weaver, what was he? I forgot," says poor Jack, kicking on Clive's bed, "in that

family the Newcomes don't count. I beg your pardon," groans poor Jack.

They lapse into silence, during which Jack's cigar glimmers from the twilight corner where Clive's bed is; whilst Clive wafts his fragrance out of the window where he sits, and whence he has a view of Lady Anne Newcome's windows to the right, over the bridge across the little rushing river, at the Hotel de Hollande hard by. The lights twinkle in the booths under the pretty lime avenues. The hum of distant voices is heard; the gambling-palace is all in a blaze; it is an assembly night, and from the doors of the conversation rooms, as they open and close, escape gusts of harmony. Behind on the little hill the darkling woods lie calm, the edges of the fir-trees cut sharp against the sky, which is clear with a crescent moon and the lambent lights of the starry hosts of heaven. Clive does not see pine-robed hills and shining stars, nor think of pleasure in its palace yonder, nor of pain writhing on his own bed within a few feet of him, where poor Belsize was groaning. His eyes are fixed upon a window whence comes the red light of a lamp, across which shadows float now and again. So every light in every booth yonder has a scheme of its own: every star above shines by itself; and each individual heart of ours goes on brightening with its own hopes, burning with its own desires, and quivering with its own pain.

The reverie is interrupted by the waiter, who announces M. le Vicomte de Florac, and a third cigar is added to the other two smoky lights. Belsize is glad to see Florac, whom he has known in a thousand haunts. "He will do my business for me. He has been out half a dozen times," thinks Jack. It would relieve the poor fellow's boiling blood that some one would let a little out. He lays his affair before Florac; he expects a message from Lord Dorking.

"Comment donc?" cries Florac; "il y avait donc quelque chose! Cette pauvre petite Miss! Vous voulez tuer le pere, apres avoir delaisse la fille? Cherchez d'autres temoins, Monsieur. Le Vicomte de Florac ne se fait pas complice de telles lachetes."

"By Heaven," says Jack, sitting up on the bed, with his eyes glaring, "I have a great mind, Florac, to wring your infernal little neck, and to fling you out of the window. Is all the world going to turn against me? I am half mad as it is. If any man dares to think anything wrong regarding that little angel, or to fancy that she is not as pure, and as good, and as gentle, and as innocent, by Heaven, as any angel there — if any man thinks I'd be the villain to hurt her, I should just like to see him," says Jack. "By the Lord, sir, just bring him to me. Just tell the waiter to send him upstairs. Hurt her! I hurt her! Oh! I'm a fool! a fool! a d — d fool! Who's that?"

"It's Kew," says a voice out of the darkness from behind cigar No. 4, and Clive now, having a party assembled, scrapes a match and lights his candles.

"I heard your last words, Jack," Lord Kew says bluntly, "and you never spoke more truth in your life. Why did you come here? What right had you to stab that poor little heart over again, and frighten Lady Clara with your confounded hairy face? You promised me you would never see her. You gave your word of honour you wouldn't, when I gave you the money to go abroad. Hang the money, I don't mind that; it was on your promise that you would prowl about her no more. The Dorkings left London before you came there; they gave you your innings. They have behaved kindly and fairly enough to that poor girl. How was she to marry such a bankrupt beggar as you are? What you have done is a shame, Charley Belsize. I tell you it is unmanly and cowardly."

"Pst," says Florac, "numero deux, voila le mot lache."

"Don't bite your thumb at me," Kew went on. "I know you could thrash me, if that's what you mean by shaking your fists; so could most men. I tell you again — you have done a bad deed; you have broken your word of honour, and you knocked down Clara Pulleyn today as cruelly as if you had done it with your hand."

With this rush upon him, and fiery assault of Kew, Belsize was quite bewildered. The huge man flung up his great arms, and let them drop at his side as a gladiator that surrenders, and asks for pity. He sank down once more on the iron bed.

"I don't know," says he, rolling and rolling round, in one of his great hands, one of the brass knobs of the bed by which he was seated. "I don't know, Frank," says he, "what the world is coming to, or me either; here is twice in one night I have been called a coward by you, and by that little what-d'-you-call-'m. I beg your pardon, Florac. I don't know whether it is very brave in you to hit a chap when he is down: hit again, I have no friends. I have acted like a blackguard, I own that; I did break my promise; you had that safe enough, Frank, my boy; but I did not think it would hurt her to see me," says he, with a dreadful sob in his voice. "By — I would have given ten years of my life to look at her. I was going mad without her. I tried every place, everything; went to Ems, to Wiesbaden, to Hombourg, and played like hell. It used to excite me once, and

now I don't care for it. I won no end of money — no end for a poor beggar like me, that is; but I couldn't keep away. I couldn't, and if she had been at the North Pole, by Heavens I would have followed her."

"And so just to look at her, just to give your confounded stupid eyes two minutes' pleasure, you must bring about all this pain, you great baby," cries Kew, who was very soft-hearted, and in truth quite torn himself by the sight of poor Jack's agony.

"Get me to see her for five minutes, Kew," cries the other, griping his comrade's hand in his; "but for five minutes."

"For shame," cries Lord Kew, shaking away his hand, "be a man, Jack, and have no more of this puling. It's not a baby, that must have its toy, and cries because it can't get it. Spare the poor girl this pain, for her own sake, and balk yourself of the pleasure of bullying and making her unhappy."

Belsize started up with looks that were by no means pleasant. "There's enough of this chaff I have been called names, and blackguarded quite sufficiently for one sitting. I shall act as I please. I choose to take my own way, and if any gentleman stops me he has full warning." And he fell to tugging his mustachios, which were of a dark tawny hue, and looked as warlike as he had ever done on any field-day.

"I take the warning!" said Lord Kew. "And if I know the way you are going, as I think I do, I will do my best to stop you, madman as you are! You can hardly propose to follow her to her own doorway and pose yourself before your mistress as the murderer of her father, like Rodrigue in the French play. If Rooster were here it would be his business to defend his sister; In his absence I will take the duty on myself, and I say to you, Charles Belsize, in the presence of these gentlemen, that any man who insults this young lady, who persecutes her with his presence, knowing it can but pain her, who persists in following her when he has given his word of honour to avoid her, that such a man is —"

"What, my Lord Kew?" cries Belsize, whose chest began to heave.

"You know what," answers the other. "You know what a man is who insults a poor woman, and breaks his word of honour. Consider the word said, and act upon it as you think fit."

"I owe you four thousand pounds, Kew," says Belsize, "and I have got four thousand on the bills, besides four hundred when I came out of that place."

"You insult me the more," cries Kew, flashing out, "by alluding to the money. If you will leave this place tomorrow, well and good; if not, you will please to give me a meeting. Mr. Newcome will you be so kind as to act as my friend? We are connexions, you know, and this gentleman chooses to insult a lady who is about to become one of our family."

"C'est bien, milord. Ma foi! c'est d'agir en vrai gentilhomme," says Florac, delighted. "Touchez-la, mon petit Kiou. Tu as du coeur. Godam! you are a brave! A brave fellow!" and the Viscount reached out his hand cordially to Lord Kew.

His purpose was evidently pacific. From Kew he turned to the great guardsman, and taking him by the coat began to apostrophise him. "And you, mon gros," says he, "is there no way of calming this hot blood without a saignee? Have you a penny to the world? Can you hope to carry off your Chimene, O Rodrigue, and live by robbing afterwards on the great way? Suppose you kill ze Fazer, you kill Kiou, you kill Roostere, your Chimene will have a pretty moon of honey."

"What the devil do you mean about your Chimene and your Rodrigue? Do you mean, Viscount —?" says Belsize, "Jack Belsize once more, and he dashed his hand across his eyes. Kew has riled me, and he drove me half wild. I ain't much of a Frenchman, but I know enough of what you said, to say it's true, by Jove, and that Frank Kew's a trump. That's what you mean. Give us your hand, Frank. God bless you, old boy; don't be too hard upon me, you know I'm d — d miserable, that I am. Hullo! What's this?" Jack's pathetic speech was interrupted at this instant, for the Vicomte de Florac in his enthusiasm rushed into his arms, and jumped up towards his face and proceeded to kiss Jack. A roar of immense laughter, as he shook the little Viscount off, cleared the air and ended this quarrel.

Everybody joined in this chorus, the Frenchman with the rest, who said, "he loved to laugh meme when he did not know why." And now came the moment of the evening, when Clive, according to Lord Kew's saying, behaved so well and prevented Barnes from incurring a great danger. In truth, what Mr. Clive did or said amounted exactly to nothing. What moments can we not all remember in our lives when it would have been so much wittier and wiser to say and do nothing?

Florac, a very sober drinker like most of his nation, was blessed with a very fine appetite, which, as he said, renewed itself thrice a day at least. He now proposed supper, and poor Jack was for supper too, and especially more drink, champagne and seltzer-water; "bring champagne and seltzer-water, there is nothing like it." Clive could not object to this entertainment, which was ordered forthwith, and the four young men sat down to share it.

Whilst Florac was partaking of his favourite ecrevisses, giving not only his palate but his hands, his beard, his mustachios and cheeks a full enjoyment of the sauce which he found so delicious, he chose to revert now and again to the occurrences which had just passed, and which had better perhaps have been forgotten, and gaily rallied Belsize upon his warlike humour. "If ze petit pretendu was here, what would you have done wiz him, Jac? You would croquer im, like zis ecrevisse, hein? You would mache his bones, hein?"

Jack, who had forgotten to put the seltzer-water into his champagne, writhed at the idea of having Barnes Newcome before him, and swore, could he but see Barnes, he would take the little villain's life.

And but for Clive, Jack might actually have beheld his enemy. Young Clive after the meal went to the window with his eternal cigar, and of course began to look at That Other window. Here, as he looked, a carriage had at the moment driven up. He saw two servants descend, then two gentlemen, and then he heard a well-known voice swearing at the couriers. To his credit be it said, he checked the exclamation which was on his lips, and when he came back to the table did not announce to Kew or his right-hand neighbour Belsize, that his uncle and Barnes had arrived. Belsize, by this time, had had quite too much wine: when the viscount went away, poor Jack's head was nodding; he had been awake all the night before; sleepless for how many nights previous. He scarce took any notice of the Frenchman's departure.

Lord Kew remained. He was for taking Jack to walk, and for reasoning with him further, and for entering more at large than perhaps he chose to do before the two others upon this family dispute. Clive took a moment to whisper to Lord Kew, "My uncle and Barnes are arrived, don't let Belsize go out; for goodness' sake let us get him to bed."

And lest the poor fellow should take a fancy to visit his mistress by moonlight, when he was safe in his room Lord Kew softly turned the key in Mr. Jack's door.



CHAPTER XXX

A RETREAT

As Clive lay awake revolving the strange incidents of the day, and speculating upon the tragedy in which he had been suddenly called to take a certain part, a sure presentiment told him that his own happy holiday was come to an end, and that the clouds and storm which he had always somehow foreboded, were about to break and obscure this brief pleasant period of sunshine. He rose at a very early hour, flung his windows open, looked out no doubt towards those other windows in the neighbouring hotel, where he may have fancied he saw a curtain stirring, drawn by a hand that every hour now he longed more to press. He turned back into his chamber with a sort of groan, and surveyed some of the relics of the last night's little feast, which still remained on the table. There were the champagne-flasks which poor Jack Belsize had emptied, the tall seltzer-water bottle, from which the gases had issued and mingled with the hot air of the previous night's talk; glasses with dregs of liquor, ashes of cigars, or their black stumps, strewing the cloth; the dead men, the burst guns of yesterday's battle. Early as it was, his neighbour J. J. had been up before him. Clive could hear him singing as was his wont when the pencil went well, and the colours arranged themselves to his satisfaction over his peaceful and happy work.

He pulled his own drawing-table to the window, set out his board and colour-box, filled a great glass from the seltzer-water bottle, drank some of the vapid liquor, and plunged his brushes in the rest, with which he began to paint. The work all went wrong. There was no song for him over his labour; he dashed brush and board aside after a while, opened his drawers, pulled out his portmanteaus from under the bed, and fell to packing mechanically. J. J. heard the noise from the next room, and came in smiling, with a great painting-brush in his mouth.

"Have the bills in, J. J.," says Clive. "Leave your cards on your friends, old boy; say good-bye to that pretty little strawberry-girl whose picture you have been doing; polish it off today, and dry the little thing's tears. I read P.P.C. in the stars last night, and my familiar spirit came to me in a vision, and said, 'Clive, son of Thomas, put thy travelling-boots on.'"

Lest any premature moralist should prepare to cry fie against the good, pure-minded little J. J., I hereby state that his strawberry-girl was a little village maiden of seven years old, whose sweet little picture a bishop purchased at the next year's Exhibition.

"Are you going already?" cries J. J., removing the bit out of his mouth. "I thought you had arranged parties for a week to come, and that the princesses and the duchesses had positively forbidden the departure of your lordship!"

"We have dallied at Capua long enough," says Clive; "and the legions have the route for Rome. So wills Hannibal, the son of Hasdrubal."

"The son of Hasdrubal is quite right," his companion answered; "the sooner we march the better. I have always said it; I will get all the accounts in. Hannibal has been living like a voluptuous Carthaginian prince. One, two, three champagne-bottles! There will be a deuce of a bill to pay."

"Ah! there will be a deuce of a bill to pay," says Clive, with a groan whereof J. J. knew the portent; for the young men had the confidence of youth one in another. Clive was accustomed to pour out his full heart to any crony who was near him; and indeed had he spoken never a word, his growing attachment to his cousin was not hard to see. A hundred times, and with the glowing language and feelings of youth, with the fire of his twenty years, with the ardour of a painter, he had spoken of her and described her. Her magnanimous simplicity, her courage and lofty scorn, her kindness towards her little family, her form, her glorious colour of rich carnation and dazzling white, her queenly grace when quiescent and in motion, had constantly formed the subjects of this young gentleman's ardent eulogies. As he looked at a great picture or statue, as the Venus of Milo, calm and deep, unfathomably beautiful as the sea from which she sprung; as he looked at the rushing Aurora of the Rospigliosi, or the Assumption of Titian, more bright and glorious than sunshine, or that divine Madonna and divine Infant, of Dresden, whose sweet faces must have shone upon Raphael out of heaven; his heart sang hymns, as it were, before these gracious altars; and, somewhat as he worshipped these masterpieces of his art, he admired the beauty of Ethel.

J. J. felt these things exquisitely after his manner, and enjoyed honest Clive's mode of celebration and rapturous floriture of song; but Ridley's natural note was much gentler, and he sang his hymns in plaintive minors. Ethel was all that

was bright and beautiful but — but she was engaged to Lord Kew. The shrewd kind confidant used gently to hint the sad fact to the impetuous hero of this piece. The impetuous hero knew this quite well. As he was sitting over his painting-board he would break forth frequently, after his manner, in which laughter and sentiment were mingled, and roar out with all the force of his healthy young lungs —

“But her heart it is another’s, she never — can — be — mine;”

and then hero and confidant would laugh each at his drawing-table. Miss Ethel went between the two gentlemen by the name of Alice Grey.

Very likely, Night, the Grey Mentor, had given Clive Newcome the benefit of his sad counsel. Poor Belsize’s agony, and the wretchedness of the young lady who shared in the desperate passion, may have set our young man a-thinking; and Lord Kew’s frankness and courage, and honour, whereof Clive had been a witness during the night, touched his heart with a generous admiration, and manned him for a trial which he felt was indeed severe. He thought of the dear old father ploughing the seas on the way to his duty, and was determined, by Heaven’s help, to do his own. Only three weeks since, when strolling careless about Bonn he had lighted upon Ethel and the laughing group of little cousins, he was a boy as they were, thinking but of the enjoyment of the day and the sunshine, as careless as those children. And now the thoughts and passions which had sprung up in a week or two, had given him an experience such as years do not always furnish; and our friend was to show, not only that he could feel love in his heart, but that he could give proof of courage, and self-denial, and honour.

“Do you remember, J. J.,” says he, as boots and breeches went plunging into the portmanteau, and with immense energy, he pummels down one upon the other, “do you remember” (a dig into the snowy bosom of a dress cambric shirt) “my dear old father’s only campaign story of his running away” (a frightful blow into the ribs of a waistcoat), “running away at Asseer-Ghur?”

“Asseer-What?” says J. J. wondering.

“The siege of Asseer-Ghur!” says Clive, “fought in the eventful year 1803: Lieutenant Newcome, who has very neat legs, let me tell you, which also he has imparted to his descendants, had put on a new pair of leather breeches, for he likes to go handsomely dressed into action. His horse was shot, the enemy were upon him, and the governor had to choose between death and retreat. I have heard his brother-officers say that my dear old father was the bravest man they ever knew, the coolest hand, sir. What do you think it was Lieutenant Newcome’s duty to do under these circumstances? To remain alone as he was, his troop having turned about, and to be cut down by the Mahratta horsemen — to perish or to run, sir?”

“I know which I should have done,” says Ridley.

“Exactly. Lieutenant Newcome adopted that course. His bran-new leather breeches were exceedingly tight, and greatly incommoded the rapidity of his retreating movement, but he ran away, sir, and afterwards begot your obedient servant. That is the history of the battle of Asseer-Ghur.”

“And now for the moral,” says J. J., not a little amused.

“J. J., old boy, this is my battle of Asseer-Ghur. I am off. Dip into the money-bag: pay the people: be generous, J. J., but not too prodigal. The chambermaid is ugly, yet let her not want for a crown to console her at our departure. The waiters have been brisk and servile; reward the slaves for their labours. Forget not the humble boots, so shall he bless us when we depart. For artists are gentlemen, though Ethel does not think so. De — No — God bless her, God bless her,” groans out Clive, cramming his two fists into his eyes. If Ridley admired him before, he thought none the worse of him now. And if any generous young fellow in life reads the Fable, which may possibly concern him, let him take a senior’s counsel and remember that there are perils in our battle, God help us, from which the bravest had best run away.

Early as the morning yet was, Clive had a visitor, and the door opened to let in Lord Kew’s honest face. Ridley retreated before it into his own den; the appearance of earls scared the modest painter, though he was proud and pleased that his Clive should have their company. Lord Kew indeed lived in more splendid apartments on the first floor of the hotel, Clive and his friend occupying a couple of spacious chambers on the second story. “You are an early bird,” says Kew. “I got up myself in a panic before daylight almost; Jack was making a deuce of a row in his room, and fit to blow the door out. I have been coaxing him for this hour; I wish we had thought of giving him a dose of laudanum last night; if it finished him, poor old boy, it would do him no harm.” And then, laughing, he gave Clive an account of his interview with Barnes on

the previous night. "You seem to be packing up to go, too," says Lord Kew, with a momentary glance of humour darting from his keen eyes. The weather is breaking up here, and if you are going to cross the St. Gothard, as the Newcomes told me, the sooner the better. It's bitter cold over the mountains in October."

"Very cold," says Clive, biting his nails.

"Post or Vett.?" asks my lord.

"I bought a carriage at Frankfort," says Clive, in an offhand manner.

"Hulloh!" cries the other, who was perfectly kind, and entirely frank and pleasant, and showed no difference in his conversation with men of any degree, except perhaps that to his inferiors in station he was a little more polite than to his equals; but who would as soon have thought of a young artist leaving Baden in a carriage of his own as of his riding away on a dragon.

"I only gave twenty pounds for the carriage; it's a little light thing, we are two, a couple of horses carry us and our traps, you know, and we can stop where we like. I don't depend upon my profession," Clive added, with a blush. "I made three guineas once, and that is the only money I ever gained in my life."

"Of course, my dear fellow, have not I been to your father's house? At that pretty ball, and seen no end of fine people there? We are young swells. I know that very well. We only paint for pleasure."

"We are artists, and we intend to paint for money, my lord," says Clive. "Will your lordship give me an order?"

"My lordship serves me right," the other said. "I think, Newcome, as you are going, I think you might do some folks here a good turn, though the service is rather a disagreeable one. Jack Belsize is not fit to be left alone. I can't go away from here just now for reasons of state. Do be a good fellow and take him with you. Put the Alps between him and this confounded business, and if I can serve you in any way I shall be delighted, if you will furnish me with the occasion. Jack does not know yet that our amiable Barnes is here. I know how fond you are of him. I have heard the story — glass of claret and all. We all love Barnes. How that poor Lady Clara can have accepted him the Lord knows. We are fearfully and wonderfully made, especially women."

"Good heavens," Clive broke out, "can it be possible that a young creature can have been brought to like such a selfish, insolent coxcomb as that, such a cocktail as Barnes Newcome? You know very well, Lord Kew, what his life is. There was a poor girl whom he brought out of a Newcome factory when he was a boy himself, and might have had a heart one would have thought, whom he ill-treated, whom he deserted, and flung out of doors without a penny, upon some pretence of her infidelity towards him; who came and actually sat down on the steps of Park Lane with a child on each side of her, and not their cries and their hunger, but the fear of his own shame and a dread of a police-court, forced him to give her a maintenance. I never see the fellow but I loathe him, and long to kick him out of window and this man is to marry a noble young lady because forsooth he is a partner in a bank, and heir to seven or eight thousand a year. Oh, it is a shame, it is a shame! It makes me sick when I think of the lot which the poor thing is to endure."

"It is not a nice story," said Lord Kew, rolling a cigarette; "Barnes is not a nice man. I give you that in. You have not heard it talked about in the family, have you?"

"Good heavens! you don't suppose that I would speak to Ethel, to Miss Newcome, about such a foul subject as that?" cries Clive. "I never mentioned it to my own father. He would have turned Barnes out of his doors if he had known it."

"It was the talk about town, I know," Kew said dryly. "Everything is told in those confounded clubs. I told you I give up Barnes. I like him no more than you do. He may have treated the woman ill, I suspect he has not an angelical temper: but in this matter he has not been so bad, so very bad as it would seem. The first step is wrong, of course — those factory towns — that sort of thing, you know — well, well, the commencement of the business is a sad one. But he is not the only sinner in London. He has declared on his honour to me when the matter was talked about, and he was coming on for election at Bays's, and was as nearly as any man I ever knew in my life — he declared on his word that he only parted from poor Mrs. Delacy, (Mrs. Delacy, the devil used to call herself) because he found that she had served him — as such women will serve men. He offered to send his children to school in Yorkshire — rather a cheap school — but she would not part with them. She made a scandal in order to get good terms, and she succeeded. He was anxious to break the connexion: he owned it had hung like a millstone round his neck and caused him a great deal of remorse — annoyance you may call it. He was immensely cut up about it. I remember, when that fellow was hanged for murdering a woman, Barnes said he did not wonder at his having done it. Young men make those connexions in their early lives and rue them all their days after. He

was heartily sorry, that we may take for granted. He wished to lead a proper life. My grandmother managed this business with the Dorkings. Lady Kew still pulls stroke oar in our boat, you know, and the old woman will not give up her place. They know everything, the elders do. He is a clever fellow. He is witty in his way. When he likes he can make himself quite agreeable to some people. There has been no sort of force. You don't suppose young ladies are confined in dungeons and subject to tortures, do you? But there is a brood of Pulleyns at Chanticleere, and old Dorking has nothing to give them. His daughter accepted Barnes of her own free will, he knowing perfectly well of that previous affair with Jack. The poor devil bursts into the place yesterday and the girl drops down in a faint. She will see Belsize this very day if he likes. I took a note from Lady Dorking to him at five o'clock this morning. If he fancies that there is any constraint put upon Lady Clara's actions she will tell him with her own lips that she has acted of her own free will. She will marry the husband she has chosen and do her duty by him. You are quite a young un who boil and froth up with indignation at the idea that a girl hardly off with an old love should take on with a new —"

"I am not indignant with her," says Clive, "for breaking with Belsize, but for marrying Barnes."

"You hate him, and you know he is your enemy; and, indeed, young fellow, he does not compliment you in talking about you. A pretty young scapegrace he has made you out to be, and very likely thinks you to be. It depends on the colours in which a fellow is painted. Our friends and our enemies draw us — and I often think both pictures are like," continued the easy world-philosopher. "You hate Barnes, and cannot see any good in him. He sees none in you. There have been tremendous shindies in Park Lane a propos of your worship, and of a subject which I don't care to mention," said Lord Kew, with some dignity; "and what is the upshot of all this malevolence? I like you; I like your father, I think he is a noble old boy; there are those who represented him as a sordid schemer. Give Mr. Barnes the benefit of common charity at any rate; and let others like him, if you do not."

"And as for this romance of love," the young nobleman went on, kindling as he spoke, and forgetting the slang and colloquialisms with which we garnish all our conversation — "this fine picture of Jenny and Jessamy falling in love at first sight, billing and cooing in an arbour, and retiring to a cottage afterwards to go on cooing and billing — Psha! what folly is this! It is good for romances, and for misses to sigh about; but any man who walks through the world with his eyes open, knows how senseless is all this rubbish. I don't say that a young man and woman are not to meet, and to fall in love that instant, and to marry that day year, and love each other till they are a hundred; that is the supreme lot — but that is the lot which the gods only grant to Baucis and Philemon, and a very, very few besides. As for the rest, they must compromise; make themselves as comfortable as they can, and take the good and the bad together. And as for Jenny and Jessamy, by Jove! look round among your friends, count up the love matches, and see what has been the end of most of them! Love in a cottage! Who is to pay the landlord for the cottage? Who is to pay for Jenny's tea and cream, and Jessamy's mutton-chops? If he has cold mutton, he will quarrel with her. If there is nothing in the cupboard, a pretty meal they make. No, you cry out against people in our world making money marriages. Why, kings and queens marry on the same understanding. My butcher has saved a stockingful of money, and marries his daughter to a young salesman; Mr. and Mrs. Salesman prosper in life, and get an alderman's daughter for their son. My attorney looks out amongst his clients for an eligible husband for Miss Deeds; sends his son to the bar, into Parliament, where he cuts a figure and becomes attorney-general, makes a fortune, has a house in Belgrave Square, and marries Miss Deeds of the second generation to a peer. Do not accuse us of being more sordid than our neighbours. We do but as the world does; and a girl in our society accepts the best party which offers itself, just as Miss Chummey, when entreated by two young gentlemen of the order of costermongers, inclines to the one who rides from market on a moke, rather than to the gentleman who sells his greens from a handbasket."

This tirade, which his lordship delivered with considerable spirit, was intended no doubt to carry a moral for Clive's private hearing; and which, to do him justice, the youth was not slow to comprehend. The point was, "Young man, if certain persons of rank choose to receive you very kindly, who have but a comely face, good manners, and three or four hundred pounds a year, do not presume upon their good-nature, or indulge in certain ambitious hopes which your vanity may induce you to form. Sail down the stream with the brass-pots, Master Earthen-pot, but beware of coming too near! You are a nice young man, but there are prizes which are some too good for you, and are meant for your betters. And you might as well ask the prime minister for the next vacant garter as expect to wear on your breast such a star as Ethel Newcome."

Before Clive made his accustomed visit to his friends at the hotel opposite, the last great potentiary had arrived who was to take part in the family Congress of Baden. In place of Ethel's flushing cheeks and bright eyes, Clive found, on

entering Lady Anne Newcome's sitting-room, the parchment-covered features and the well-known hooked beak of the old Countess of Kew. To support the glances from beneath the bushy black eyebrows on each side of that promontory was no pleasant matter. The whole family cowered under Lady Kew's eyes and nose, and she ruled by force of them. It was only Ethel whom these awful features did not utterly subdue and dismay.

Besides Lady Kew, Clive had the pleasure of finding his lordship, her grandson, Lady Anne and children of various sizes, and Mr. Barnes; not one of whom was the person whom Clive desired to behold.

The queer glance in Kew's eye directed towards Clive, who was himself not by any means deficient in perception, informed him that there had just been a conversation in which his own name had figured. Having been abusing Clive extravagantly as he did whenever he mentioned his cousin's name, Barnes must needs hang his head when the young fellow came in. His hand was yet on the chamber-door, and Barnes was calling his miscreant and scoundrel within; so no wonder Barnes had a hangdog look. But as for Lady Kew, that veteran diplomatist allowed no signs of discomfiture, or any other emotion, to display themselves on her ancient countenance. Her bushy eyebrows were groves of mystery, her unfathomable eyes were wells of gloom.

She gratified Clive by a momentary loan of two knucky old fingers, which he was at liberty to hold or to drop; and then he went on to enjoy the felicity of shaking hands with Mr. Barnes, who, observing and enjoying his confusion over Lady Kew's reception, determined to try Clive in the same way, and he gave Clive at the same time a supercilious "How de dah," which the other would have liked to drive down his throat. A constant desire to throttle Mr. Barnes — to beat him on the nose — to send him flying out of window, was a sentiment with which this singular young man inspired many persons whom he accosted. A biographer ought to be impartial, yet I own, in a modified degree, to have partaken of this sentiment. He looked very much younger than his actual time of life, and was not of commanding stature; but patronised his equals, nay, let us say, his betters, so insufferably, that a common wish for his suppression existed amongst many persons in society.

Clive told me of this little circumstance, and I am sorry to say of his own subsequent ill behaviour. "We were standing apart from the ladies," so Clive narrated, "when Barnes and I had our little passage-of-arms. He had tried the finger business upon me before, and I had before told him, either to shake hands or to leave it alone. You know the way in which the impudent little beggar stands astride, and sticks his little feet out. I brought my heel well down on his confounded little varnished toe, and gave it a scrunch which made Mr. Barnes shriek out one of his loudest oaths."

"D—— clumsy ——!" screamed out Barnes.

Clive said, in a low voice, "I thought you only swore at women, Barnes."

"It is you that say things before women, Clive," cries his cousin, looking very furious.

Mr. Clive lost all patience. "In what company, Barnes, would you like me to say, that I think you are a snob? Will you have it on the Parade? Come out and I will speak to you."

"Barnes can't go out on the Parade," cries Lord Kew, bursting out laughing: "there's another gentleman there wanting him." And two of the three young men enjoyed this joke exceedingly. I doubt whether Barnes Newcome Newcome, Esq., of Newcome, was one of the persons amused.

"What wickedness are you three boys laughing at?" cries Lady Anne, perfectly innocent and good-natured; "no good, I will be bound. Come here, Clive." Our young friend, it must be premised, had no sooner received the thrust of Lady Kew's two fingers on entering, than it had been intimated to him that his interview with that gracious lady was at an end. For she had instantly called her daughter to her, with whom her ladyship fell a-whispering; and then it was that Clive retreated from Lady Kew's hand, to fall into Barnes's.

"Clive trod on Barnes's toe," cries out cheery Lord Kew, "and has hurt Barnes's favourite corn, so that he cannot go out, and is actually obliged to keep the room. That's what we were laughing at."

"Hem!" growled Lady Kew. She knew to what her grandson alluded. Lord Kew had represented Jack Belsize, and his thundering big stick, in the most terrific colours to the family council. The joke was too good a one not to serve twice.

Lady Anne, in her whispered conversation with the old Countess, had possibly deprecated her mother's anger towards poor Clive, for when he came up to the two ladies, the younger took his hand with great kindness, and said, "My dear Clive, we are very sorry you are going. You were of the greatest use to us on the journey. I am sure you have been uncommonly good-natured and obliging, and we shall all miss you very much." Her gentleness smote the generous young fellow, and an

emotion of gratitude towards her for being so compassionate to him in his misery, caused his cheeks to blush and his eyes perhaps to moisten. "Thank you, dear aunt," says he, "you have been very good and kind to me. It is I that shall feel lonely; but — but it is quite time that I should go to my work."

"Quite time!" said the severe possessor of the eagle beak. "Baden is a bad place for young men. They make acquaintances here of which very little good can come. They frequent the gambling-tables, and live with the most disreputable French Viscounts. We have heard of your goings-on, sir. It is a great pity that Colonel Newcome did not take you with him to India."

"My dear mamma," cries Lady Anne, "I am sure Clive has been a very good boy indeed." The old lady's morality put a stop to Clive's pathetic mood, and he replied with a great deal of spirit, "Dear Lady Anne, you have been always very good, and kindness is nothing surprising from you; but Lady Kew's advice, which I should not have ventured to ask, is an unexpected favour; my father knows the extent of the gambling transactions to which your ladyship was pleased to allude, and introduced me to the gentleman whose acquaintance you don't seem to think eligible."

"My good young man, I think it is time you were off," Lady Kew said, this time with great good-humour; she liked Clive's spirit, and as long as he interfered with none of her plans, was quite disposed to be friendly with him. "Go to Rome, go to Florence, go wherever you like, and study very hard, and make very good pictures, and come back again, and we shall all be very glad to see you. You have very great talents — these sketches are really capital."

"Is not he very clever, mamma?" said kind Lady Anne, eagerly. Clive felt the pathetic mood coming on again, and an immense desire to hug Lady Anne in his arms, and to kiss her. How grateful are we — how touched a frank and generous heart is for a kind word extended to us in our pain! The pressure of a tender hand nerves a man for an operation, and cheers him for the dreadful interview with the surgeon.

That cool old operator, who had taken Mr. Clive's case in hand, now produced her shining knife, and executed the first cut with perfect neatness and precision. "We are come here, as I suppose you know, Mr. Newcome, upon family matters, and I frankly tell you that I think, for your own sake, you would be much better away. I wrote my daughter a great scolding when I heard that you were in this place."

"But it was by the merest chance, mamma, indeed it was," cries Lady Anne.

"Of course, by the merest chance, and by the merest chance I heard of it too. A little bird came and told me at Kissingen. You have no more sense, Anne, than a goose. I have told you so a hundred times. Lady Anne requested you to stay, and I, my good young friend, request you to go away."

"I needed no request," said Clive. "My going, Lady Kew, is my own act. I was going without requiring any guide to show me to the door."

"No doubt you were, and my arrival is the signal for Mr. Newcome's bon jour. I am Bogey, and I frighten everybody away. By the scene which you witnessed yesterday, my good young friend, and all that painful esclandre on the promenade, you must see how absurd, and dangerous, and wicked — yes, wicked it is for parents to allow intimacies to spring up between young people, which can only lead to disgrace and unhappiness. Lady Dorking was another good-natured goose. I had not arrived yesterday ten minutes, when my maid came running in to tell me of what had occurred on the promenade; and, tired as I was, I went that instant to Jane Dorking and passed the evening with her, and that poor little creature to whom Captain Belsize behaved so cruelly. She does not care a fig for him — not one fig. Her childish inclination is passed away these two years, whilst Mr. Jack was performing his feats in prison; and if the wretch flatters himself that it was on his account she was agitated yesterday, he is perfectly mistaken, and you may tell him Lady Kew said so. She is subject to fainting fits. Dr. Finck has been attending her ever since she has been here. She fainted only last Tuesday at the sight of a rat walking about their lodgings (they have dreadful lodgings, the Dorkings), and no wonder she was frightened at the sight of that great coarse tipsy wretch! She is engaged, as you know, to your connexion, my grandson, Barnes:— in all respects a most eligible union. The rank of life of the parties suits them to one another. She is a good young woman, and Barnes has experienced from persons of another sort such horrors, that he will know the blessing of domestic virtue. It was high time he should. I say all this in perfect frankness to you.

"Go back again and play in the garden, little brats" (this to the innocents who came frisking in from the lawn in front of the windows). "You have been? And Barnes sent you in here? Go up to Miss Quigley. No, stop. Go and tell Ethel to come down; bring her down with you. Do you understand?"

The unconscious infants toddle upstairs to their sister; and Lady Kew blandly says, "Ethel's engagement to my grandson, Lord Kew, has long been settled in our family, though these things are best not talked about until they are quite determined, you know, my dear Mr. Newcome. When we saw you and your father in London, we heard that you too—that you too were engaged to a young lady in your own rank of life, a Miss — what was her name? — Miss MacPherson, Miss Mackenzie. Your aunt, Mrs. Hobson Newcome, who I must say is a most blundering silly person, had set about this story. It appears there is no truth in it. Do not look surprised that I know about your affairs. I am an old witch, and know numbers of things."

And, indeed, how Lady Kew came to know this fact, whether her maid corresponded with Lady Anne's maid, what her ladyship's means of information were, avowed or occult, this biographer has never been able to ascertain. Very likely Ethel, who in these last three weeks had been made aware of that interesting circumstance, had announced it to Lady Kew in the course of a cross-examination, and there may have been a battle between the granddaughter and the grandmother, of which the family chronicler of the Newcomes has had no precise knowledge. That there were many such I know — skirmishes, sieges, and general engagements. When we hear the guns, and see the wounded, we know there has been a fight. Who knows had there been a battle-royal, and was Miss Newcome having her wounds dressed upstairs?

"You will like to say good-bye to your cousin, I know," Lady Kew continued, with imperturbable placidity. "Ethel, my dear, here is Mr. Clive Newcome, who has come to bid us all good-bye." The little girls came trotting down at this moment, each holding a skirt of their elder sister. She looked rather pale, but her expression was haughty — almost fierce.

Clive rose up as she entered, from the sofa by the old Countess's side, which place she had pointed him to take during the amputation. He rose up and put his hair back off his face, and said very calmly, "Yes, I'm come to say good-bye. My holidays are over, and Ridley and I are off for Rome; good-bye, and God bless you, Ethel."

She gave him her hand and said, "Good-bye, Clive," but her hand did not return his pressure, and dropped to her side, when he let it go.

Hearing the words good-bye, little Alice burst into a howl, and little Maude, who was an impetuous little thing, stamped her little red shoes and said, "It san't be good-bye. Tlive san't go." Alice, roaring, clung hold of Clive's trousers. He took them up gaily, each on an arm, as he had done a hundred times, and tossed the children on to his shoulders, where they used to like to pull his yellow mustachios. He kissed the little hands and faces, and a moment after was gone.

"Qu'as-tu?" says M. de Florac, meeting him going over the bridge to his own hotel. "Qu'as-tu, mon petit Claive? Est-ce qu'on vient de t'arracher une dent?"

"C'est ca," says Clive, and walked into the Hotel de France. "Hulloh! J. J.! Ridley!" he sang out. "Order the trap out and let's be off." "I thought we were not to march till tomorrow," says J. J., divining perhaps that some catastrophe had occurred. Indeed, Mr. Clive was going a day sooner than he had intended. He woke at Fribourg the next morning. It was the grand old cathedral he looked at, not Baden of the pine-clad hills, of the pretty walks and the lime-tree avenues. Not Baden, the prettiest booth of all Vanity Fair. The crowds and the music, the gambling-tables and the cadaverous croupiers and chinking gold, were far out of sight and hearing. There was one window in the Hotel de Hollande that he thought of, how a fair arm used to open it in the early morning, how the muslin curtain in the morning air swayed to and fro. He would have given how much to see it once more! Walking about at Fribourg in the night, away from his companions, he had thought of ordering horses, galloping back to Baden, and once again under that window, calling Ethel, Ethel. But he came back to his room and the quiet J. J., and to poor Jack Belsize, who had had his tooth taken out too.

We had almost forgotten Jack, who took a back seat in Clive's carriage, as befits a secondary personage in this history, and Clive in truth had almost forgotten him too. But Jack having his own cares and business, and having rammed his own carpet-bag, brought it down without a word, and Clive found him environed in smoke when he came down to take his place in the little britzka. I wonder whether the window at the Hotel de Hollande saw him go? There are some curtains behind which no historian, however prying, is allowed to peep.

"Tiens, le petit part," says Florac of the cigar, who was always sauntering. "Yes, we go," says Clive. "There is a fourth place, Viscount; will you come too?"

"I would love it well," replies Florac, "but I am here in faction. My cousin and seigneur M. le Duc d'Ivry is coming all the way from Bagneres de Bigorre. He says he counts on me:— affaires mon cher, affaires d'etat."

"How pleased the duchess will be! Easy with that bag!" shouts Clive. "How pleased the princess will be!" In truth he

hardly knew what he was saying.

“Vous croyez; vous croyez,” says M. de Florac. “As you have a fourth place, I know who had best take it.”

“And who is that?” asked the young traveller.

Lord Kew and Barnes, Esq., of Newcome, came out of the Hotel de Hollande at this moment. Barnes slunk back, seeing Jack Belsize’s hairy face. Kew ran over the bridge. “Good-bye, Clive. Good-bye, Jack.” “Good-bye, Kew.” It was a great handshake. Away goes the postillion blowing his horn, and young Hannibal has left Capua behind him.



CHAPTER XXXI

MADAME LA DUCHESSE

In one of Clive Newcome's letters from Baden, the young man described to me, with considerable humour and numerous illustrations as his wont was, a great lady to whom he was presented at that watering-place by his friend Lord Kew. Lord Kew had travelled in the East with Monsieur le Duc and Madame la Duchesse d'Ivry — the prince being an old friend of his lordship's family. He is the "Q" of Madame d'Ivry's book of travels, *Footprints of the Gazelles*, by a daughter of the Crusaders, in which she prays so fervently for Lord Kew's conversion. He is the "Q" who rescued the princess from the Arabs, and performed many a feat which lives in her glowing pages. He persists in saying that he never rescued Madame la Princesse from any Arabs at all, except from one beggar who was bawling out for bucksheesh, and whom Kew drove away with a stick. They made pilgrimages to all the holy places, and a piteous sight it was, said Lord Kew, to see the old prince in the Jerusalem processions at Easter pacing with bare feet and a candle. Here Lord Kew separated from the prince's party. His name does not occur in the last part of the *Footprints*; which, in truth, are filled full of strange rhapsodies, adventures which nobody was but the princess, and mystic disquisitions. She hesitates at nothing, like other poets of her nation: not profoundly learned, she invents where she has not acquired: mingles together religion and the opera; and performs Parisian pas-de-ballet before the gates of monasteries and the cells of anchorites. She describes, as if she had herself witnessed the catastrophe, the passage of the Red Sea: and, as if there were no doubt of the transaction, an unhappy love-affair between Pharaoh's eldest son and Moses's daughter. At Cairo, apropos of Joseph's granaries, she enters into a furious tirade against Putiphar, whom she paints as an old savage, suspicious and a tyrant. They generally have a copy of the *Footprints of the Gazelles* at the Circulating Library at Baden, as Madame d'Ivry constantly visits that watering-place. M. le Duc was not pleased with the book, which was published entirely without his concurrence, and which he described as one of the ten thousand follies of Madame la Duchesse.

This nobleman was five-and-forty years older than his duchess. France is the country where that sweet Christian institution of mariages de convenance (which so many folks of the family about which this story treats are engaged in arranging) is most in vogue. There the newspapers daily announce that M. de Foy has a bureau de confiance, where families may arrange marriages for their sons and daughters in perfect comfort and security. It is but a question of money on one side and the other. Mademoiselle has so many francs of dot; Monsieur has such and such rentes or lands in possession or reversion, an etude d'avoue, a shop with a certain clientele bringing him such and such an income, which may be doubled by the judicious addition of so much capital, and the pretty little matrimonial arrangement is concluded (the agent touching his percentage), or broken off, and nobody unhappy, and the world none the wiser. The consequences of the system I do not pretend personally to know; but if the light literature of a country is a reflex of its manners, and French novels are a picture of French life, a pretty society must that be into the midst of which the London reader may walk in twelve hours from this time of perusal, and from which only twenty miles of sea separate us.

When the old Duke d'Ivry, of the ancient nobility of France, an emigrant with Artois, a warrior with Conde, an exile during the reign of the Corsican usurper, a grand prince, a great nobleman afterwards, though shorn of nineteen-twentieths of his wealth by the Revolution — when the Duke d'Ivry lost his two sons, and his son's son likewise died, as if fate had determined to end the direct line of that noble house, which had furnished queens to Europe, and renowned chiefs to the Crusaders — being of an intrepid spirit, the Duke was ill disposed to yield to his redoubtable energy, in spite of the cruel blows which the latter had inflicted upon him, and when he was more than sixty years of age, three months before the July Revolution broke out, a young lady of a sufficient nobility, a virgin of sixteen, was brought out of the convent of the Sacre Coeur at Paris, and married with immense splendour and ceremony to this princely widower. The most august names signed the book of the civil marriage. Madame la Dauphine and Madame la Duchesse de Berri complimented the young bride with royal favours. Her portrait by Dubufe was in the Exhibition next year, a charming young duchess indeed, with black eyes, and black ringlets, pearls on her neck, and diamonds in her hair, as beautiful as a princess of a fairy tale. M. d'Ivry, whose early life may have been rather oragious, was yet a gentleman perfectly well conserved. Resolute against fate his enemy (one would fancy fate was of an aristocratic turn, and took especial delight in combats with princely houses; the Atridae, the Borbonidae, the Ivrys — the Browns and Joneses being of no account), the prince seemed to be determined

not only to secure a progeny, but to defy age. At sixty he was still young, or seemed to be so. His hair was as black as the princess's own, his teeth as white. If you saw him on the Boulevard de Gand, sunning among the youthful exquisites there, or riding au Bois, with a grace worthy of old Franconi himself, you would take him for one of the young men, of whom indeed up to his marriage he retained a number of the graceful follies and amusements, though his manners had a dignity acquired in old days of Versailles and the Trianon, which the moderns cannot hope to imitate. He was as assiduous behind the scenes of the opera as any journalist, or any young dandy of twenty years. He "ranged himself," as the French phrase is, shortly before his marriage, just like any other young bachelor: took leave of Phryne and Aspasia in the coulisses, and proposed to devote himself henceforth to his charming young wife.

The affreux catastrophe of July arrived. The ancient Bourbons were once more on the road to exile (save one wily old remnant of the race, who rode grinning over the barricades, and distributing poignées de main to the stout fists that had pummelled his family out of France). M. le Duc d'Ivry, who lost his place at court, his appointments which helped his income very much, and his peerage would no more acknowledge the usurper of Neuilly, than him of Elba. The ex-peer retired to his terres. He barricaded his house in Paris against all supporters of the citizen king; his nearest kinsman, M. de Florac, among the rest, who for his part cheerfully took his oath of fidelity, and his seat in Louis Philippe's house of peers, having indeed been accustomed to swear to all dynasties for some years past.

In due time Madame la Duchesse d'Ivry gave birth to a child, a daughter, whom her noble father received with but small pleasure. What the Duke desired, was an heir to his name, a Prince of Moncontour, to fill the place of the sons and grandsons gone before him, to join their ancestors in the tomb. No more children, however, blessed the old Duke's union. Madame d'Ivry went the round of all the watering-places: pilgrimages were tried: vows and gifts to all saints supposed to be favourable to the d'Ivry family, or to families in general:— but the saints turned a deaf ear; they were inexorable since the true religion and the elder Bourbons were banished from France.

Living by themselves in their ancient castles, or their dreary mansion of the Faubourg St. Germain, I suppose the Duke and Duchess grew tired of one another, as persons who enter into a marriage de convenance sometimes, nay, as those who light a flaming love-match, and run away with one another, will be found to do. A lady of one-and-twenty, and a gentleman of sixty-six, alone in a great castle, have not unfrequently a third guest at their table, who comes without a card, and whom they cannot shut out, though they keep their doors closed ever so. His name is Ennui, and many a long hour and weary night must such folks pass in the unbidden society of this Old Man of the Sea; this daily guest at the board; this watchful attendant at the fireside; this assiduous companion who will walk out with you; this sleepless restless bedfellow.

At first, M. d'Ivry, that well-conserved nobleman who never would allow that he was not young, exhibited no sign of doubt regarding his own youth except an extreme jealousy and avoidance of all other young fellows. Very likely Madame la Duchesse may have thought men in general dyed their hair, wore stays, and had the rheumatism. Coming out of the convent of the Sacre Coeur, how was the innocent young lady to know better? You see, in these mariages de convenance, though a coronet may be convenient to a beautiful young creature, and a beautiful young creature may be convenient to an old gentleman, there are articles which the marriage-monger cannot make to convene at all: tempers over which M. de Foy and his like have no control; and tastes which cannot be put into the marriage settlements. So this couple were unhappy, and the Duke and Duchess quarrelled with one another like the most vulgar pair who ever fought across a table.

In this unhappy state of home affairs, madame took to literature, monsieur to politics. She discovered that she was a great unappreciated soul, and when a woman finds that treasure in her bosom of course she sets her own price on the article. Did you ever see the first poems of Madame la Duchesse d'Ivry, *Les Cris de l'Ame*? She used to read them to her very intimate friends, in white, with her hair a good deal down her back. They had some success. Dubufe having painted her as a Duchess, Scheffer depicted her as a Muse. That was in the third year of her marriage, when she rebelled against the Duke her husband, insisted on opening her saloons to art and literature, and, a fervent devotee still, proposed to unite genius and religion. Poets had interviews with her. Musicians came and twanged guitars to her.

Her husband, entering her room, would fall over the sabre and spurs of Count Almaviva from the boulevard, or Don Basilio with his great sombrero and shoe-buckles. The old gentleman was breathless and bewildered in following her through all her vagaries. He was of old France, she of new. What did he know of the Ecole Romantique, and these jeunes gens with their Marie Tudors and Tours de Nesle, and sanguineous histories of queens who sewed their lovers into sacks, emperors who had interviews with robber captains in Charlemagne's tomb, Buridans and Hernanis, and stuff? Monsieur le Vicomte de Chateaubriand was a man of genius as a writer, certainly immortal; and M. de Lamartine was a young man

extremely bien pensant, but, ma foi, give him Crebillon fils, or a bonne farce of M. Vade to make laugh; for the great sentiments, for the beautiful style, give him M. de Lormian (although Bonapartist) or the Abbe de Lille. And for the new school! bah! these little Dumass, and Hugos, and Mussets, what is all that? "M. de Lormian shall be immortal, monsieur," he would say, "when all these freluquets are forgotten." After his marriage he frequented the coulisses of the opera no more; but he was a pretty constant attendant at the Theatre Francais, where you might hear him snoring over the chefs-d'oeuvres of French tragedy.

For some little time after 1830, the Duchesse was as great a Carlist as her husband could wish; and they conspired together very comfortably at first. Of an adventurous turn, eager for excitement of all kinds, nothing would have better pleased the Duchesse than to follow MADAME in her adventurous courses in La Vendee, disguised as a boy above all. She was persuaded to stay at home, however, and aid the good cause at Paris; while Monsieur le Duc went off to Brittany to offer his old sword to the mother of his king. But MADAME was discovered up the chimney at Rennes, and all sorts of things were discovered afterwards. The world said that our silly little Duchess of Paris was partly the cause of the discovery. Spies were put upon her, and to some people she would tell anything. M. le Duc, on paying his annual visit to august exiles at Goritz, was very badly received: Madame la Dauphine gave him a sermon. He had an awful quarrel with Madame la Duchesse on returning to Paris. He provoked Monsieur le Comte Tiercelin, le beau Tiercelin, an officer of ordonnance of the Duke of Orleans, into a duel, a propos of a cup of coffee in a salon; he actually wounded the beau Tiercelin — he sixty-five years of age! his nephew, M. de Florac, was loud in praise of his kinsman's bravery.

That pretty figure and complexion which still appear so captivating in M. Dubufe's portrait of Madame la Duchesse d'Ivry, have long existed — it must be owned only in paint. "Je la prefere a l'huile," the Vicomte de Florac said of his cousin. "She should get her blushes from Monsieur Dubufe — those of her present furnishers are not near so natural." Sometimes the Duchess appeared with these postiches roses, sometimes of a mortal paleness. Sometimes she looked plump, on other occasions wofully thin. "When she goes into the world," said the same chronicler, "ma cousine surrounds herself with jupons — c'est pour defendre sa vertu: when she is in a devotional mood, she gives up rouge, roast meat, and crinoline, and fait maigre absolument." To spite the Duke her husband, she took up with the Vicomte de Florac, and to please herself she cast him away. She took his brother, the Abbe de Florac, for a director, and presently parted from him. "Mon frere, ce saint homme ne parle jamais de Madame la Duchesse, maintenant," said the Vicomte. "She must have confessed to him des choses affreuses — oh, oui! — affreuses ma parole d'honneur!"

The Duke d'Ivry being archiroyaliste, Madame la Duchesse must make herself ultra-Philippiste. "Oh, oui! tout ce qu'il y a de plus Madame Adelaide au monde!" cried Florac. "She raffoles of M. le Regent. She used to keep a fast of the day of the supplice of Philippe Egalite, Saint and Martyr. I say used, for to make to enrage her husband, and to recall the Abbe my brother, did she not advise herself to consult M. le Pasteur Grigou, and to attend the preach at his Temple? When this sheep had brought her shepherd back, she dismissed the Pasteur Grigou. Then she tired of M. l'Abbe again, and my brother is come out from her, shaking his good head. Ah! she must have put things into it which astonished the good Abbe! You know he has since taken the Dominican robe? My word of honour! I believe it was terror of her that drove him into a convent. You shall see him at Rome, Clive. Give him news of his elder, and tell him this gross prodigal is repenting amongst the swine. My word of honour! I desire but the death of Madame la Vicomtesse de Florac, to marry and range myself!

"After being Royalist, Philippist, Catholic, Huguenot, Madame d'Ivry must take to Pantheism, to bearded philosophers who believe in nothing, not even in clean linen, eclecticism, republicanism, what know I? All her changes have been chronicled by books of her composition. Les Demons, poem Catholic; Charles IX. is the hero and the demons are shot for the most part at the catastrophe of St. Bartholomew. My good mother, all good Catholic as she is, was startled by the boldness of this doctrine. Then there came Une Dragonnade, par Mme. la Duchesse d'Ivry, which is all on your side. That was of the time of the Pastor Grigou, that one. The last was Les Dieux dechus, poeme en 20 chants, par Mme. la D——d'I. Guard yourself well from this Muse! If she takes a fancy to you she will never leave you alone. If you see her often, she will fancy you are in love with her, and tell her husband. She always tells my uncle — afterwards — after she has quarrelled with you and grown tired of you! Eh, being in London once, she had the idea to make herself a Quakre; wore the costume, consulted a minister of that culte, and quarrelled with him as of rule. It appears the Quakers do not beat themselves, otherwise my poor uncle must have paid of his person.

"The turn of the philosophers then came, the chemists, the natural historians, what know I? She made a laboratory in her hotel, and rehearsed poisons like Madame de Brinvilliers — she spent hours in the Jardin des Plantes. Since she has

grown affreusement maigre and wears mounting robes, she has taken more than ever to the idea that she resembles Mary Queen of Scots. She wears a little frill and a little cap. Every man she loves, she says, has come to misfortune. She calls her lodgings Lochleven. Eh! I pity the landlord of Lochleven! She calls ce gros Blackball, vous savez, that pillar of estaminets, that prince of mauvais-ton, her Bothwell; little Mijaud, the poor little pianist, she named her Rizzio; young Lord Greenhorn who was here with governor, a Monsieur of Oxford, she christened her Darnley, and the Minister Anglican, her John Knox! The poor man was quite enchanted! Beware of this haggard siren, my little Clive! — mistrust her dangerous song! Her cave is jonchee with the bones of her victims. Be you not one!”

Far from causing Clive to avoid Madame la Duchesse, these cautions very likely would have made him only the more eager to make her acquaintance, but that a much nobler attraction drew him elsewhere. At first, being introduced to Madame d'Ivry's salon, he was pleased and flattered, and behaved himself there merrily and agreeably enough. He had not studied Horace Vernet for nothing; he drew a fine picture of Kew rescuing her from the Arabs, with a plenty of sabres, pistols, burnouses, and dromedaries. He made a pretty sketch of her little girl Antoinette, and a wonderful likeness of Miss O'Grady, the little girl's governess, the mother's dame de compagnie; — Miss O'Grady, with the richest Milesian brogue, who had been engaged to give Antoinette the pure English accent. But the French lady's great eyes and painted smiles would not bear comparison with Ethel's natural brightness and beauty. Clive, who had been appointed painter in ordinary to the Queen of Scots, neglected his business, and went over to the English faction; so did one or two more of the Princess's followers, leaving her Majesty by no means well pleased at their desertion.

There had been many quarrels between M. d'Ivry and his next-of-kin. Political differences, private differences — a long story. The Duke, who had been wild himself, could not pardon the Vicomte de Florac for being wild. Efforts at reconciliation had been made which ended unsuccessfully. The Vicomte de Florac had been allowed for a brief space to be intimate with the chief of his family, and then had been dismissed for being too intimate. Right or wrong, the Duke was jealous of all young men who approached the Duchesse. “He is suspicious,” Madame de Florac indignantly said, “because he remembers: and he thinks other men are like himself.” The Vicomte discreetly said, “My cousin has paid me the compliment to be jealous of me,” and acquiesced in his banishment with a shrug.

During the emigration the old Lord Kew had been very kind to exiles, M. d'Ivry amongst the number; and that nobleman was anxious to return to all Lord Kew's family when they came to France the hospitality which he had received himself in England. He still remembered or professed to remember Lady Kew's beauty. How many women are there, awful of aspect, at present, of whom the same pleasing legend is not narrated! It must be true, for do not they themselves confess it? I know of few things more remarkable or suggestive of philosophic contemplation than those physical changes.

When the old Duke and the old Countess met together and talked confidentially, their conversation bloomed into a jargon wonderful to hear. Old scandals woke up, old naughtinesses rose out of their graves, and danced, and smirked, and gibbered again, like those wicked nuns whom Bertram and Robert le Diable evoke from their sepulchres whilst the bassoon performs a diabolical incantation. The Brighton Pavilion was tenanted; Ranelagh and the Pantheon swarmed with dancers and masks; Perdita was found again, and walked a minuet with the Prince of Wales. Mrs. Clarke and the Duke of York danced together — a pretty dance. The old Duke wore a jabot and ailes-de-pigeon, the old Countess a hoop, and a cushion on her head. If haply the young folks came in, the elders modified their recollections, and Lady Kew brought honest old King George and good old ugly Queen Charlotte to the rescue. Her ladyship was sister of the Marquis of Steyne: and in some respects resembled that lamented nobleman. Their family had relations in France (Lady Kew had always a pied-a-terre at Paris, a bitter little scandal-shop, where les bien pensants assembled and retailed the most awful stories against the reigning dynasty). It was she who handed over le petit Kiou, when quite a boy, to Monsieur and Madame d'Ivry, to be lanced into Parisian society. He was treated as a son of the family by the Duke, one of whose many Christian names, his lordship, Francis George Xavier, Earl of Kew and Viscount Walham, bears. If Lady Kew hated any one (and she could hate very considerably) she hated her daughter-in-law, Walham's widow, and the Methodists who surrounded her. Kew remain among a pack of psalm-singing old women and parsons with his mother! Fi donc! Frank was Lady Kew's boy; she would form him, marry him, leave him her money if he married to her liking, and show him life. And so she showed it to him.

Have you taken your children to the National Gallery in London, and shown them the “Marriage a la Mode?” Was the artist exceeding the privilege of his calling in painting the catastrophe in which those guilty people all suffer? If this fable were not true, if many and many of your young men of pleasure had not acted it, and rued the moral, I would tear the page. You know that in our Nursery Tales there is commonly a good fairy to counsel, and a bad one to mislead the young prince.

You perhaps feel that in your own life there is a Good Principle imploring you to come into its kind bosom, and a Bad Passion which tempts you into its arms. Be of easy minds good-natured people! Let us disdain surprises and coups-de-theatre for once; and tell those good souls who are interested about him, that there is a Good Spirit coming to the rescue of our young Lord Kew.

Surrounded by her court and royal attendants, La Reine Marie used graciously to attend the play-table, where luck occasionally declared itself for and against her Majesty. Her appearance used to create not a little excitement in the Saloon of Roulette, the game which she patronised, it being more “fertile of emotions” than the slower trente-et-quarante. She dreamed of numbers, had favourite incantations by which to conjure them: noted the figures made by peels of peaches and so forth, the numbers of houses, on hackney-coaches — was superstitious comme toutes les rimes poetiques. She commonly brought a beautiful agate bonbonniere full of gold pieces, when she played. It was wonderful to see her grimaces: to watch her behaviour: her appeals to heaven, her delight and despair. Madame la Baronne de la Cruchecassee played on one side of her, Madame la Comtesse de Schlanigenbad on the other. When she had lost all her money her Majesty would condescend to borrow — not from those ladies:— knowing the royal peculiarity, they never had any money; they always lost; they swiftly pocketed their winnings and never left a mass on the table, or quitted it, as courtiers will, when they saw luck was going against their sovereign. The officers of her household were Count Punter, a Hanoverian, the Cavaliere Spada, Captain Blackball of a mysterious English regiment, which might be any one of the hundred and twenty in the Army List, and other noblemen and gentlemen, Greeks, Russians, and Spaniards. Mr. and Mrs. Jones (of England), who had made the princess’s acquaintance at Bagneres (where her lord still remained in the gout) and perseveringly followed her all the way to Baden, were dazzled by the splendour of the company in which they found themselves. Miss Jones wrote such letters to her dearest friend Miss Thompson, Cambridge Square, London, as caused that young person to crever with envy. Bob Jones, who had grown a pair of mustachios since he left home, began to think slightly of poor little Fanny Thompson, now he had got into “the best Continental society.” Might not he quarter a countess’s coat on his brougham along with the Jones arms, or, more slap-up still, have the two shields painted on the panels with the coronet over? “Do you know the princess calls herself the Queen of Scots, and she calls me Julian Avenel?” says Jones delighted, to Clive, who wrote me about the transmogrification of our schoolfellow, an attorney’s son, whom I recollected a snivelling little boy at Grey Friars. “I say, Newcome, the princess is going to establish an order,” cried Bob in ecstasy. Every one of her aides-de-camp had a bunch of orders at his button, excepting, of course, poor Jones.

Like all persons who beheld her, when Miss Newcome and her party made their appearance at Baden, Monsieur de Florac was enraptured with her beauty. “I speak of it constantly before the Duchesse. I know it pleases her,” so the Vicomte said. “You should have seen her looks when your friend M. Jones praised Miss Newcome! She ground her teeth with fury. Tiens ce petit sournois de Kiou! He always spoke of her as a mere sac d’argent that he was about to marry — an ingot of the cite — une fille de Lord Maire. Have all English bankers such pearls of daughters? If the Vicomtesse de Florac had but quitted the earth, dont elle fait l’ornement — I would present myself to the charmante meess and ride a steeple-chase with Kiou!” That he should win it the Viscount never doubted.

When Lady Anne Newcome first appeared in the ballroom at Baden, Madame la Duchesse d’Ivry begged the Earl of Kew (notre filleul, she called him) to present her to his aunt miladi and her charming daughter. “My filleul had not prepared me for so much grace,” she said, turning a look towards Lord Kew, which caused his lordship some embarrassment. Her kindness and graciousness were extreme. Her caresses and compliments never ceased all the evening. She told the mother and the daughter too that she had never seen any one so lovely as Ethel. Whenever she saw Lady Anne’s children in the walks she ran to them (so that Captain Blackball and Count Punter, A.D.C., were amazed at her tenderness), she etouffed them with kisses. What lilies and roses! What lovely little creatures! What companions for her own Antoinette. “This is your governess, Miss Quigli; mademoiselle, you must let me present you to Miss O’Gredi, your compatriot, and I hope your children will be always together.” The Irish Protestant governess scowled at the Irish Catholic — there was a Boyne Water between them.

Little Antoinette; a lonely little girl, was glad to find any companions. “Mamma kisses me on the promenade,” she told them in her artless way. “She never kisses me at home!” One day when Lord Kew with Florac and Clive were playing with the children, Antoinette said, “Pourquoi ne venez-vous plus chez nous, M. de Kew? And why does mamma say you are a lache? She said so yesterday to ces messieurs. And why does mamma say thou art only a vaurien, mon cousin? Thou art always very good for me. I love thee better than all those messieurs. Ma tante Florac a ete bonne pour moi a Paris aussi —

Ah! qu'elle a ete bonne!"

"C'est que les anges aiment bien les petits cherubins, and my mother is an angel, seest thou," cries Florac, kissing her.

"Thy mother is not dead," said little Antoinette, "then why dost thou cry, my cousin?" And the three spectators were touched by this little scene and speech.

Lady Anne Newcome received the caresses and compliments of Madame la Duchesse with marked coldness on the part of one commonly so very good-natured. Ethel's instinct told her that there was something wrong in this woman, and she shrank from her with haughty reserve. The girl's conduct was not likely to please the French lady, but she never relaxed in her smiles and her compliments, her caresses, and her professions of admiration. She was present when Clara Pulleyn fell; and, prodigal of calineries and consolation, and shawls and scent-bottles, to the unhappy young lady, she would accompany her home. She inquired perpetually after the health of *cette pauvre petite* Miss Clara. Oh, how she railed against *ces Anglaises* and their prudery! Can you fancy her and her circle, the tea-table set in the twilight that evening, the court assembled, Madame de la Cruchecassee and Madame de Schlangenbad; and their whiskered humble servants, Baron Punter and Count Spada, and Marquis Iago, and Prince Iachimo, and worthy Captain Blackball? Can you fancy a moonlight conclave, and ghouls feasting on the fresh corpse of a reputation:— the gibes and sarcasms, the laughing and the gnashing of teeth? How they tear the dainty limbs, and relish the tender morsels!

"The air of this place is not good for you, believe me, my little Kew; it is dangerous. Have pressing affairs in England; let your chateau burn down; or your intendant run away, and pursue him. *Partez, mon petit Kiou; partez*, or evil will come of it." Such was the advice which a friend of Lord Kew gave the young nobleman.



CHAPTER XXXII

BARNES'S COURTSHIP

Ethel had made various attempts to become intimate with her future sister-in-law; had walked, and ridden, and talked with Lady Clara before Barnes's arrival. She had come away not very much impressed with respect for Lady Clara's mental powers; indeed, we have said that Miss Ethel was rather more prone to attack women than to admire them, and was a little hard upon the fashionable young persons of her acquaintance and sex. In after life, care and thought subdued her pride, and she learned to look at society more good-naturedly; but at this time, and for some years after, she was impatient of commonplace people, and did not choose to conceal her scorn. Lady Clara was very much afraid of her. Those timid little thoughts, which would come out, and frisk and gambol with pretty graceful antics, and advance confidingly at the sound of Jack Belsize's jolly voice, and nibble crumbs out of his hand, shrank away before Ethel, severe nymph with the bright eyes, and hid themselves under the thickets and in the shade. Who has not overheard a simple couple of girls, or of lovers possibly, pouring out their little hearts, laughing at their own little jokes, prattling and prattling away unceasingly, until mamma appears with her awful didactic countenance, or the governess with her dry moralities, and the colloquy straightway ceases, the laughter stops, the chirp of the harmless little birds is hushed. Lady Clara being of a timid nature, stood in as much awe of Ethel as of her father and mother; whereas her next sister, a brisk young creature of seventeen, who was of the order of romps or tomboys, was by no means afraid of Miss Newcome, and indeed a much greater favourite with her than her placid elder sister.

Young ladies may have been crossed in love, and have had their sufferings, their frantic moments of grief and tears, their wakeful nights, and so forth; but it is only in very sentimental novels that people occupy themselves perpetually with that passion: and, I believe, what are called broken hearts are very rare articles indeed. Tom is jilted — is for a while in a dreadful state — bores all his male acquaintance with his groans and his frenzy — rallies from the complaint — eats his dinner very kindly — takes an interest in the next turf event, and is found at Newmarket, as usual, bawling out the odds which he will give or take. Miss has her paroxysm and recovery — Madame Crinoline's new importations from Paris interest the young creature — she deigns to consider whether pink or blue will become her most — she conspires with her maid to make the spring morning dresses answer for the autumn — she resumes her books, piano, and music (giving up certain songs perhaps that she used to sing)— she waltzes with the Captain — gets a colour — waltzes longer, better, and ten times quicker than Lucy, who is dancing with the Major — replies in an animated manner to the Captain's delightful remarks — takes a little supper — and looks quite kindly at him before she pulls up the carriage windows.

Clive may not like his cousin Barnes Newcome, and many other men share in that antipathy, but all ladies do not. It is a fact that Barnes, when he likes, can make himself a very pleasant fellow. He is dreadfully satirical, that is certain; but many persons are amused by those dreadful satirical young men: and to hear fun made of our neighbours, even of some of our friends, does not make us very angry. Barnes is one of the very best waltzers in all society, that is the truth; whereas it must be confessed Some One Else was very heavy and slow, his great foot always crushing you, and he always begging your pardon. Barnes whirls a partner round a room ages after she is ready to faint. What wicked fun he makes of other people when he stops! He is not handsome, but in his face there is something odd-looking and distinguished. It is certain he has beautiful small feet and hands.

He comes every day from the City, drops in, in his quiet unobtrusive way, and drinks tea at five o'clock; always brings a budget of the funniest stories with him, makes mamma laugh, Clara laugh, Henrietta, who is in the schoolroom still, die of laughing. Papa has the highest opinion of Mr. Newcome as a man of business: if he had had such a friend in early life his affairs would not be where they now are, poor dear kind papa! Do they want to go anywhere, is not Mr. Newcome always ready? Did he not procure that delightful room for them to witness the Lord Mayor's show; and make Clara die of laughing at those odd City people at the Mansion House ball? He is at every party, and never tired though he gets up so early: he waltzes with nobody else: he is always there to put Lady Clara in the carriage: at the drawing-room he looked quite handsome in his uniform of the Newcome Hussars, bottle-green and silver lace: he speaks Politics so exceedingly well with papa and gentlemen after dinner: he is a sound conservative, full of practical good sense and information, with no dangerous new-fangled ideas, such as young men have. When poor dear Sir Brian Newcome's health gives way quite, Mr.

Newcome will go into Parliament, and then he will resume the old barony which has been in abeyance in the family since the reign of Richard the Third. They had fallen quite, quite low. Mr. Newcome's grandfather came to London with a satchel on his back, like Whittington. Isn't it romantic?

This process has been going on for months. It is not in one day that poor Lady Clara has been made to forget the past, and to lay aside her mourning. Day after day, very likely, the undeniable faults and many peccadilloes of — of that other person, have been exposed to her. People around the young lady may desire to spare her feelings, but can have no interest in screening Poor Jack from condign reprobation. A wild prodigal — a disgrace to his order — a son of old Highgate's leading such a life, and making such a scandal! Lord Dorking believes Mr. Belsize to be an abandoned monster and fiend in human shape; gathers and relates all the stories that ever have been told to the young man's disadvantage, and of these be sure there are enough, and speaks of him with transports of indignation. At the end of months of unwearied courtship, Mr. Barnes Newcome is honestly accepted, and Lady Clara is waiting for him at Baden, not unhappy to receive him; when walking on the promenade with her father, the ghost of her dead love suddenly rises before her, and the young lady faints to the ground.

When Barnes Newcome thinks fit he can be perfectly placable in his demeanour and delicate in his conduct. What he said upon this painful subject was delivered with the greatest propriety. He did not for one moment consider that Lady Clara's agitation arose from any present feeling in Mr. Belsize's favour, but that she was naturally moved by the remembrance of the past, and the sudden appearance which recalled it. "And but that a lady's name should never be made the subject of dispute between men," Newcome said to Lord Dorking, with great dignity, "and that Captain Belsize has opportunely quitted the place, I should certainly have chastised him. He and another adventurer, against whom I have had to warn my own family, have quitted Baden this afternoon. I am glad that both are gone, Captain Belsize especially; for my temper, my lord, is hot, and I do not think I should have commanded it."

Lord Kew, when the elder lord informed him of this admirable speech of Barnes Newcome's, upon whose character, prudence, and dignity the Earl of Dorking pronounced a fervent eulogium, shook his head gravely, and said, "Yes, Barnes was a dead shot, and a most determined fellow:" and did not burst out laughing until he and Lord Dorking had parted. Then to be sure he took his fill of laughter, he told the story to Ethel, he complimented Barnes on his heroic self-denial; the joke of the thundering big stick was nothing to it. Barnes Newcome laughed too; he had plenty of humour, Barnes. "I think you might have whopped Jack when he came out from his interview with the Dorkings," Kew said: "the poor devil was so bewildered and weak, that Alfred might have thrashed him. At other times you would find it more difficult, Barnes my man." Mr. B. Newcome resumed his dignity; said a joke was a joke, and there was quite enough of this one; which assertion we may be sure he conscientiously made.

That meeting and parting between the old lovers passed with a great deal of calm and propriety on both sides. Miss's parents of course were present when Jack at their summons waited upon them and their daughter, and made his hang-dog bow. My Lord Dorking said (poor Jack in the anguish of his heart had poured out the story to Clive Newcome afterwards), "Mr. Belsize, I have to apologise for words which I used in my heat yesterday, and which I recall and regret, as I am sure you do that there should have been any occasion for them."

Mr. Belsize looking at the carpet said he was very sorry.

Lady Dorking here remarked, that as Captain Belsize was now at Baden, he might wish to hear from Lady Clara Pulleyn's own lips that the engagement into which she had entered was formed by herself, certainly with the consent and advice of her family. "Is it not so, my dear?"

Lady Clara said, "Yes, mamma," with a low curtsy.

"We have now to wish you good-bye, Charles Belsize," said my lord, with some feeling. "As your relative, and your father's old friend, I wish you well. I hope your future course in life may not be so unfortunate as the past year. I request that we may part friends. Good-bye, Charles. Clara, shake hands with Captain Belsize. My Lady Dorking, you will please to give Charles your hand. You have known him since he was a child; and — and — we are sorry to be obliged to part in this way." In this wise Mr. Jack Belsize's tooth was finally extracted; and for the moment we wish him and his brother-patient a good journey.

Little lynx-eyed Dr. Von Finck, who attends most of the polite company at Baden, drove ceaselessly about the place that day, with the real version of the fainting-fit story, about which we may be sure the wicked and malicious, and the

uninitiated, had a hundred absurd details. Lady Clara ever engaged to Captain Belsize? Fiddle-de-dee! Everybody knew the Captain's affairs, and that he could no more think of marrying than flying. Lady Clara faint at seeing him! she fainted before he came up; she was always fainting, and had done so thrice in the last week to his knowledge. Lord Dorking had a nervous affection of his right arm, and was always shaking his stick. He did not say Villain, he said William; Captain Belsize's name is William. It is not so in the Peerage? Is he called Jack in the Peerage? Those Peerages are always wrong. These candid explanations of course had their effect. Wicked tongues were of course instantaneously silent. People were entirely satisfied; they always are. The next night being Assembly night, Lady Clara appeared at the rooms and danced with Lord Kew and Mr. Barnes Newcome. All the society was as gracious and good-humoured as possible, and there was no more question of fainting than of burning down the Conversation-house. But Madame de Cruchecassee, and Madame de Schlangenbad, and those horrid people whom the men speak to, but whom the women salute with silent curtsies, persisted in declaring that there was no prude like an English prude; and to Dr. Finck's oaths, assertions, explanations, only replied, with a shrug of their bold shoulders, "Taisez-vous, Docteur, vous n'ete qu'une vieille bete."

Lady Kew was at the rooms, uncommonly gracious. Miss Ethel took a few turns of the waltz with Lord Kew, but this nymph looked more farouche than upon ordinary days. Bob Jones, who admired her hugely, asked leave to waltz with her, and entertained her with recollections of Clive Newcome at school. He remembered a fight in which Clive had been engaged, and recounted that action to Miss Newcome, who seemed to be interested. He was pleased to deplore Clive's fancy for turning artist, and that Miss Newcome recommended him to have his likeness taken, for she said his appearance was exceedingly picturesque. He was going on with further prattle, but she suddenly cut Mr. Jones short, making him a bow, and going to sit down by Lady Kew. "And the next day, sir," said Bob, with whom the present writer had the happiness of dining at a mess dinner at the Upper Temple, "when I met her on the walk, sir, she cut me as dead as a stone. The airs those swells give themselves is enough to make any man turn republican."

Miss Ethel indeed was haughty, very haughty, and of a difficult temper. She spared none of her party except her kind mother, to whom Ethel always was kind, and her father, whom, since his illnesses, she tended with much benevolence and care. But she did battle with Lady Kew repeatedly, coming to her Aunt Julia's rescue, on whom her mother as usual exercised her powers of torturing. She made Barnes quail before her by the shafts of contempt which she flashed at him; and she did not spare Lord Kew, whose good-nature was no shield against her scorn. The old queen-mother was fairly afraid of her; she even left off beating Lady Julia when Ethel came in, of course taking her revenge in the young girl's absence, but trying in her presence to soothe and please her. Against Lord Kew the young girl's anger was most unjust, and the more cruel because the kindly young nobleman never spoke a hard word of any one mortal soul, and, carrying no arms, should have been assaulted by none. But his very good-nature seemed to make his young opponent only the more wrathful; she shot because his honest breast was bare; it bled at the wounds which she inflicted. Her relatives looked at her surprised at her cruelty, and the young man himself was shocked in his dignity and best feelings by his cousin's wanton ill-humour.

Lady Kew fancied she understood the cause of this peevishness, and remonstrated with Miss Ethel. "Shall we write a letter to Lucerne, and order Dick Tinto back again?" said her ladyship. "Are you such a fool, Ethel, as to be hankering after that young scapegrace, and his yellow beard? His drawings are very pretty. Why, I think he might earn a couple of hundred a year as a teacher, and nothing would be easier than to break your engagement with Kew, and whistle the drawing-master back again."

Ethel took up the whole heap of Clive's drawings, lighted a taper, carried the drawings to the fireplace, and set them in a blaze. "A very pretty piece of work," says Lady Kew, "and which proves satisfactorily that you don't care for the young Clive at all. Have we arranged a correspondence? We are cousins, you know; we may write pretty cousinly letters to one another." A month before the old lady would have attacked her with other arms than sarcasm, but she was scared now, and dared to use no coarser weapons. "Oh!" cried Ethel in a transport, "what a life ours is, and how you buy and sell, and haggle over your children! It is not Clive I care about, poor boy. Our ways of life are separate. I cannot break from my own family, and I know very well how you would receive him in it. Had he money, it would be different. You would receive him, and welcome him, and hold out your hands to him; but he is only a poor painter, and we forsooth are bankers in the City; and he comes among us on sufferance, like those concert-singers whom mamma treats with so much politeness, and who go down and have supper by themselves. Why should they not be as good as we are?"

"M. de C— — my dear, is of a noble family," interposed Lady Kew; "when he has given up singing and made his fortune, no doubt he can go back into the world again."

“Made his fortune, yes,” Ethel continued, “that is the cry. There never were, since the world began, people so unblushingly sordid! We own it, and are proud of it. We barter rank against money, and money against rank, day after day. Why did you marry my father to my mother? Was it for his wit? You know he might have been an angel and you would have scorned him. Your daughter was bought with papa’s money as surely as ever Newcome was. Will there be no day when this mammon-worship will cease among us?”

“Not in my time or yours, Ethel,” the elder said, not unkindly; perhaps she thought of a day long ago before she was old herself.

“We are sold,” the young girl went on, “we are as much sold as Turkish women; the only difference being that our masters may have but one Circassian at a time. No, there is no freedom for us. I wear my green ticket, and wait till my master comes. But every day as I think of our slavery, I revolt against it more. That poor wretch, that poor girl whom my brother is to marry, why did she not revolt and fly? I would, if I loved a man sufficiently, loved him better than the world, than wealth, than rank, than fine houses and titles — and I feel I love these best — I would give up all to follow him. But what can I be with my name and my parents? I belong to the world like all the rest of my family. It is you who have bred us up; you who are answerable for us. Why are there no convents to which we can fly? You make a fine marriage for me; you provide me with a good husband, a kind soul, not very wise, but very kind; you make me what you call happy, and I would rather be at the plough like the women here.”

“No, you wouldn’t, Ethel,” replies the grandmother, drily. “These are the fine speeches of schoolgirls. The showers of rain would spoil your complexion — you would be perfectly tired in an hour, and come back to luncheon — you belong to your belongings, my dear, and are not better than the rest of the world:— very good-looking, as you know perfectly well, and not very good-tempered. It is lucky that Kew is. Calm your temper, at least before marriage; such a prize does not fall to a pretty girl’s lot every day. Why, you sent him away quite seared by your cruelty; and if he is not playing at roulette, or at billiards, I dare say he is thinking what a little termagant you are, and that he had best pause while it is yet time. Before I was married, your poor grandfather never knew I had a temper; of after-days I say nothing; but trials are good for all of us, and he bore his like an angel.”

Lady Kew, too, on this occasion at least, was admirably good-humoured. She also when it was necessary could put a restraint on her temper, and, having this match very much at heart, chose to coax and to soothe her granddaughter rather than to endeavour to scold and frighten her.

“Why do you desire this marriage so much, grandmamma,” the girl asked. “My cousin is not very much in love — at least I should fancy not,” she added, blushing. “I am bound to own Lord Kew is not in the least eager, and I think if you were to tell him to wait for five years he would be quite willing. Why should you be so very anxious?”

“Why, my dear? Because I think young ladies who want to go and work in the fields, should make hay while the sun shines; because I think it is high time that Kew should range himself; because I am sure he will make the best husband, and Ethel the prettiest Countess in England.” And the old lady, seldom exhibiting any signs of affection, looked at her granddaughter very fondly. From her Ethel looked up into the glass, which very likely repeated on its shining face the truth her elder had just uttered. Shall we quarrel with the girl for that dazzling reflection; for owning that charming truth, and submitting to the conscious triumph? Give her her part of vanity, of youth, of desire to rule and be admired. Meanwhile Mr. Clive’s drawings have been crackling in the fireplace at her feet, and the last spark of that combustion is twinkling out unheeded.



CHAPTER XXXIII

LADY KEW AT THE CONGRESS

When Lady Kew heard that Madame d'Ivry was at Baden, and was informed at once of the French lady's graciousness towards the Newcome family, and of her fury against Lord Kew, the old Countess gave a loose to that energetic temper with which nature had gifted her; a temper which she tied up sometimes and kept from barking and biting; but which when unmuzzled was an animal of whom all her ladyship's family had a just apprehension. Not one of them but in his or her time had been wounded, lacerated, tumbled over, otherwise frightened or injured by this unruly brute. The cowards brought it sops and patted it; the prudent gave it a clear berth, and walked round so as not to meet it; but woe be to those of the family who had to bring the meal, and prepare the litter, and (to speak respectfully) share the kennel with Lady Kew's "Black Dog!" Surely a fine furious temper, if accompanied with a certain magnanimity and bravery which often go together with it, is one of the most precious and fortunate gifts with which a gentleman or lady can be endowed. A person always ready to fight is certain of the greatest consideration amongst his or her family circle. The lazy grow tired of contending with him; the timid coax and flatter him; and as almost every one is timid or lazy, a bad-tempered man is sure to have his own way. It is he who commands, and all the others obey. If he is a gourmand, he has' what he likes for dinner; and the tastes of all the rest are subservient to him. She (we playfully transfer the gender, as a bad temper is of both sexes) has the place which she likes best in the drawing-room; nor do her parents, nor her brothers and sisters, venture to take her favourite chair. If she wants to go to a party, mamma will dress herself in spite of her headache; and papa, who hates those dreadful soirees, will go upstairs after dinner and put on his poor old white neckcloth, though he has been toiling at chambers all day, and must be there early in the morning — he will go out with her, we say, and stay for the cotillon. If the family are taking their tour in the summer, it is she who ordains whither they shall go, and when they shall stop. If he comes home late, the dinner is kept for him, and not one dares to say a word though ever so hungry. If he is in a good humour, how every one frisks about and is happy! How the servants jump up at his bell and run to wait upon him! How they sit up patiently, and how eagerly they rush out to fetch cabs in the rain! Whereas for you and me, who have the tempers of angels, and never were known to be angry or to complain, nobody cares whether we are pleased or not. Our wives go to the milliners and send us the bill, and we pay it; our John finishes reading the newspaper before he answers our bell, and brings it to us; our sons loll in the arm-chair which we should like; fill the house with their young men, and smoke in the dining-room; our tailors fit us badly; our butchers give us the youngest mutton; our tradesmen dun us much more quickly than other people's, because they know we are good-natured; and our servants go out whenever they like, and openly have their friends to supper in the kitchen. When Lady Kew said *Sic volo, sic jubeo*, I promise you few persons of her ladyship's belongings stopped, before they did her biddings, to ask her reasons.

If, which very seldom happens, there are two such imperious and domineering spirits in a family, unpleasantries of course will arise from their contentions; or, if out of doors the family Bajazet meets with some other violent Turk, dreadful battles ensue, all the allies on either side are brought in, and the surrounding neighbours perforce engaged in the quarrel. This was unluckily the case in the present instance. Lady Kew, unaccustomed to have her will questioned at home, liked to impose it abroad. She judged the persons around her with great freedom of speech. Her opinions were quoted, as people's sayings will be; and if she made bitter speeches, depend on it they lost nothing in the carrying. She was furious against Madame la Duchesse d'Ivry, and exploded in various companies whenever that lady's name was mentioned. "Why was she not with her husband? Why was the poor old Duke left to his gout, and this woman trailing through the country with her vagabond court of billiard-markers at her heels? She to call herself Mary Queen of Scots, forsooth! — well, she merited the title in some respects, though she had not murdered her husband as yet. Ah! I should like to be Queen Elizabeth if the Duchess is Queen of Scots!" said the old lady, shaking her old fist. And these sentiments being uttered in public, upon the promenade, to mutual friends, of course the Duchess had the benefit of Lady Kew's remarks a few minutes after they were uttered; and her grace, and the distinguished princes, counts, and noblemen in her court, designated as billiard-markers by the old Countess, returned the latter's compliments with pretty speeches of their own. Scandals were dug up respecting her ladyship, so old that one would have thought them forgotten these forty years — so old that they happened before most of the Newcomes now extant were born, and surely therefore are out of the province of this contemporary biography. Lady

Kew was indignant with her daughter (there were some moments when any conduct of her friends did not meet her ladyship's approbation) even for the scant civility with which Lady Anne had received the Duchess's advances. "Leave a card upon her! — yes, send a card by one of your footmen; but go in to see her — because she was at the window and saw you drive up. — Are you mad, Anne? That was the very reason you should not have come out of your carriage. But you are so weak and good-natured, that if a highwayman stopped you, you would say, 'Thank you, sir,' as you gave him your purse: yes, and if Mrs. Macheath called on you afterwards you would return the visit!"

Even had these speeches been made about the Duchess, and some of them not addressed to her, things might have gone on pretty well. If we quarrelled with all the people who abuse us behind our backs, and began to tear their eyes out as soon as we set ours on them, what a life it would be, and when should we have any quiet? Backbiting is all fair in society. Abuse me, and I will abuse you; but let us be friends when we meet. Have not we all entered a dozen rooms, and been sure, from the countenances of the amiable persons present, that they had been discussing our little peculiarities, perhaps as we were on the stairs? Was our visit, therefore, the less agreeable? Did we quarrel and say hard words to one another's faces? No — we wait until some of our dear friends take their leave, and then comes our turn. My back is at my neighbour's service; as soon as that is turned let him make what faces he thinks proper: but when we meet we grin and shake hands like well-bred folk, to whom clean linen is not more necessary than a clean sweet-looking countenance, and a nicely got-up smile, for company.

Here was Lady Kew's mistake. She wanted, for some reason, to drive Madame d'Ivry out of Baden; and thought there were no better means of effecting this object than by using the high hand, and practising those frowns upon the Duchess which had scared away so many other persons. But the Queen of Scots was resolute, too, and her band of courtiers fought stoutly round about her. Some of them could not pay their bills, and could not retreat: others had courage, and did not choose to fly. Instead of coaxing and soothing Madame d'Ivry, Madame de Kew thought by a brisk attack to rout and dislodge her. She began on almost the very first occasion when the ladies met. "I was so sorry to hear that Monsieur le Duc was ill at Bagneres, Madame la Duchesse," the old lady began on their very first meeting, after the usual salutations had taken place.

"Madame la Comtesse is very kind to interest herself in Monsieur d'Ivry's health. Monsieur le Duc at his age is not disposed to travel. You, dear miladi, are more happy in being always able to retain the *gout des voyages*!"

"I come to my family! my dear Duchess."

"How charmed they must be to possess you! Miladi Anne, you must be inexpressibly consoled by the presence of a mother so tender! Permit me to present Madame la Comtesse de la Cruchecassee to Madame la Comtesse de Kew. Miladi is sister to that amiable Marquis of Steyne, whom you have known, Ambrosine! Madame la Baronne de Schlangenbad, Miladi Kew. Do you not see the resemblance to milor? These ladies have enjoyed the hospitalities — the splendours of Gaunt House. They were of those famous routs of which the charming Mistress Crawley, la semillante Becki, made part! How sad the Hotel de Gaunt must be under the present circumstances! Have you heard, miladi, of the charming Mistress Becki? Monsieur le Duc describes her as the most spirituelle Englishwoman he ever met." The Queen of Scots turns and whispers her lady of honour, and shrugs and taps her forehead. Lady Kew knows that Madame d'Ivry speaks of her nephew, the present Lord Steyne, who is not in his right mind. The Duchess looks round, and sees a friend in the distance whom she beckons. "Comtesse, you know already monsieur the Captain Blackball? He makes the delight of our society!" A dreadful man with a large cigar, a florid waistcoat, and billiards written on his countenance, swaggers forward at the Duchess's summons. The Countess of Kew has not gained much by her attack. She has been presented to Cruchecassee and Schlangenbad. She sees herself on the eve of becoming the acquaintance of Captain Blackball.

"Permit me, Duchess, to choose my English friends at least for myself," says Lady Kew, drumming her foot.

"But, madam, assuredly! You do not love this good Monsieur de Blackball? Eh! the English manners are droll, pardon me for saying so. It is wonderful how proud you are as a nation, and how ashamed you are of your compatriots!"

"There are some persons who are ashamed of nothing, Madame la Duchesse," cries Lady Kew; losing her temper.

"Is that gracieuseté for me? How much goodness! This good Monsieur de Blackball is not very well bred; but, for an Englishman, he is not too bad. I have met with people who are more ill-bred than Englishmen in my travels."

"And they are?" said Lady Anne, who had been in vain endeavouring to put an end to this colloquy.

"Englishwomen, madam! I speak not for you. You are kind; you — you are too soft, dear Lady Anne, for a persecutor."

The counsels of the worldly woman who governed and directed that branch of the Newcome family of whom it is our business to speak now for a little while, bore other results than those which the elderly lady desired and foresaw. Who can foresee everything and always? Not the wisest among us. When his Majesty Louis XIV., jockeyed his grandson on to the throne of Spain (founding thereby the present revered dynasty of that country), did he expect to peril his own, and bring all Europe about his royal ears? Could a late King of France, eager for the advantageous establishment of one of his darling sons, and anxious to procure a beautiful Spanish princess, with a crown and kingdom in reversion, for the simple and obedient youth, ever suppose that the welfare of his whole august race and reign would be upset by that smart speculation? We take only the most noble examples to illustrate the conduct of such a noble old personage as her ladyship of Kew, who brought a prodigious deal of trouble upon some of the innocent members of her family, whom no doubt she thought to better in life by her experienced guidance and undoubted worldly wisdom. We may be as deep as Jesuits, know the world ever so well, lay the best-ordered plans, and the profoundest combinations, and by a certain not unnatural turn of fate, we, and our plans and combinations, are sent flying before the wind. We may be as wise as Louis Philippe, that many-counselled Ulysses whom the respectable world admired so; and after years of patient scheming, and prodigies of skill, after coaxing, wheedling, doubling, bullying, wisdom, behold yet stronger powers interpose: and schemes, and skill and violence, are nought.

Frank and Ethel, Lady Kew's grandchildren, were both the obedient subjects of this imperious old Louis XIV. in a black front and a cap and ribbon, this scheming old Louis Philippe in tabinet; but their blood was good and their tempers high; and for all her biting and driving, and the training of her mange, the generous young colts were hard to break. Ethel, at this time, was especially stubborn in training, rebellious to the whip, and wild under harness; and the way in which Lady Kew managed her won the admiration of her family: for it was a maxim among these folks that no one could manage Ethel but Lady Kew. Barnes said no one could manage his sister but his grandmother. He couldn't, that was certain. Mamma never tried, and indeed was so good-natured, that rather than ride the filly, she would put the saddle on her own back and let the filly ride her; no, there was no one but her ladyship capable of managing that girl, Barnes owned, who held Lady Kew in much respect and awe. "If the tightest hand were not kept on her, there's no knowing what she mightn't do," said her brother. "Ethel Newcome, by Jove, is capable of running away with the writing-master."

After poor Jack Belsize's mishap and departure, Barnes's own bride showed no spirit at all, save one of placid contentment. She came at call and instantly, and went through whatever paces her owner demanded of her. She laughed whenever need was, simpered and smiled when spoken to, danced whenever she was asked; drove out at Barnes's side in Kew's phaeton, and received him certainly not with warmth, but with politeness and welcome. It is difficult to describe the scorn with which her sister-inlaw regarded her. The sight of the patient timid little thing chafed Ethel, who was always more haughty and flighty and bold when in Clara's presence than at any other time. Her ladyship's brother, Captain Lord Viscount Rooster, before mentioned, joined the family party at this interesting juncture. My Lord Rooster found himself surprised, delighted, subjugated by Miss Newcome, her wit and spirit. "By Jove, she is a plucky one," his lordship exclaimed. "To dance with her is the best fun in life. How she pulls all the other girls to pieces, by Jove, and how splendidly she chaffs everybody! But," he added with the shrewdness and sense of humour which distinguished the young officer, "I'd rather dance with her than marry her — by a doosid long score — I don't envy you that part of the business, Kew, my boy." Lord Kew did not set himself up as a person to be envied. He thought his cousin beautiful: and with his grandmother, that she would make a very handsome Countess; and he thought the money which Lady Kew would give or leave to the young couple a very welcome addition to his means.

On the next night, when there was a ball at the room, Miss Ethel chose to appear in a toilette the very grandest and finest which she had ever assumed, who was ordinarily exceedingly simple in her attire, and dressed below the mark of the rest of the world. Her clustering ringlets, her shining white shoulders, her splendid raiment (I believe indeed it was her court-dress which the young lady assumed) astonished all beholders. She eclipsed all other beauties by her appearance; so much so that Madame d'Ivry's court could not but look, the men in admiration, the women in dislike, at this dazzling young creature. None of the countesses, duchesses, princesses, Russ, Spanish, Italian, were so fine or so handsome. There were some New York ladies at Baden as there are everywhere else in Europe now. Not even these were more magnificent than Miss Ethel. General Jeremiah J. Bung's lady owned that Miss Newcome was fit to appear in any party in Fourth Avenue. She was the only well-dressed English girl Mrs. Bung had seen in Europe. A young German *Durchlaucht* deigned to explain to his aide-de-camp how very handsome he thought Miss Newcome. All our acquaintances were of one mind.

Mr. Jones of England pronounced her stunning; the admirable Captain Blackball examined her points with the skill of an amateur, and described them with agreeable frankness. Lord Rooster was charmed as he surveyed her, and complimented his late companion-in-arms on the possession of such a paragon. Only Lord Kew was not delighted — nor did Miss Ethel mean that he should be. She looked as splendid as Cinderella in the prince's palace. But what need for all this splendour? this wonderful toilette? this dazzling neck and shoulders, whereof the brightness and beauty blinded the eyes of lookers-on? She was dressed as gaudily as an actress of the Varieties going to a supper at *Trois Freres*. "It was Mademoiselle Mabilien en habit de coeur," Madame d'Ivry remarked to Madame Schlangenbad. Barnes, who with his bride-elect for a partner made a vis-a-vis for his sister and the admiring Lord Rooster, was puzzled likewise by Ethel's countenance and appearance. Little Lady Clara looked like a little schoolgirl dancing before her.

One, two, three, of the attendants of her Majesty the Queen of Scots were carried off in the course of the evening by the victorious young beauty, whose triumph had the effect, which the headstrong girl perhaps herself anticipated, of mortifying the Duchesse d'Ivry, of exasperating old Lady Kew, and of annoying the young nobleman to whom Miss Ethel was engaged. The girl seemed to take a pleasure in defying all three, a something embittered her, alike against her friends and her enemies. The old dowager chaffed and vented her wrath upon Lady Anne and Barnes. Ethel kept the ball alive by herself almost. She refused to go home, declining hints and commands alike. She was engaged for ever so many dances more. Not dance with Count Punter? it would be rude to leave him after promising him. Not waltz with Captain Blackball? He was not a proper partner for her? Why then did Kew know him? Lord Kew walked and talked with Captain Blackball every day. Was she to be so proud as not to know Lord Kew's friends? She greeted the Captain with a most fascinating smile as he came up whilst the controversy was pending, and ended it by whirling round the room in his arms.

Madame d'Ivry viewed with such pleasure as might be expected the defection of her adherents, and the triumph of her youthful rival, who seemed to grow more beautiful with each waltz, so that the other dancers paused to look at her, the men breaking out in enthusiasm, the reluctant women being forced to join in the applause. Angry as she was, and knowing how Ethel's conduct angered her grandson, old Lady Kew could not help admiring the rebellious beauty, whose girlish spirit was more than a match for the imperious dowager's tough old resolution. As for Mr. Barnes's displeasure, the girl tossed her saucy head, shrugged her fair shoulders, and passed on with a scornful laugh. In a word, Miss Ethel conducted herself as a most reckless and intrepid young flirt, using her eyes with the most consummate effect, chattering with astounding gaiety, prodigal of smiles, gracious thanks and killing glances. What wicked spirit moved her? Perhaps had she known the mischief she was doing, she would have continued it still.

The sight of this wilfulness and levity smote poor Lord Kew's honest heart with cruel pangs of mortification. The easy young nobleman had passed many a year of his life in all sorts of wild company. The chaumiere knew him, and the balls of Parisian actresses, the coulisses of the opera at home and abroad. Those pretty heads of ladies whom nobody knows, used to nod their shining ringlets at Kew, from private boxes at theatres, or dubious Park broughams. He had run the career of young men of pleasure, and laughed and feasted with jolly prodigals and their company. He was tired of it: perhaps he remembered an earlier and purer life, and was sighing to return to it. Living as he had done amongst the outcasts, his ideal of domestic virtue was high and pure. He chose to believe that good women were entirely good. Duplicity he could not understand; ill-temper shocked him: wilfulness he seemed to fancy belonged only to the profane and wicked; not to good girls, with good mothers, in honest homes. Their nature was to love their families; to obey their parents; to tend their poor; to honour their husbands; to cherish their children. Ethel's laugh woke him up from one of these simple reveries very likely, and then she swept round the ballroom rapidly, to the brazen notes of the orchestra. He never offered to dance with her more than once in the evening; went away to play, and returned to find her still whirling to the music. Madame d'Ivry remarked his tribulation and gloomy face, though she took no pleasure at his discomfiture, knowing that Ethel's behaviour caused it.

In plays and novels, and I dare say in real life too sometimes, when the wanton heroine chooses to exert her powers of fascination, and to flirt with Sir Harry or the Captain, the hero, in a pique, goes off and makes love to somebody else: both acknowledge their folly after a while, shake hands, and are reconciled, and the curtain drops, or the volume ends. But there are some people too noble and simple for these amorous scenes and smirking artifices. When Kew was pleased he laughed, when he was grieved he was silent. He did not deign to hide his grief or pleasure under disguises. His error, perhaps, was in forgetting that Ethel was very young; that her conduct was not design so much as girlish mischief and high spirits; and that if young men have their frolics, sow their wild oats, and enjoy their pleasure, young women may be permitted

sometimes their more harmless vagaries of gaiety, and sportive outbreaks of wilful humour.

When she consented to go home at length, Lord Kew brought Miss Newcome's little white cloak for her (under the hood of which her glossy curls, her blushing cheeks, and bright eyes looked provokingly handsome), and encased her in this pretty garment without uttering one single word. She made him a saucy curtsy in return for this act of politeness, which salutation he received with a grave bow; and then he proceeded to cover up old Lady Kew, and to conduct her ladyship to her chariot. Miss Ethel chose to be displeased at her cousin's displeasure. What were balls made for but that people should dance? She a flirt? She displease Lord Kew? If she chose to dance, she would dance; she had no idea of his giving himself airs; besides it was such fun taking away the gentlemen of Mary Queen of Scots' court from her; such capital fun! So she went to bed, singing and performing wonderful roulades as she lighted her candle and retired to her room. She had had such a jolly evening!! such famous fun, and, I dare say (but how shall a novelist penetrate these mysteries?), when her chamber door was closed, she scolded her maid and was as cross as two sticks. You see there come moments of sorrow after the most brilliant victories; and you conquer and rout the enemy utterly, and then regret that you fought.



CHAPTER XXXIV

THE END OF THE CONGRESS OF BADEN

Mention has been made of an elderly young person from Ireland, engaged by Madame la Duchesse d'Ivry, as companion and teacher of English for her little daughter. When Miss O'Grady, as she did some time afterwards, quitted Madame d'Ivry's family, she spoke with great freedom regarding the behaviour of that duchess, and recounted horrors which she, the latter, had committed. A number of the most terrific anecdotes issued from the lips of the indignant Miss, whose volubility Lord Kew was obliged to check, not choosing that his countess, with whom he was paying a bridal visit to Paris, should hear such dreadful legends. It was there that Miss O'Grady, finding herself in misfortune, and reading of Lord Kew's arrival at the Hotel Bristol, waited upon his lordship and the Countess of Kew, begging them to take tickets in a raffle for an invaluable ivory writing-desk, sole relic of her former prosperity, which she proposed to give her friends the chance of acquiring: in fact, Miss O'Grady lived for some years on the produce of repeated raffles for this beautiful desk: many religious ladies of the Faubourg St. Germain taking an interest in her misfortunes, and alleviating them by the simple lottery system. Protestants as well as Catholics were permitted to take shares in Miss O'Grady's raffles; and Lord Kew, good-natured then as always, purchased so many tickets, that the contrite O'Grady informed him of a transaction which had nearly affected his happiness, and in which she took a not very creditable share. "Had I known your lordship's real character," Miss O'G was pleased to say, "no tortures would have induced me to do an act for which I have undergone penance. It was that black-hearted woman, my lord, who maligned your lordship to me: that woman whom I called friend once, but who is the most false, depraved, and dangerous of her sex." In this way do ladies' companions sometimes speak of ladies when quarrels separate them, when confidential attendants are dismissed, bearing away family secrets in their minds, and revenge in their hearts.

The day after Miss Ethel's feats at the assembly, old Lady Kew went over to advise her granddaughter, and to give her a little timely warning about the impropriety of flirtations; above all, with such men as are to be found at watering-places, persons who are never seen elsewhere in society. "Remark the peculiarities of Kew's temper, who never flies into a passion like you and me, my dear," said the old lady (being determined to be particularly gracious and cautious); "when once angry he remains so, and is so obstinate that it is almost impossible to coax him into good-humour. It is much better, my love, to be like us," continued the old lady, "to fly out in a rage and have it over; but *que voulez-vous?* such is Frank's temper, and we must manage him." So she went on, backing her advice by a crowd of examples drawn from the family history; showing how Kew was like his grandfather, her own poor husband; still more like his late father, Lord Walham; between whom and his mother there had been differences, chiefly brought on by my Lady Walham, of course, which had ended in the almost total estrangement of mother and son. Lady Kew then administered her advice, and told her stories with Ethel alone for a listener; and in a most edifying manner, she besought Miss Newcome to menage Lord Kew's susceptibilities, as she valued her own future comfort in life, as well as the happiness of a most amiable man, of whom, if properly managed, Ethel might make what she pleased. We have said Lady Kew managed everybody, and that most of the members of her family allowed themselves to be managed by her ladyship.

Ethel, who had permitted her grandmother to continue her sententious advice, while she herself sat tapping her feet on the floor, and performing the most rapid variations of that air which is called the Devil's Tattoo, burst out, at length, to the elder lady's surprise, with an outbreak of indignation, a flushing face, and a voice quivering with anger.

"This most amiable man," she cried out, "that you design for me, I know everything about this most amiable man, and thank you and my family for the present you make me! For the past year, what have you been doing? Every one of you! my father, my brother, and you yourself, have been filling my ears wit cruel reports against a poor boy, whom you chose to depict as everything that was dissolute and wicked, when there was nothing against him; nothing, but that he was poor. Yes, you yourself, grandmamma, have told me many and many a time, that Clive Newcome was not a fit companion for us; warned me against his bad courses, and painted him as extravagant, unprincipled, I don't know how bad. How bad! I know how good he is; how upright, generous, and truth-telling: though there was not a day until lately, that Barnes did not make some wicked story against him — Barnes, who, I believe, is bad himself, like — like other young men. Yes, I am sure there was something about Barnes in that newspaper which my father took away from me. And you come, and you lift up your

hands, and shake your head, because I dance with one gentleman or another. You tell me I am wrong; mamma has told me so this morning. Barnes, of course, has told me so, and you bring me Frank as a pattern, and tell me to love and honour and obey him! Look here," and she drew out a paper and put it into Lady Kew's hands. "Here is Kew's history, and I believe it is true; yes, I am sure it is true."

The old dowager lifted her eyeglass to her black eyebrow, and read a paper written in English, and bearing no signature, in which many circumstances of Lord Kew's life were narrated for poor Ethel's benefit. It was not a worse life than that of a thousand young men of pleasure, but there were Kew's many misdeeds set down in order: such a catalogue as we laugh at when Leporello trolls it, and sings his master's victories in France, Italy, and Spain. Madame d'Ivry's name was not mentioned in this list, and Lady Kew felt sure that the outrage came from her.

With real ardour Lady Kew sought to defend her grandson from some of the attacks here made against him; and showed Ethel that the person who could use such means of calumniating him, would not scruple to resort to falsehood in order to effect her purpose.

"Her purpose!" cries Ethel. "How do you know it is a woman?" Lady Kew lapsed into generalities. She thought the handwriting was a woman's — at least it was not likely that a man should think of addressing an anonymous letter to a young lady, and so wreaking his hatred upon Lord Kew. "Besides, Frank has had no rivals — except — except one young gentleman who has carried his paint-boxes to Italy," says Lady Kew. "You don't think your dear Colonel's son would leave such a piece of mischief behind him? You must act, my dear," continued her ladyship, "as if this letter had never been written at all; the person who wrote it no doubt will watch you. Of course we are too proud to allow him to see that we are wounded; and pray, pray do not think of letting poor Frank know a word about this horrid transaction."

"Then the letter is true?" burst out Ethel. "You know it is true, grandmamma, and that is why you would have me keep it a secret from my cousin; besides," she added, with a little hesitation, "your caution comes too late, Lord Kew has seen the letter."

"You fool!" screamed the old lady, "you were not so mad as to show it to him?"

"I am sure the letter is true," Ethel said, rising up very haughtily. "It is not by calling me bad names that your ladyship will disprove it. Keep them, if you please, for my Aunt Julia; she is sick and weak, and can't defend herself. I do not choose to bear abuse from you, or lectures from Lord Kew. He happened to be here a short while since, when the letter arrived. He had been good enough to come to preach me a sermon on his own account. He to find fault with my actions!" cried Miss Ethel, quivering with wrath and clenching the luckless paper in her hand. "He to accuse me of levity, and to warn me against making improper acquaintances! He began his lectures too soon. I am not a lawful slave yet, and prefer to remain unmolested, at least as long as I am free."

"And you told Frank all this, Miss Newcome, and you showed him that letter?" said the old lady.

"The letter was actually brought to me whilst his lordship was in the midst of his sermon," Ethel replied. "I read it as he was making his speech," she continued, gathering anger and scorn as she recalled the circumstances of the interview. "He was perfectly polite in his language. He did not call me a fool or use a single other bad name. He was good enough to advise me and to make such virtuous pretty speeches, that if he had been a bishop he could not have spoken better; and as I thought the letter was a nice commentary on his lordship's sermon, I gave it to him. I gave it to him," cried the young woman, "and much good may it do him. I don't think my Lord Kew will preach to me again for some time."

"I don't think he will indeed," said Lady Kew, in a hard dry voice. "You don't know what you may have done. Will you be pleased to ring the bell and order my carriage? I congratulate you on having performed a most charming morning's work."

Ethel made her grandmother a very stately curtsy. I pity Lady Julia's condition when her mother reached home.

All who know Lord Kew may be pretty sure that in that unlucky interview with Ethel, to which the young lady has alluded, he just said no single word to her that was not kind, and just, and gentle. Considering the relation between them, he thought himself justified in remonstrating with her as to the conduct which she chose to pursue, and in warning her against acquaintances of whom his own experience had taught him the dangerous character. He knew Madame d'Ivry and her friends so well that he would not have his wife-elect a member of their circle. He could not tell Ethel what he knew of those women and their history. She chose not to understand his hints — did not, very likely, comprehend them. She was quite young, and the stories of such lives as theirs had never been told before her. She was indignant at the surveillance

which Lord Kew exerted over her, and the authority which he began to assume. At another moment and in a better frame of mind she would have been thankful for his care, and very soon and ever after she did justice to his many admirable qualities — his frankness, honesty, and sweet temper. Only her high spirit was in perpetual revolt at this time against the bondage in which her family strove to keep her. The very worldly advantages of the position which they offered her served but to chafe her the more. Had her proposed husband been a young prince with a crown to lay at her feet, she had been yet more indignant very likely, and more rebellious. Had Kew's younger brother been her suitor, or Kew in his place, she had been not unwilling to follow her parents' wishes. Hence the revolt in which she was engaged — the wayward freaks and outbreaks her haughty temper indulged in. No doubt she saw the justice of Lord Kew's reproofs. That self-consciousness was not likely to add to her good-humour. No doubt she was sorry for having shown Lord Kew the letter the moment after she had done that act, of which the poor young lady could not calculate the consequences that were now to ensue.

Lord Kew, on glancing over the letter, at once divined the quarter whence it came. The portrait drawn of him was not unlike, as our characters described by those who hate us are not unlike. He had passed a reckless youth; indeed he was sad and ashamed of that past life, longed like the poor prodigal to return to better courses, and had embraced eagerly the chance afforded him of a union with a woman young, virtuous, and beautiful, against whom and against heaven he hoped to sin no more. If we have told or hinted at more of his story than will please the ear of modern conventionalism, I beseech the reader to believe that the writer's purpose at least is not dishonest, nor unkindly. The young gentleman hung his head with sorrow over that sad detail of his life and its follies. What would he have given to be able to say to Ethel, "This is not true"

His reproaches to Miss Newcome of course were at once stopped by this terrible assault on himself. The letter had been put in the Baden post-box, and so had come to its destination. It was in a disguised handwriting. Lord Kew could form no idea even of the sex of the scribe. He put the envelope in his pocket, when Ethel's back was turned. He examined the paper when he left her. He could make little of the superscription or of the wafer which had served to close the note. He did not choose to caution Ethel as to whether she should burn the letter or divulge it to her friends. He took his share of the pain, as a boy at school takes his flogging, stoutly and in silence.

When he saw Ethel again, which he did in an hour's time, the generous young gentleman held his hand out to her. "My dear," he said, "if you had loved me you never would have shown me that letter." It was his only reproof. After that he never again reproved or advised her.

Ethel blushed. "You are very brave and generous, Frank," said, bending her head, "and I am captious and wicked." He felt the hot tear blotting on his hand from his cousin's downcast eyes.

He kissed her little hand. Lady Anne, who was in the room with her children when these few words passed between the two in a very low tone, thought it was a reconciliation. Ethel knew it was a renunciation on Kew's part — she never liked him so much as at that moment. The young man was too modest and simple to guess himself what the girl's feelings were. Could he have told them, his fate and hers might have been changed.

"You must not allow our kind letter-writing friend," Lord Kew continued, "to fancy we are hurt. We must walk out this afternoon, and we must appear very good friends."

"Yes, always, Kew," said Ethel, holding out her hand again. The next minute her cousin was at the table carving roast-fowls, and distributing the portions to the hungry children.

The assembly of the previous evening had been one of those which the *fermier des jeux* at Baden beneficently provides for the frequenters of the place, and now was to come off a much more brilliant entertainment, in which poor Clive, who is far into Switzerland by this time, was to have taken a share. The Bachelors had agreed to give a ball, one of the last entertainments of the season: a dozen or more of them had subscribed the funds, and we may be sure Lord Kew's name was at the head of the list, as it was of any list, of any scheme, whether of charity or fun. The English were invited, and the Russians were invited; the Spaniards and Italians, Poles, Prussians, and Hebrews; all the motley frequenters of the place, and the warriors in the Duke of Baden's army. Unlimited supper was set in the restaurant. The dancing-room glittered with extra lights, and a profusion of cut-paper flowers decorated the festive scene. Everybody was present, those crowds with whom our story has nothing to do, and those two or three groups of persons who enact minor or greater parts in it. Madame d'Ivry came in a dress of stupendous splendour, even more brilliant than that in which Miss Ethel had figured at the last assembly. If the Duchess intended to ecraser Miss Newcome by the superior magnificence of her toilet, she was

disappointed. Miss Newcome wore a plain white frock on the occasion, and resumed, Madame d'Ivry said, her role of ingenue for that night.

During the brief season in which gentlemen enjoyed the favour of Mary Queen of Scots, that wandering sovereign led them through all the paces and vagaries of a regular passion. As in a fair, where time is short and pleasures numerous, the master of the theatrical booth shows you a tragedy, a farce, and a pantomime, all in a quarter of an hour, having a dozen new audiences to witness his entertainments in the course of the forenoon; so this lady with her platonic lovers went through the complete dramatic course — tragedies of jealousy, pantomimes of rapture, and farces of parting. There were billets on one side and the other; hints of a fatal destiny, and a ruthless, lynx-eyed tyrant, who held a demoniac grasp over the Duchess by means of certain secrets which he knew: there were regrets that we had not known each other sooner: why were we brought out of our convent and sacrificed to Monsieur le Duc? There were frolic interchanges of fancy and poesy: pretty bouderies; sweet reconciliations; yawns finally — and separation. Adolphe went out and Alphonse came in. It was the new audience; for which the bell rang, the band played, and the curtain rose; and the tragedy, comedy, and farce were repeated.

Those Greenwich performers who appear in the theatrical pieces above-mentioned, make a great deal more noise than your stationary tragedians; and if they have to denounce a villain, to declare a passion, or to threaten an enemy, they roar, stamp, shake their fists, and brandish their sabres, so that every man who sees the play has surely a full pennyworth for his penny. Thus Madame la Duchesse d'Ivry perhaps a little exaggerated her heroines' parts liking to strike her audiences quickly, and also to change them often. Like good performers, she flung herself heart and soul into the business of the stage, and was what she acted. She was Phedre, and if in the first part of the play she was uncommonly tender to Hippolyte, in the second she hated him furiously. She was Medea, and if Jason was volage, woe to Creusa! Perhaps our poor Lord Kew had taken the first character in a performance with Madame d'Ivry; for his behaviour in which part it was difficult enough to forgive him; but when he appeared at Baden the affianced husband of one of the most beautiful young creatures in Europe — when his relatives scorned Madame d'Ivry — no wonder she was maddened and enraged, and would have recourse to revenge, steel, poison.

There was in the Duchess's court a young fellow from the South of France, whose friends had sent him to faire son droit at Paris, where he had gone through the usual course of pleasure and studies of the young inhabitants of the Latin Quarter. He had at one time exalted republican opinions, and had fired his shot with distinction at St. Meri. He was a poet of some little note — a book of his lyrics, *Les Rales d'un Asphyxie*, having made a sensation at the time of their appearance. He drank great quantities of absinthe of a morning; smoked incessantly; played roulette whenever he could get a few pieces; contributed to a small journal, and was especially great in his hatred of l'infame Angleterre. Delenda est Carthago was tattooed beneath his shirt-sleeves. Fifine and Clarisse, young milliners of the students' district, had punctured this terrible motto on his manly right arm. Le leopard, emblem of England, was his aversion; he shook his fist at the caged monster in the Garden of Plants. He desired to have "Here lies an enemy of England" engraved upon his early tomb. He was skilled at billiards and dominoes, adroit in the use of arms, of unquestionable courage and fierceness. Mr. Jones of England was afraid of M. de Castillonnes, and cowered before his scowls and sarcasms. Captain Blackball, the other English aide-de-camp of the Duchesse d'Ivry, a warrior of undoubted courage, who had been "on the ground" more than once, gave him a wide berth, and wondered what the little beggar meant when he used to say, "Since the days of the Prince Noir, monsieur, my family has been at feud with l'Angleterre!" His family were grocers at Bordeaux, and his father's name was M. Cabasse. He had married a noble in the revolutionary times; and the son at Paris himself himself Victor Cabasse de Castillonnes; then Victor C. de Castillonnes; then M. de Castillonnes. One of the followers of the Black Prince had insulted a lady of the house of Castillonnes, when the English were lords of Guienne; hence our friend's wrath against the Leopard. He had written, and afterwards dramatised a terrific legend describing the circumstances, and the punishment of the Briton by a knight of the Castillonnes family. A more awful coward never existed in a melodrama than that felon English knight. His blanche-fille, of course, died of hopeless love for the conquering Frenchman, her father's murderer. The paper in which the feuilleton appeared died at the sixth number of the story. The theatre of the Boulevard refused the drama; so the author's rage against l'infame Albion was yet unappeased. On beholding Miss Newcome, Victor had fancied a resemblance between her and Agnes de Calverley, the blanche Miss of his novel and drama, and cast an eye of favour upon the young creature. He even composed verses in her honour (for I presume that the "Miss Betti" and the Princess Crimhilde of the poems which he subsequently published, were no other than Miss Newcome, and the Duchess, her rival).

He had been one of the lucky gentlemen who had danced with Ethel on the previous evening. On the occasion of the ball, he came to her with a highflown compliment, and a request to be once more allowed to waltz with her — a request to which he expected a favourable answer, thinking, no doubt, that his wit, his powers of conversation, and the amour qui flambait dans son regard, had had their effect upon the charming Meess. Perhaps he had a copy of the very verses in his breast-pocket, with which he intended to complete his work of fascination. For her sake alone, he had been heard to say that he would enter into a truce with England, and forget the hereditary wrongs of his race.

But the blanche Miss on this evening declined to waltz with him. His compliments were not of the least avail. He retired with them and his unuttered verses in his crumpled bosom. Miss Newcome only danced in one quadrille with Lord Kew, and left the party quite early, to the despair of many of the bachelors, who lost the fairest ornament of their ball.

Lord Kew, however, had been seen walking with her in public, and particularly attentive to her during her brief appearance in the ballroom; and the old Dowager, who regularly attended all places of amusement, and was at twenty parties and six dinners the week before she died, thought fit to be particularly gracious to Madame d'Ivry upon this evening, and, far from shunning the Duchesse's presence or being rude to her, as on former occasions, was entirely smiling and good-humoured. Lady Kew, too, thought there had been a reconciliation between Ethel and her cousin. Lady Anne had given her mother some account of the handshaking. Kew's walk with Ethel, the quadrille which she had danced with him alone, induced the elder lady to believe that matters had been made up between the young people.

So, by way of showing the Duchesse that her little shot of the morning had failed in its effect, as Frank left the room with his cousin, Lady Kew gaily hinted, "that the young earl was aux petits soins with Miss Ethel; that she was sure her old friend, the Duc d'Ivry, would be glad to hear that his godson was about to range himself. He would settle down on his estates. He would attend to his duties as an English peer and a country gentleman. We shall go home," says the benevolent Countess, "and kill the veau gras, and you shall see our dear prodigal will become a very quiet gentleman."

The Duchesse said, "my Lady Kew's plan was most edifying. She was charmed to hear that Lady Kew loved veal; there were some who thought that meat rather insipid." A waltzer came to claim her hand at this moment; and as she twirled round the room upon that gentleman's arm, wafting odours as she moved, her pink silks, pink feathers, pink ribands, making a mighty rustling, the Countess of Kew had the satisfaction of thinking that she had planted an arrow in that shrivelled little waist, which Count Punter's arms embraced, and had returned the stab which Madame d'Ivry had delivered in the morning.

Mr. Barnes, and his elect bride, had also appeared, danced, and disappeared. Lady Kew soon followed her young ones; and the ball went on very gaily, in spite of the absence of these respectable personages.

Being one of the managers of the entertainment, Lord Kew returned to it after conducting Lady Anne and her daughter to their carriage, and now danced with great vigour, and with his usual kindness, selecting those ladies whom other waltzers rejected because they were too old, or too plain, or too stout, or what not. But he did not ask Madame d'Ivry to dance. He could condescend to dissemble so far as to hide the pain which he felt; but did not care to engage in that more advanced hypocrisy of friendship, which for her part, his old grandmother had not shown the least scruple in assuming.

Amongst other partners, my lord selected that intrepid waltzer, the Graefinn von Gumpelheim, who, in spite of her age, size, and large family, never lost a chance of enjoying her favourite recreation. "Look with what a camel my lord waltzes," said M. Victor to Madame d'Ivry, whose slim waist he had the honour of embracing to the same music. "What man but an Englishman would ever select such a dromedary?"

"Avant de se marier," said Madame d'Ivry, "il faut avouer que my lord se permet d'énormes distractions."

"My lord marries himself! And when and whom?" cried the Duchesse's partner.

"Miss Newcome. Do not you approve of his choice? I thought the eyes of Stenio" (the Duchess called M. Victor, Stenio) "looked with some favour upon that little person. She is handsome, even very handsome. Is it not so often in life, Stenio? Are not youth and innocence (I give Miss Ethel the compliment of her innocence, now surtout that the little painter is dismissed)— are we not cast into the arms of jaded roués? Tender young flowers, are we not torn from our convent gardens, and flung into a world of which the air poisons our pure life, and withers the sainted buds of hope and love and faith? Faith! The mocking world tramples on it, n'est-ce pas? Love! The brutal world strangles the heaven-born infant at its birth. Hope! It smiled at me in my little convent chamber, played among the flowers which I cherished, warbled with the birds that I loved. But it quitted me at the door of the world, Stenio. It folded its white wings and veiled its radiant face! In

return for my young love, they gave me — sixty years, the dregs of a selfish heart, egotism cowering over its fire, and cold for all its mantle of ermine! In place of the sweet flowers of my young years, they gave me these, Stenio!” and she pointed to her feathers and her artificial roses. “Oh, I should like to crush them under my feet!” and she put out the neatest little slipper. The Duchesse was great upon her wrongs, and paraded her blighted innocence to every one who would feel interested by that piteous spectacle. The music here burst out more swiftly and melodiously than before; the pretty little feet forgot their desire to trample upon the world. She shrugged the lean little shoulders — “Eh!” said the Queen of Scots, “dansons et oublions;” and Stenio’s arm once more surrounded her fairy waist (she called herself a fairy; other ladies called her a skeleton); and they whirled away in the waltz again and presently she and Stenio came bumping up against the stalwart Lord Kew and the ponderous Madame de Gumpelheim, as a wherry dashes against the oaken ribs of a steamer.

The little couple did not fall; they were struck on to a neighbouring bench, luckily: but there was a laugh at the expense of Stenio and the Queen of Scots — and Lord Kew, settling his panting partner on to a seat, came up to make excuses for his awkwardness to the lady who had been its victim. At the laugh produced by the catastrophe, the Duchesse’s eyes gleamed with anger.

“M. de Castillonnes,” she said to her partner, “have you had any quarrel with that Englishman?”

“With ce milor? But no,” said Stenio.

“He did it on purpose. There has been no day but his family has insulted me!” hissed out the Duchesse, and at this moment Lord Kew came up to make his apologies. He asked a thousand pardons of Madame la Duchesse for being so maladroit.

“Maladroit! et tres maladroit, monsieur,” says Stenio, curling his moustache; “c’est bien le mot, monsieur!”

“Also, I make my excuses to Madame la Duchesse, which I hope she will receive,” said Lord Kew. The Duchesse shrugged her shoulders and sunk her head.

“When one does not know how to dance, one ought not to dance,” continued the Duchesse’s knight.

“Monsieur is very good to give me lessons in dancing,” said Lord Kew.

“Any lessons which you please, milor!” cries Stenio; “and everywhere where you will them.”

Lord Kew looked at the little man with surprise. He could not understand so much anger for so trifling an accident, which happens a dozen times in every crowded ball. He again bowed to the Duchesse, and walked away.

“This is your Englishman — your Kew, whom you vaunt everywhere,” said Stenio to M. de Florac, who was standing by and witnessed the scene. “Is he simply bete, or is he poltron as well? I believe him to be both.”

“Silence, Victor!” cried Florac, seizing his arm, and drawing him away. “You know me, and that I am neither one or the other. Believe my word, that my Lord Kew wants neither courage nor wit!”

“Will you be my witness, Florac?” continues the other.

“To take him your excuses? yes. It is you who have insulted —”

“Yes, parbleu, I have insulted!” says the Gascon.

“— A man who never willingly offended soul alive. A man full of heart: the most frank: the most loyal. I have seen him put to the proof, and believe me he is all I say.”

“Eh! so much the better for me!” cried the Southron. “I shall have the honour of meeting a gallant man: and there will be two on the field.”

“They are making a tool of you, my poor Gascon,” said M. de Florac, who saw Madame d’Ivry’s eyes watching the couple. She presently took the arm of the noble Count de Punter, and went for fresh air into the adjoining apartment, where play was going on as usual; and Lord Kew and his friend Lord Rooster were pacing the room apart from the gamblers.

My Lord Rooster, at something which Kew said, looked puzzled, and said, “Pooh, stuff, damned little Frenchman! Confounded nonsense!”

“I was searching you, milor!” said Madame d’Ivry, in a most winning tone, tripping behind him with her noiseless little feet. “Allow me a little word. Your arm! You used to give it me once, mon filleul! I hope you think nothing of the rudeness of M. de Castillonnes; he is a foolish Gascon: he must have been too often to the buffet this evening.”

Lord Kew said, No, indeed, he thought nothing of de Castillonnes’ rudeness.

"I am so glad! These heroes of the *salle-d'armes* have not the commonest manners. These Gascons are always *flamberge au vent*. What would the charming Miss Ethel say, if she heard of the dispute?"

"Indeed there is no reason why she should hear of it," said Lord Kew, "unless some obliging friend should communicate it to her."

"Communicate it to her — the poor dear! who would be so cruel as to give her pain?" asked the innocent Duchesse. "Why do you look at me so, Frank?"

"Because I admire you," said her interlocutor, with a bow. "I have never seen Madame la Duchesse to such advantage as today."

"You speak in enigmas! Come back with me to the ballroom. Come and dance with me once more. You used to dance with me. Let us have one waltz more, Kew. And then, and then, in a day or two I shall go back to Monsieur le Duc, and tell him that his *filleul* is going to marry the fairest of all Englishwomen and to turn hermit in the country, and orator in the Chamber of Peers. You have wit! ah si — you have wit!" And she led back Lord Kew, rather amazed himself at what he was doing, into the ballroom; so that the good-natured people who were there, and who beheld them dancing, could not refrain from clapping their hands at the sight of this couple.

The Duchess danced as if she was bitten by that Neapolitan spider which, according to the legend, is such a wonderful dance-incentor. She would have the music quicker and quicker. She sank on Kew's arm, and clung on his support. She poured out all the light of her languishing eyes into his face. Their glances rather confused than charmed him. But the bystanders were pleased; they thought it so good-hearted of the Duchesse, after the little quarrel, to make a public avowal of reconciliation!

Lord Rooster looking on, at the entrance of the dancing-room, over Monsieur de Florac's shoulder, said, "It's all right! She's a clipper to dance, the little Duchess."

"The viper!" said Florac, "how she writhes!"

"I suppose that business with the Frenchman is all over," says Lord Rooster. "Confounded piece of nonsense."

"You believe it finished? We shall see!" said Florac, who perhaps knew his fair cousin better. When the waltz was over, Kew led his partner to a seat, and bowed to her; but though she made room for him at her side, pointing to it, and gathering up her rustling robes so that he might sit down, he moved away, his face full of gloom. He never wished to be near her again. There was something more odious to him in her friendship than her hatred. He knew hers was the hand that had dealt that stab at him and Ethel in the morning. He went back and talked with his two friends in the doorway. "Couch yourself, my little Kiou," said Florac. "You are all pale. You were best in bed, *mon garcon*!"

"She has made me promise to take her in to supper," Kew said, with a sigh.

"She will poison you," said the other. "Why have they abolished the *roue chez nous*? My word of honour they should *retablir* it for this woman."

"There is one in the next room," said Kew, with a laugh, "Come, Vicomte, let us try our fortune," and he walked back into the play-room.

That was the last night on which Lord Kew ever played a gambling game. He won constantly. The double zero seemed to obey him; so that the *croupiers* wondered at his fortune. Florac backed it; saying with the superstition of a gambler, "I am sure something goes to arrive to this boy." From time to time M. de Florac went back to the dancing-room, leaving his *mise* under Kew's charge. He always found his heaps increased; indeed the worthy Vicomte wanted a turn of luck in his favour. On one occasion he returned with a grave face, saying to Lord Rooster, "She has the other one in hand. We are going to see." "Trente-six encor! et rouge gagne," cried the *croupier* with his nasal tone, Monsieur de Florac's pockets overflowed with double Napoleons, and he stopped his play, luckily, for Kew putting down his winnings, once, twice, thrice, lost them all.

When Lord Kew had left the dancing-room, Madame d'Ivry saw Stenio following him with fierce looks, and called back that bearded bard. "You were going to pursue M. de Kew," she said: "I knew you were. Sit down here, sir," and she patted him down on her seat with her fan.

"Do you wish that I should call him back, madame?" said the poet, with the deepest tragic accents.

"I can bring him when I want him, Victor," said the lady.

"Let us hope others will be equally fortunate," the Gascon said, with one hand in his breast, the other stroking his moustache.

"Fi, monsieur, que vous sentez le tabac! je vous le defends, entendez-vous, monsieur?"

"Pourtant, I have seen the day when Madame la Duchesse did not disdain a cigar," said Victor. "If the odour incommodes, permit that I retire."

"And you also would quit me, Stenio? Do you think I did not mark your eyes towards Miss Newcome? your anger when she refused you to dance? Ah! we see all. A woman does not deceive herself, do you see? You send me beautiful verses, Poet. You can write as well of a statue or a picture, of a rose or a sunset, as of the heart of a woman. You were angry just now because I danced with M. de Kew. Do you think in a woman's eyes jealousy is unpardonable?"

"You know how to provoke it, madame," continued the tragedian.

"Monsieur," replied the lady, with dignity, "am I to render you an account of all my actions, and ask your permission for a walk?"

"In fact, I am but the slave, madame," groaned the Gascon, "I am not the master."

"You are a very rebellious slave, monsieur," continues the lady, with a pretty moue, and a glance of the large eyes artfully brightened by her rouge. "Suppose — suppose I danced with M. de Kew, not for his sake — Heaven knows to dance with him is not a pleasure — but for yours. Suppose I do not want a foolish quarrel to proceed. Suppose I know that he is ni sot ni poltron as you pretend. I overheard you, sir, talking with one of the basest of men, my good cousin, M. de Florac: but it is not of him I speak. Suppose I know the Comte de Kew to be a man, cold and insolent, ill-bred, and grossier, as the men of his nation are — but one who lacks no courage — one who is terrible when roused; might I have no occasion to fear, not for him, but —"

"But for me! Ah, Marie! Ah, madame! Believe you that a man of my blood will yield a foot to any Englishman? Do you know the story of my race? do you know that since my childhood I have vowed hatred to that nation? Tenez, madame, this M. Jones who frequents your salon, it was but respect for you that has enabled me to keep my patience with this stupid islander. This Captain Blackball, whom you distinguish, who certainly shoots well, who mounts well to horse, I have always thought his manners were those of the marker of a billiard. But I respect him because he has made war with Don Carlos against the English. But this young M. de Kew, his laugh crisps me the nerves; his insolent air makes me bound; in beholding him I said to myself, I hate you; think whether I love him better after having seen him as I did but now, madame!" Also, but this Victor did not say, he thought Kew had laughed at him at the beginning of the evening, when the blanche Miss had refused to dance with him.

"Ah, Victor, it is not him, but you that I would save," said the Duchess. And the people round about, and the Duchess herself, afterwards said, yes, certainly, she had a good heart. She entreated Lord Kew; she implored M. Victor; she did everything in her power to appease the quarrel between him and the Frenchman.

After the ball came the supper, which was laid at separate little tables, where parties of half a dozen enjoyed themselves. Lord Kew was of the Duchess's party, where our Gascon friend had not a seat. But being one of the managers of the entertainment, his lordship went about from table to table, seeing that the guests at each lacked nothing. He supposed too that the dispute with the Gascon had possibly come to an end; at any rate, disagreeable as the other's speech had been, he had resolved to put up with it, not having the least inclination to drink the Frenchman's blood, or to part with his own on so absurd a quarrel. He asked people in his good-natured way to drink wine with him; and catching M. Victor's eye scowling at him from a distant table, he sent a waiter with a champagne-bottle to his late opponent, and lifted his glass as a friendly challenge. The waiter carried the message to M. Victor, who, when he heard it, turned up his glass, and folded his arms in a stately manner. "M. de Castillonnes dit qu'il refuse, milor," said the waiter, rather scared. "He charged me to bring that message to milor." Florac ran across to the angry Gascon. It was not while at Madame d'Ivry's table that Lord Kew sent his challenge and received his reply; his duties as steward had carried him away from that pretty early.

Meanwhile the glimmering dawn peered into the windows of the refreshment-room, and behold, the sun broke in and scared all the revellers. The ladies scurried away like so many ghosts at cock-crow, some of them not caring to face that detective luminary. Cigars had been lighted ere this; the men remained smoking them with those sleepless German waiters still bringing fresh supplies of drink. Lord Kew gave the Duchesse d'Ivry his arm, and was leading her out; M. de Castillonnes stood scowling directly in their way, upon which, with rather an abrupt turn of the shoulder, and a "Pardon,

monsieur,” Lord Kew pushed by, and conducted the Duchesse to her carriage. She did not in the least see what had happened between the two gentlemen in the passage; she ogled, and nodded, and kissed her hands quite affectionately to Kew as the fly drove away.

Florac in the meanwhile had seized his compatriot, who had drunk champagne copiously with others, if not with Kew, and was in vain endeavouring to make him hear reason. The Gascon was furious; he vowed that Lord Kew had struck him. “By the tomb of my mother,” he bellowed, “I swear I will have his blood!” Lord Rooster was bawling out, “D—— him, carry him to bed, and shut him up;” which remarks Victor did not understand, or two victims would doubtless have been sacrificed on his mamma’s mausoleum.

When Kew came back (as he was only too sure to do), the little Gascon rushed forward with a glove in his hand, and having an audience of smokers round about him, made a furious speech about England, leopards, cowardice, insolent islanders, and Napoleon at St. Helena; and demanded reason for Kew’s conduct during the night. As he spoke, he advanced towards Lord Kew, glove in hand, and lifted it as if he was actually going to strike.

“There is no need for further words,” said Lord Kew, taking his cigar out of his mouth. “If you don’t drop that glove, upon my word I will pitch you out of the window. Ha! — Pick the man up, somebody. You’ll bear witness, gentlemen, I couldn’t help myself. If he wants me in the morning, he knows where to find me.”

“I declare that my Lord Kew has acted with great forbearance, and under the most brutal provocation — the most brutal provocation, entendez-vous, M. Cabasse?” cried out M. de Florac, rushing forward to the Gascon, who had now risen; “monsieur’s conduct has been unworthy of a Frenchman and a gallant homme.”

“D—— it, he has had it on his nob, though,” said Lord Viscount Rooster, laconically.

“Ah, Roosterre! ceci n’est pas pour rire,” Florac cried sadly, as they both walked away with Lord Kew; “I wish that first blood was all that was to be shed in this quarrel”

“Gaw! how he did go down!” cried Rooster, convulsed with laughter.

“I am very sorry for it,” said Kew, quite seriously; “I couldn’t help it. God forgive me.” And he hung down his head. He thought of the past, and its levities, and punishment coming after him *pede claudo*. It was with all his heart the contrite young man said “God forgive me.” He would take what was to follow as the penalty of what had gone before.

“Pallas te hoc vulnere, Pallas immolat, mon pauvre Kiou,” said his French friend. And Lord Rooster, whose classical education had been much neglected, turned round and said, “Hullo, mate, what ship’s that?”

Viscount Rooster had not been two hours in bed, when the Count de Punter (formerly of the Black Jaegers) waited upon him upon the part of M. de Castillonnes and the Earl of Kew, who had referred him to the Viscount to arrange matters for a meeting between them. As the meeting must take place out of the Baden territory, and they ought to move before the police prevented them, the Count proposed that they should at once make for France; where, as it was an affair of *honneur*, they would assuredly be let to enter without passports.

Lady Anne and Lady Kew heard that the gentlemen after the ball had all gone out on a hunting-party, and were not alarmed for four-and-twenty hours at least. On the next day none of them returned; and on the day after, the family heard that Lord Kew had met with rather a dangerous accident; but all the town knew he had been shot by M. de Castillonnes on one of the islands on the Rhine, opposite Kehl, where he was now lying.



CHAPTER XXXV

ACROSS THE ALPS

Our discursive muse must now take her place in the little britzska in which Clive Newcome and his companions are travelling, and cross the Alps in that vehicle, beholding the snows on St. Gothard, and the beautiful region through which the Ticino rushes on its way to the Lombard lakes, and the corn-covered great plains of the Milanese; and that royal city, with the cathedral for its glittering crown, only less magnificent than the imperial dome of Rome. I have some long letters from Mr. Clive, written during this youthful tour, every step of which, from the departure at Baden, to the gate of Milan, he describes as beautiful; and doubtless, the delightful scenes through which the young man went, had their effect in soothing any private annoyances with which his journey commenced. The aspect of nature, in that fortunate route which he took, is so noble and cheering, that our private affairs and troubles shrink away abashed before that serene splendour. O sweet peaceful scene of azure lake, and snow-crowned mountain, so wonderfully lovely is your aspect, that it seems like heaven almost, and as if grief and care could not enter it! What young Clive's private cares were I knew not as yet in those days; and he kept them out of his letters; it was only in the intimacy of future life that some of these pains were revealed to me.

Some three months after taking leave of Miss Ethel, our young gentleman found himself at Rome, with his friend Ridley still for a companion. Many of us, young or middle-aged, have felt that delightful shock which the first sight of the great city inspires. There is one other place of which the view strikes one with an emotion even greater than that with which we look at Rome, where Augustus was reigning when He saw the day, whose birthplace is separated but by a hill or two from the awful gates of Jerusalem. Who that has beheld both can forget that first aspect of either? At the end of years the emotion occasioned by the sight still thrills in your memory, and it smites you as at the moment when you first viewed it.

The business of the present novel, however, lies neither with priest nor pagan, but with Mr. Clive Newcome, and his affairs and his companions at this period of his life. Nor, if the gracious reader expects to hear of cardinals in scarlet, and noble Roman princes and princesses, will he find such in this history. The only noble Roman into whose mansion our friend got admission was the Prince Polonia, whose footmen wear the liveries of the English royal family, who gives gentlemen and even painters cash upon good letters of credit; and, once or twice in a season, opens his transtiberine palace and treats his customers to a ball. Our friend Clive used jocularly to say, he believed there were no Romans. There were priests in portentous hats; there were friars with shaven crowns; there were the sham peasantry, who dressed themselves out in masquerade costumes, with bagpipe and goatskin, with crossed leggings and scarlet petticoats, who let themselves out to artists at so many pauls per sitting; but he never passed a Roman's door except to buy a cigar or to purchase a handkerchief. Thither, as elsewhere, we carry our insular habits with us. We have a little England at Paris, a little England at Munich, Dresden, everywhere. Our friend is an Englishman, and did at Rome as the English do.

There was the polite English society, the society that flocks to see the Colosseum lighted up with blue fire, that flocks to the Vatican to behold the statues by torchlight, that hustles into the churches on public festivals in black veils and deputy-lieutenants' uniforms, and stares, and talks, and uses opera-glasses while the pontiffs of the Roman Church are performing its ancient rites, and the crowds of faithful are kneeling round the altars; the society which gives its balls and dinners, has its scandal and bickerings, its aristocrats, parvenus, toadies imported from Belgravia; has its club, its hunt, and its Hyde Park on the Pincio: and there is the other little English world, the broad-hatted, long-bearded, velvet-jacketed, jovial colony of the artists, who have their own feasts, haunts, and amusements by the side of their aristocratic compatriots, with whom but few of them have the honour to mingle.

J. J. and Clive engaged pleasant lofty apartments in the Via Gregoriana. Generations of painters had occupied these chambers and gone their way. The windows of their painting-room looked into a quaint old garden, where there were ancient statues of the Imperial time, a babbling fountain and noble orange-trees with broad clustering leaves and golden balls of fruit, glorious to look upon. Their walks abroad were endlessly pleasant and delightful. In every street there were scores of pictures of the graceful characteristic Italian life, which our painters seem one and all to reject, preferring to depict their quack brigands, contadini, pifferari, and the like, because Thompson painted them before Jones, and Jones

before Thompson, and so on, backwards into time. There were the children at play, the women huddled round the steps of the open doorways, in the kindly Roman winter; grim, portentous old hags, such as Michael Angelo painted, draped in majestic raggedness; mothers and swarming bambinos; slouching countrymen, dark of beard and noble of countenance, posed in superb attitudes, lazy, tattered, and majestic. There came the red troops, the black troops, the blue troops of the army of priests; the snuffy regiments of Capuchins, grave and grotesque; the trim French abbess; my lord the bishop, with his footman (those wonderful footmen); my lord the cardinal, in his ramshackle coach and his two, nay three, footmen behind him; — flunkies, that look as if they had been dressed by the costumier of a British pantomime; coach with prodigious emblazonments of hats and coats-of-arms, that seems as if it came out of the pantomime too, and was about to turn into something else. So it is, that what is grand to some persons' eyes appears grotesque to others; and for certain sceptical persons, that step, which we have heard of, between the sublime and the ridiculous, is not visible.

"I wish it were not so," writes Clive, in one of the letters wherein he used to pour his full heart out in those days. "I see these people at their devotions, and envy them their rapture. A friend, who belongs to the old religion, took me, last week, into a church where the Virgin lately appeared in person to a Jewish gentleman, flashed down upon him from heaven in light and splendour celestial, and, of course, straightway converted him. My friend bade me look at the picture, and, kneeling down beside me, I know prayed with all his honest heart that the truth might shine down upon me too; but I saw no glimpse of heaven at all. I saw but a poor picture, an altar with blinking candles, a church hung with tawdry strips of red and white calico. The good, kind W—— went away, humbly saying 'that such might have happened again if heaven so willed it.' I could not but feel a kindness and admiration for the good man. I know his works are made to square with his faith, that he dines on a crust, lives as chaste as a hermit, and gives his all to the poor.

"Our friend J. J., very different to myself in so many respects, so superior in all, is immensely touched by these ceremonies. They seem to answer to some spiritual want of his nature, and he comes away satisfied as from a feast, where I have only found vacancy. Of course our first pilgrimage was to St. Peter's. What a walk! Under what noble shadows does one pass; how great and liberal the houses are, with generous casements and courts, and great grey portals which giants might get through and keep their turbans on. Why, the houses are twice as tall as Lamb Court itself; and over them hangs a noble dingy, a venerable mouldy splendour. Over the solemn portals are ancient mystic escutcheons — vast shields of princes and cardinals, such as Ariosto's knights might take down; and every figure about them is a picture by himself. At every turn there is a temple: in every court a brawling fountain. Besides the people of the streets and houses, and the army of priests black and brown, there's a great silent population of marble. There are battered gods tumbled out of Olympus and broken in the fall, and set up under niches and over fountains; there are senators namelessly, noselessly, noiselessly seated under archways, or lurking in courts and gardens. And then, besides these defunct ones, of whom these old figures may be said to be the corpses, there is the reigning family, a countless carved hierarchy of angels, saints, confessors of the latter dynasty which has conquered the court of Jove. I say, Pen, I wish Warrington would write the history of the Last of the Pagans. Did you never have a sympathy for them as the monks came rushing into their temples, kicking down their poor altars, smashing the fair calm faces of their gods, and sending their vestals a-flying? They are always preaching here about the persecution of the Christians. Are not the churches full of martyrs with choppers in their meek heads; virgins on gridirons; riddled St. Sebastians, and the like? But have they never persecuted in their turn? O me! You and I know better, who were bred up near to the pens of Smithfield, where Protestants and Catholics have taken their turn to be roasted.

"You pass through an avenue of angels and saints on the bridge across Tiber, all in action; their great wings seem clanking, their marble garments clapping; St. Michael, descending upon the Fiend, has been caught and bronzed just as he lighted on the Castle of St. Angelo: his enemy doubtless fell crushing through the roof and so downwards. He is as natural as blank verse — that bronze angel-set, rhythmic, grandiose. You'll see, some day or other, he's a great sonnet, sir, I'm sure of that. Milton wrote in bronze; I am sure Virgil polished off his Georgics in marble — sweet calm shapes! exquisite harmonies of line! As for the Aeneid; that, sir, I consider to be so many bas-reliefs, mural ornaments which affect me not much.

"I think I have lost sight of St. Peter's, haven't I? Yet it is big enough. How it makes your heart beat when you first see it! Ours did as we came in at night from Civita Vecchia, and saw a great ghostly darkling dome rising solemnly up into the grey night, and keeping us company ever so long as we drove, as if it had been an orb fallen out of heaven with its light put out. As you look at it from the Pincio, and the sun sets behind it, surely that aspect of earth and sky is one of the grandest in the world. I don't like to say that the facade of the church is ugly and obtrusive. As long as the dome overawes, that

facade is supportable. You advance towards it — through, oh, such a noble court! with fountains flashing up to meet the sunbeams; and right and left of you two sweeping half-crescents of great columns; but you pass by the courtiers and up to the steps of the throne, and the dome seems to disappear behind it. It is as if the throne was upset, and the king had toppled over.

“There must be moments, in Rome especially, when every man of friendly heart, who writes himself English and Protestant, must feel a pang at thinking that he and his countrymen are insulated from European Christendom. An ocean separates us. From one shore or the other one can see the neighbour cliffs on clear days: one must wish sometimes that there were no stormy gulf between us; and from Canterbury to Rome a pilgrim could pass, and not drown beyond Dover. Of the beautiful parts of the great Mother Church I believe among us many people have no idea; we think of lazy friars, of pining cloistered virgins, of ignorant peasants worshipping wood and stones, bought and sold indulgences, absolutions, and the like commonplaces of Protestant satire. Lo! yonder inscription, which blazes round the dome of the temple, so great and glorious it looks like heaven almost, and as if the words were written in stars, it proclaims to all the world, this is that Peter, and on this rock the Church shall be built, against which Hell shall not prevail. Under the bronze canopy his throne is lit with lights that have been burning before it for ages. Round this stupendous chamber are ranged the grandees of his court. Faith seems to be realised in their marble figures. Some of them were alive but yesterday; others, to be as blessed as they, walk the world even now doubtless; and the commissioners of heaven, here holding their court a hundred years hence, shall authoritatively announce their beatification. The signs of their power shall not be wanting. They heal the sick, open the eyes of the blind, cause the lame to walk today as they did eighteen centuries ago. Are there not crowds ready to bear witness to their wonders? Isn't there a tribunal appointed to try their claims; advocates to plead for and against; prelates and clergy and multitudes of faithful to back and believe them? Thus you shall kiss the hand of a priest today, who has given his to a friar whose bones are already beginning to work miracles, who has been the disciple of another whom the Church has just proclaimed a saint — hand in hand they hold by one another till the line is lost up in heaven. Come, friend, let us acknowledge this, and go and kiss the toe of St. Peter. Alas! there's the Channel always between us; and we no more believe in the miracles of St. Thomas of Canterbury, than that the bones of His Grace John Bird, who sits in St. Thomas's chair presently, will work wondrous cures in the year 2000: that his statue will speak, or his portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence will wink.

“So, you see, at those grand ceremonies which the Roman Church exhibits at Christmas, I looked on as a Protestant. Holy Father on his throne or in his palanquin, cardinals with their tails and their train-bearers, mitred bishops and abbots, regiments of friars and clergy, relics exposed for adoration, columns draped, altars illuminated, incense smoking, organs pealing, and boxes of piping soprani, Swiss guards with slashed breeches and fringed halberts; — between us and all this splendour of old-world ceremony, there's an ocean flowing; and yonder old statue of Peter might have been Jupiter again, surrounded by a procession of flamens and augurs, and Augustus as Pontifex Maximus, to inspect the sacrifices — and my feelings at the spectacle had been, doubtless, pretty much the same.

“Shall I utter any more heresies? I am an unbeliever in Raphael's ‘Transfiguration’ — the scream of that devil-possessed boy, in the lower part of the figure of eight (a stolen boy too), jars the whole music of the composition. On Michael Angelo's great wall, the grotesque and terrible are not out of place. What an awful achievement! Fancy the state of mind of the man who worked it — as alone, day after day, he devised and drew those dreadful figures! Suppose in the days of the Olympian dynasty, the subdued Titan rebels had been set to ornament a palace for Jove, they would have brought in some such tremendous work: or suppose that Michael descended to the Shades, and brought up this picture out of the halls of Limbo. I like a thousand and a thousand times better to think of Raphael's loving spirit. As he looked at women and children, his beautiful face must have shone like sunshine: his kind hand must have caressed the sweet figures as he formed them. If I protest against the ‘Transfiguration,’ and refuse to worship at that altar before which so many generations have knelt, there are hundreds of others which I salute thankfully. It is not so much in the set harangues (to take another metaphor), as in the daily tones and talk that his voice is so delicious. Sweet poetry, and music, and tender hymns drop from him: he lifts his pencil, and something gracious falls from it on the paper. How noble his mind must have been! it seems but to receive, and his eye seems only to rest on, what is great, and generous, and lovely. You walk through crowded galleries, where are pictures ever so large and pretentious; and come upon a grey paper, or a little fresco, bearing his mark-and over all the brawl and the throng recognise his sweet presence. ‘I would like to have you been Giulio Romano,’ J. J. says (who does not care for Giulio's pictures), ‘because then I would have been Raphael's favourite pupil.’

We agreed that we would rather have seen him and William Shakspeare, than all the men we ever read of. Fancy poisoning a fellow out of envy — as Spagnoletto did! There are some men whose admiration takes that bilious shape. There's a fellow in our mess at the Lepre, a clever enough fellow too — and not a bad fellow to the poor. He was a Gandishite. He is a genre and portrait painter, by the name of Haggard. He hates J. J. because Lord Fareham, who is here, has given J. J. an order; and he hates me, because I wear a clean shirt, and ride a cock-horse.

"I wish you could come to our mess at the Lepre. It's such a dinner: such a tablecloth: such a waiter: such a company! Every man has a beard and a sombrero: and you would fancy we were a band of brigands. We are regaled with woodcocks, snipes, wild swans, ducks, robins, and owls and oionoi te pasi for dinner; and with three pauls' worth of wines and victuals the hungriest has enough, even Claypole the sculptor. Did you ever know him? He used to come to the Haunt. He looks like the Saracen's head with his beard now. There is a French table still more hairy than ours, a German table, an American table. After dinner we go and have coffee and mezzo-caldo at the Cafe Greco over the way. Mezzo-caldo is not a bad drink — a little rum — a slice of fresh citron — lots of pounded sugar, and boiling water for the rest. Here in various parts of the cavern (it is a vaulted low place) the various nations have their assigned quarters, and we drink our coffee and strong waters, and abuse Guido, or Rubens, or Bernini selon les gouts, and blow such a cloud of smoke as would make Warrington's lungs dilate with pleasure. We get very good cigars for a bajoccho and half — that is very good for us, cheap tobaccanalians; and capital when you have got no others. M'Collop is here: he made a great figure at a cardinal's reception in the tartan of the M'Collop. He is splendid at the tomb of the Stuarts, and wanted to cleave Haggard down to the chine with his claymore for saying that Charles Edward was often drunk.

"Some of us have our breakfasts at the Cafe Greco at dawn. The birds are very early birds here; and you'll see the great sculptors — the old Dons, you know, who look down on us young fellows — at their coffee here when it is yet twilight. As I am a swell, and have a servant, J. J. and I breakfast at our lodgings. I wish you could see Terribile our attendant, and Ottavia our old woman! You will see both of them on the canvas one day. When he hasn't blacked our boots and has got our breakfast, Terribile the valet-de-chambre becomes Terribile the model. He has figured on a hundred canvases ere this, and almost ever since he was born. All his family were models. His mother having been a Venus, is now a Witch of Endor. His father is in the patriarchal line: he has himself done the cherubs, the shepherd-boys, and now is a grown man, and ready as a warrior, a pifferaro, a capuchin, or what you will.

"After the coffee and the Cafe Greco we all go to the Life Academy. After the Life Academy, those who belong to the world dress and go out to tea-parties just as if we were in London. Those who are not in society have plenty of fun of their own — and better fun than the tea-party fun too. Jack Screwby has a night once a week, sardines and ham for supper, and a cask of Marsala in the corner. Your humble servant entertains on Thursdays: which is Lady Fitch's night too; and I flatter myself some of the London dandies who are passing the winter here, prefer the cigars and humble liquors which we dispense, to tea and Miss Fitch's performance on the pianoforte.

"What is that I read in Galignani about Lord K— and an affair of honour at Baden? Is it my dear kind jolly Kew with whom some one has quarrelled? I know those who will be even more grieved than I am, should anything happen to the best of good fellows. A great friend of Lord Kew's, Jack Belsize commonly called, came with us from Baden through Switzerland, and we left him at Milan. I see by the paper that his elder brother is dead and so poor Jack will be a great man some day. I wish the chance had happened sooner if it was to befall at all. So my amiable cousin, Barnes Newcome Newcome, Esq., has married my Lady Clara Pulleyn; I wish her joy of her bridegroom. All I have heard of that family is from the newspaper. If you meet them, tell me anything about them. — We had a very pleasant time altogether at Baden. I suppose the accident to Kew will put off his marriage with Miss Newcome. They have been engaged, you know, ever so long. — And — do, do write to me and tell me something about London. It's best I should — should stay here and work this winter and the next. J. J. has done a famous picture, and if I send a couple home, you'll give them a notice in the Pall Mall Gazette — won't you? — for the sake of old times and yours affectionately, Clive Newcome."



CHAPTER XXXVI

IN WHICH M. DE FLORAC IS PROMOTED

However much Madame la Duchesse d'Ivry was disposed to admire and praise her own conduct in the affair which ended so unfortunately for poor Lord Kew, between whom and the Gascon her grace vowed that she had done everything in her power to prevent a battle, the old Duke, her lord, was, it appeared, by no means delighted with his wife's behaviour, nay, visited her with his very sternest displeasure. Miss O'Grady, the Duchesse's companion, and her little girl's instructress, at this time resigned her functions in the Ivry family; it is possible that in the recriminations consequent upon the governess's dismissal, the Miss Irlandaise, in whom the family had put so much confidence, divulged stories unfavourable to her patroness, and caused the indignation of the Duke, her husband. Between Florac and the Duchesse there was also open war and rupture. He had been one of Kew's seconds in the latter's affair with the Vicomte's countryman. He had even cried out for fresh pistols, and proposed to engage Castillonnes, when his gallant principal fell; and though a second duel was luckily averted as murderous and needless, M. de Florac never hesitated afterwards, and in all companies, to denounce with the utmost virulence the instigator and the champion of the odious original quarrel. He vowed that the Duchesse had shot le petit Kiou as effectually as if she had herself fired the pistol at his breast. Murderer, poisoner, Brinvilliers, a hundred more such epithets he used against his kinswoman, regretting that the good old times were past — that there was no *Chambre Ardente* to try her, and no rack and wheel to give her her due.

The biographer of the Newcomes has no need (although he possesses the fullest information) to touch upon the Duchesse's doings, further than as they relate to that most respectable English family. When the Duke took his wife into the country, Florac never hesitated to say that to live with her was dangerous for the old man, and to cry out to his friends of the Boulevards or the Jockey Club, "*Ma parole d'honneur, cette femme le tuera!*"

Do you know, O gentle and unsuspecting readers, or have you ever reckoned as you have made your calculation of society, how many most respectable husbands help to kill their wives — how many respectable wives aid in sending their husbands to Hades? The wife of a chimney-sweep or a journeyman butcher comes shuddering before a police magistrate — her head bound up — her body scarred and bleeding with wounds, which the drunken ruffian, her lord, has administered: a poor shopkeeper or mechanic is driven out of his home by the furious ill-temper of the shrill virago his wife — takes to the public-house — to evil courses — to neglecting his business — to the gin-bottle — to delirium tremens — to perdition. Bow Street, and policemen, and the newspaper reporters, have cognisance and a certain jurisdiction over these vulgar matrimonial crimes; but in politer company how many murderous assaults are there by husband or wife — where the woman is not felled by the actual fist, though she staggers and sinks under blows quite as cruel and effectual; where, with old wounds yet unhealed, which she strives to hide under a smiling face from the world, she has to bear up and to be stricken down and to rise to her feet again, under fresh daily strokes of torture; where the husband, fond and faithful, has to suffer slights, coldness, insult, desertion, his children sneered away from their love for him, his friends driven from his door by jealousy, his happiness strangled, his whole life embittered, poisoned, destroyed! If you were acquainted with the history of every family in your street, don't you know that in two or three of the houses there such tragedies have been playing? Is not the young mistress of Number 20 already pining at her husband's desertion? The kind master of Number 30 racking his fevered brains and toiling through sleepless nights to pay for the jewels on his wife's neck, and the carriage out of which she ogles Lothario in the Park? The fate under which man or woman falls, blow of brutal tyranny, heartless desertion, weight of domestic care too heavy to bear — are not blows such as these constantly striking people down? In this long parenthesis we are wandering ever so far away from M. le Duc and Madame la Duchesse d'Ivry, and from the vivacious Florac's statement regarding his kinsman, that that woman will kill him.

There is this at least to be said, that if the Duc d'Ivry did die he was a very old gentleman, and had been a great viveur for at least threescore years of his life. As Prince de Moncontour in his father's time before the Revolution, during the Emigration, even after the Restoration, M. le Duc had vecu with an extraordinary vitality. He had gone through good and bad fortune: extreme poverty, display and splendour, affairs of love — affairs of honour — and of one disease or another a man must die at the end. After the Baden business — and he had dragged off his wife to Champagne — the Duke became greatly broken; he brought his little daughter to a convent at Paris, putting the child under the special guardianship of

Madame de Florac, with whom and with whose family in these latter days the old chief of the house effected a complete reconciliation. The Duke was now for ever coming to Madame de Florac; he poured all his wrongs and griefs into her ear with garrulous senile eagerness. "That little Duchesse is a monstre, a femme d'Eugene Sue," the Vicomte used to say; "the poor old Duke he cry — ma parole d'honneur, he cry and I cry too when he comes to recount to my poor mother, whose sainted heart is the asile of all griefs, a real Hotel Dieu, my word the most sacred, with beds for all the afflicted, with sweet words, like Sisters of Charity, to minister to them: — I cry, mon bon Pendennis, when this vieillard tells his stories about his wife and tears his white hairs to the feet of my mother."

When the little Antoinette was separated by her father from her mother, the Duchesse d'Ivry, it might have been expected that that poetess would have dashed off a few more *cris de l'ame*, shrieking according to her wont, and baring and beating that shrivelled maternal bosom of hers, from which her child had been just torn. The child skipped and laughed to go away to the convent. It was only when she left Madame de Florac that she used to cry; and when urged by that good lady to exhibit a little decorous sentiment in writing to her mamma, Antoinette would ask, in her artless way, "Pourquoi? Mamma used never to speak to me except sometimes before the world, before ladies, that understands itself. When her gentleman came, she put me to the door; then she gave me tapes, o oui, she gave me tapes! I cry no more; she has so much made to cry M. le Duc, that it is quite enough of one in a family." So Madame la Duchesse d'Ivry did not weep, even in print, for the loss of her pretty little Antoinette; besides, she was engaged, at that time, by other sentimental occupations. A young grazier of their neighbouring town, of an aspiring mind and remarkable poetic talents, engrossed the Duchesse's platonic affections at this juncture. When he had sold his beasts at market, he would ride over and read Rousseau and Schiller with Madame la Duchesse, who formed him. His pretty young wife was rendered miserable by all these readings, but what could the poor little ignorant countrywoman know of Platonism? Faugh! there is more than one woman we see in society smiling about from house to house, pleasant and sentimental and formosa superne enough; but I fancy a fish's tail is flapping under her fine flounces, and a forked fin at the end of it!

Finer flounces, finer bonnets, more lovely wreaths, more beautiful lace, smarter carriages, bigger white bows, larger footmen, were not seen, during all the season of 18 — than appeared round about St. George's, Hanover Square, in the beautiful month of June succeeding that September when so many of our friends the Newcomes were assembled at Baden. Those flaunting carriages, powdered and favoured footmen, were in attendance upon members of the Newcome family and their connexions, who were celebrating what is called a marriage in high life in the temple within. Shall we set down a catalogue of the dukes, marquises, earls, who were present; cousins of the lovely bride? Are they not already in the Morning Herald and Court Journal, as well as in the Newcome Chronicle and Independent, and the Dorking Intelligencer and Chanticleer Weekly Gazette? There they are, all printed at full length sure enough; the name of the bride, Lady Clara Pulleyn, the lovely and accomplished daughter of the Earl and Countess of Dorking; of the beautiful bridesmaids, the Ladies Henrietta, Belinda, Adelaide Pulleyn, Miss Newcome, Miss Alice Newcome, Miss Maude Newcome, Miss Anna Maria (Hobson) Newcome; and all the other persons engaged in the ceremony. It was performed by the Right Honourable Viscount Gallowglass, Bishop of Ballyshannon, brother-inlaw to the bride, assisted by the Honourable and Reverend Hercules O'Grady, his lordship's chaplain, and the Reverend John Bulders, Rector of St. Mary's, Newcome. Then follow the names of all the nobility who were present, and of the noble and distinguished personages who signed the book. Then comes an account of the principal dresses, chefs-d'oeuvre of Madame Crinoline; of the bride's coronal of brilliants, supplied by Messrs. Morr and Stortimer; — of the veil of priceless Chantilly lace, the gift of the Dowager Countess of Kew. Then there is a description of the wedding-breakfast at the house of the bride's noble parents, and of the cake, decorated by Messrs. Gunter with the most delicious taste and the sweetest hymeneal allusions.

No mention was made by the fashionable chronicler of a slight disturbance which occurred at St. George's, and which was indeed out of the province of such a genteel purveyor of news. Before the marriage service began, a woman of vulgar appearance and disorderly aspect, accompanied by two scared children who took no part in the disorder occasioned by their mother's proceeding, except by their tears and outcries to augment the disquiet, made her appearance in one of the pews of the church, was noted there by persons in the vestry, was requested to retire by a beadle, and was finally induced to quit the sacred precincts of the building by the very strongest persuasion of a couple of policemen; X and Y laughed at one another, and nodded their heads knowingly as the poor wretch with her whimpering boys was led away. They understood very well who the personage was who had come to disturb the matrimonial ceremony; it did not commence until Mrs. De Lacy (as this lady chose to be called) had quitted this temple of Hymen. She slunk through the throng of emblazoned

carriages, and the press of footmen arrayed as splendidly as Solomon in his glory. John jeered at Thomas, William turned his powdered head, and signalled Jeames, who answered with a corresponding grin, as the woman with sobs, and wild imprecations, and frantic appeals, made her way through the splendid crowd escorted by her aides-de-camp in blue. I dare say her little history was discussed at many a dinner-table that day in the basement story of several fashionable houses. I know that at clubs in St. James's the facetious little anecdote was narrated. A young fellow came to Bays's after the marriage breakfast and mentioned the circumstance with funny comments; although the Morning Post, in describing this affair in high life, naturally omitted all mention of such low people as Mrs. De Lacy and her children.

Those people who knew the noble families whose union had been celebrated by such a profusion of grandees, fine equipages, and footmen, brass bands, brilliant toilets, and wedding favours, asked how it was that Lord Kew did not assist at Barnes Newcome's marriage; other persons in society inquired waggishly why Jack Belsize was not present to give Lady Clara away.

As for Jack Belsize, his clubs had not been ornamented by his presence for a year past. It was said he had broken the bank at Hombourg last autumn; had been heard of during the winter at Milan, Venice, and Vienna; and when, a few months after the marriage of Barnes Newcome and Lady Clara, Jack's elder brother died, and he himself became the next in succession to the title and estates of Highgate, many folks said it was a pity little Barney's marriage had taken place so soon. Lord Kew was not present, because Kew was still abroad; he had had a gambling duel with a Frenchman, and a narrow squeak for his life. He had turned Roman Catholic, some men said; others vowed that he had joined the Methodist persuasion. At all events Kew had given up his wild courses, broken with the turf, and sold his stud off; he was delicate yet, and his mother was taking care of him; between whom and the old dowager of Kew, who had made up Barney's marriage, as everybody knew, there was no love lost.

Then who was the Prince de Moncontour, who, with his princess, figured at this noble marriage? There was a Moncontour, the Duc d'Ivry's son, but he died at Paris before the revolution of '30: one or two of the oldsters at Bays's, Major Pendennis, General Tufto, old Cackleby — the old fogies, in a word — remembered the Duke of Ivry when he was here during the Emigration, and when he was called Prince de Moncontour, the title of the eldest son of the family. Ivry was dead, having buried his son before him, and having left only a daughter by that young woman whom he married, and who led him such a life. Who was this present Moncontour?

He was a gentleman to whom the reader has already been presented, though when we lately saw him at Baden he did not enjoy so magnificent a title. Early in the year of Barnes Newcome's marriage, there came to England, and to our modest apartment in the Temple, a gentleman bringing a letter of recommendation from our dear young Clive, who said that the bearer, the Vicomte de Florac, was a great friend of his, and of the Colonel's, who had known his family from boyhood. A friend of our Clive and our Colonel was sure of a welcome in Lamb Court; we gave him the hand of hospitality, the best cigar in the box, the easy-chair with only one broken leg; the dinner in chambers and at the club, the banquet at Greenwich (where, *ma foi*, the little whites baits elicited his profound satisfaction); in a word, did our best to honour that bill which our young Clive had drawn upon us. We considered the young one in the light of a nephew of our own; we took a pride in him, and were fond of him; and as for the Colonel, did we not love and honour him; would we not do our utmost in behalf of any stranger who came recommended to us by Thomas Newcome's good word? So Florac was straightway admitted to our companionship. We showed him the town, and some of the modest pleasures thereof; we introduced him to the Haunt, and astonished him by the company which he met there. Between Brent's "Deserter" and Mark Wilder's "Garryowen," Florac sang —

Tiens voici ma pipe, voilà mon bri — quet;
Et quand la Tulipe fait le noir tra — jet
Que tu sois la seule dans le regi — ment
Avec la brule-gueule de ton cher z'a — mant;

to the delight of Tom Sarjent, who, though he only partially comprehended the words of the song, pronounced the singer to be a rare gentleman, full of most excellent differences. We took our Florac to the Derby; we presented him in Fitzroy Square, whither we still occasionally went, for Clive's and our dear Colonel's sake.

The Vicomte pronounced himself strongly in favour of the blanche misse little Rosey Mackenzie, of whom we have lost sight for some few chapters. Mrs. Mac he considered, my faith, to be a woman superb. He used to kiss the tips of his own fingers, in token of his admiration for the lovely widow; he pronounced her again more pretty than her daughter; and paid

her a thousand compliments, which she received with exceeding good-humour. If the Vicomte gave us to understand presently that Rosey and her mother were both in love with him, but that for all the world he would not meddle with the happiness of his dear little Clive, nothing unfavourable to the character or constancy of the before-mentioned ladies must be inferred from M. de Florac's speech; his firm conviction being, that no woman could pass many hours in his society without danger to her subsequent peace of mind.

For some little time we had no reason to suspect that our French friend was not particularly well furnished with the current coin of the realm. Without making any show of wealth, he would, at first, cheerfully engage in our little parties: his lodgings in the neighbourhood of Leicester Square, though dingy, were such as many noble foreign exiles have inhabited. It was not until he refused to join some pleasure-trip which we of Lamb Court proposed, honestly confessing his poverty, that we were made aware of the Vicomte's little temporary calamity; and, as we became more intimate with him, he acquainted us, with great openness, with the history of all his fortunes. He described energetically that splendid run of luck which had set in at Baden with Clive's loan: his winnings, at that fortunate period, had carried him through the winter with considerable brilliancy, but bouillotte and Mademoiselle Atala, of the Varietes (une ogresse, mon cher, who devours thirty of our young men every year in her cavern, in the Rue de Breda), had declared against him, and the poor Vicomte's pockets were almost empty when he came to London.

He was amiably communicative regarding himself, and told us his virtues and his faults (if indeed a passion for play and for women could be considered as faults in a gay young fellow of two or three and forty), with a like engaging frankness. He would weep in describing his angel mother: he would fly off again into tirades respecting the wickedness, the wit, the extravagance, the charms of the young lady of the Varietes. He would then (in conversation) introduce us to Madame de Florac, nee Higg, of Manchesterre. His prattle was incessant, and to my friend Mr. Warrington especially he was an object of endless delight and amusement and wonder. He would roll and smoke countless paper cigars, talking unrestrainedly when we were not busy, silent when we were engaged; he would only rarely partake of our meals, and altogether refused all offers of pecuniary aid. He disappeared at dinner-time into the mysterious purlieu of Leicester Square, and dark ordinaries only frequented by Frenchmen. As we walked with him in the Regent Street precincts, he would exchange marks of recognition with many dusky personages, smoking bravos; and whiskered refugees of his nation.

"That gentleman," he would say, "who has done me the honour to salute me, is a coiffeur of the most celebrated; he forms the deuces of our table-d'hôte. 'Bon jour, mon cher monsieur!' We are friends, though not of the same opinion. Monsieur is a republican of the most distinguished; conspirator of profession, and at this time engaged in constructing an infernal machine to the address of His Majesty, Louis Philippe, King of the French." "Who is my friend with the scarlet beard and the white paletot? My good Warrington! you do not move in the world; you make yourself a hermit, my dear! Not know monsieur! — monsieur is secretary to Mademoiselle Caracoline, the lovely rider at the circus of Astley; I shall be charmed to introduce you to this amiable society some day at our table-d'hôte."

Warrington vowed that the company of Florac's friends would be infinitely more amusing than the noblest society ever chronicled in the Morning Post; but we were neither sufficiently familiar with the French language to make conversation in that tongue as pleasant to us as talking in our own; and so were content with Florac's description of his compatriots, which the Vicomte delivered in that charming French-English of which he was a master.

However threadbare in his garments, poor in purse, and eccentric in morals our friend was, his manners were always perfectly gentlemanlike, and he draped himself in his poverty with the grace of a Spanish grandee. It must be confessed, that the grandee loved the estaminet where he could play billiards with the first comer; that he had a passion for the gambling-house; that he was a loose and disorderly nobleman: but, in whatever company he found himself, a certain kindness, simplicity, and politeness distinguished him always. He bowed to the damsel who sold him a penny cigar, as graciously as to a duchess; he crushed a manant's impertinence or familiarity as haughtily as his noble ancestors ever did at the Louvre, at Marli, or Versailles. He declined to obtemperer to his landlady's request to pay his rent, but he refused with a dignity which struck the woman with awe; and King Alfred, over the celebrated muffin (on which Gandish and other painters have exercised their genius), could not have looked more noble than Florac in a robe-de-chambre, once gorgeous, but shady now as became its owner's clouded fortunes; toasting his bit of bacon at his lodgings, when the fare even of his table-d'hôte had grown too dear for him.

As we know from Gandish's work, that better times were in store for the wandering monarch, and that the officers came acquainting him that his people demanded his presence a grands cris, when of course King Alfred laid down the toast

and resumed the sceptre; so in the case of Florac, two humble gentlemen, inhabitants of Lamb Court, and members of the Upper temple, had the good luck to be the heralds as it were, nay indeed, the occasion, of the rising fortunes of the Prince de Moncontour. Florac had informed us of the death of his cousin the Duc d'Ivry, by whose demise the Vicomte's father, the old Count de Florac, became the representative of the house of Ivry, and possessor, through his relative's bequest, of an old chateau still more gloomy and spacious than the count's own house in the Faubourg St. Germain — a chateau, of which the woods, domains, and appurtenances had been lopped off by the Revolution. "Monsieur le Comte," Florac says, "has not wished to change his name at his age; he has shrugged his old shoulder, and said it was not the trouble to make to engrave a new card; and for me," the philosophical Vicomte added, "of what good shall be a title of prince in the position where I find myself?" It is wonderful for us who inhabit a country where rank is worshipped with so admirable a reverence, to think that there are many gentlemen in France who actually have authentic titles and do not choose to bear them.

Mr. George Warrington was hugely amused with this notion of Florac's ranks and dignities. The idea of the Prince purchasing penny cigars; of the Prince mildly expostulating with his landlady regarding the rent; of his punting for half-crowns at a neighbouring hall in Air Street, whither the poor gentleman desperately ran when he had money in his pocket, tickled George's sense of humour. It was Warrington who gravely saluted the Vicomte, and compared him to King Alfred, on that afternoon when we happened to call upon him and found him engaged in cooking his modest dinner.

We were bent upon an excursion to Greenwich, and on having our friend's company on that voyage, and we induced the Vicomte to forgo his bacon, and be our guest for once. George Warrington chose to indulge in a great deal of ironical pleasantry in the course of the afternoon's excursion. As we went down the river, he pointed out to Florac the very window in the Tower where the captive Duke of Orleans used to sit when he was an inhabitant of that fortress. At Greenwich, which palace Florac informed us was built by Queen Elizabeth, George showed the very spot where Raleigh laid his cloak down to enable Her Majesty to step over a puddle. In a word, he mystified M. de Florac; such was Mr. Warrington's reprehensible spirit.

It happened that Mr. Barnes Newcome came to dine at Greenwich on the same day when our little party took place. He had come down to meet Rooster and one or two other noble friends whose names he took care to give us, cursing them at the same time for having thrown him over. Having missed his own company, Mr. Barnes condescended to join ours, Warrington gravely thanking him for the great honour which he conferred upon us by volunteering to take a place at our table. Barnes drank freely, and was good enough to resume his acquaintance with Monsieur de Florac, whom he perfectly well recollected at Baden, but had thought proper to forget on the one or two occasions when they had met in public since the Vicomte's arrival in this country. There are few men who can drop and resume an acquaintance with such admirable self-possession as Barnes Newcome. When, over our dessert, by which time all tongues were unloosed and each man talked gaily, George Warrington feelingly thanked Barnes in a little mock speech, for his great kindness in noticing us, presenting him at the same time to Florac as the ornament of the City, the greatest banker of his age, the beloved kinsman of their friend Clive, who was always writing about him; Barnes said, with one of his accustomed curses, he did not know whether Mr. Warrington was "chaffing" him or not, and indeed could never make him out. Warrington replied that he never could make himself out: and if ever Mr. Barnes could, George would thank him for information on that subject.

Florac, like most Frenchmen very sober in his potations, left us for a while over ours, which were conducted after the more liberal English manner, and retired to smoke his cigar on the terrace. Barnes then freely uttered his sentiments regarding him, which were not more favourable than those which the young gentleman generally emitted respecting gentlemen whose backs were turned. He had known a little of Florac the year before at Baden: he had been mixed up with Kew in that confounded row in which Kew was hit; he was an adventurer, a pauper, a blackleg, a regular Greek; he had heard Florac was of old family, that was true; but what of that? He was only one of those d ——— French counts; everybody was a count in France confound 'em! The claret was beastly — not fit for a gentleman to drink! — He swigged off a great bumper as he was making the remark: for Barnes Newcome abuses the men and things which he uses, and perhaps is better served than more grateful persons.

"Count!" cries Warrington, "what do you mean by talking about beggarly counts? Florac's family is one of the noblest and most ancient in Europe. It is more ancient than your illustrious friend, the barber-surgeon; it was illustrious before the house, ay, or the pagoda of Kew was in existence." And he went on to describe how Florac by the demise of his kinsman, was now actually Prince de Moncontour, though he did not choose to assume that title. Very likely the noble Gascon drink in which George had been indulging, imparted a certain warmth and eloquence to his descriptions of Florac's good

qualities, high birth, and considerable patrimony; Barnes looked quite amazed and scared at these announcements, then laughed and declared once more that Warrington was chaffing him.

“As sure as the Black Prince was lord of Aquitaine — as sure as the English were masters of Bordeaux — and why did we ever lose the country?” cries George, filling himself a bumper — “every word I have said about Florac is true;” and Florac coming in at this juncture havin just finished his cigar, George turned round and made him a fine speech in the French language, in which he lauded his constancy and good-humour under evil fortune, paid him two or three more cordial compliments, and finished by drinking another great bumper to his good health.

Florac took a little wine, replied “with effusion” to the toast which his excellent, his noble friend had just carried. We rapped our glasses at the end of the speech. The landlord himself seemed deeply touched by it as he stood by with a fresh bottle. “It is good wine — it is honest wine — it is capital wine” says George, “and honni soit qui mal y pence! What business have you, you little beggar, to abuse it? My ancestor drank the wine and wore the motto round his leg long before a Newcome ever showed his pale face in Lombard Street.” George Warrington never bragged about his pedigree except under certain influences. I am inclined to think that on this occasion he really did find the claret very good.

“You don’t mean to say,” says Barnes, addressing Florac in French, on which he piqued himself, “que vous avez un tel manche a votre nom, et que vous ne l’usez pas?”

Florac shrugged his shoulders; he at first did not understand that familiar figure of English speech, or what was meant by “having a handle to your name.” “Moncontour cannot dine better than Florac,” he said. “Florac has two louis in his pocket, and Moncontour exactly forty shillings. Florac’s proprietor will ask Moncontour tomorrow for five weeks’ rent; and as for Florac’s friends, my dear, they will burst out laughing to Moncontour’s nose!” “How droll you English are!” this acute French observer afterwards said, laughing, and recalling the incident. Did you not see how that little Barnes, as soon as he knew my title of Prince, changed his manner and became all respect towards me? This, indeed, Monsieur de Florac’s two friends remarked with no little amusement. Barnes began quite well to remember their pleasant days at Baden, and talked of their acquaintance there: Barnes offered the Prince the vacant seat in his brougham, and was ready to set him down anywhere that he wished in town.

“Bah!” says Florac; “we came by the steamer, and I prefer the peniboat.” But the hospitable Barnes, nevertheless, called upon Florac the next day. And now having partially explained how the Prince de Moncontour was present at Mr. Barnes Newcome’s wedding, let us show how it was that Barnes’s first-cousin, the Earl of Kew, did not attend that ceremony.



CHAPTER XXXVII

RETURN TO LORD KEW

WE do not propose to describe at length or with precision the circumstances of the duel which ended so unfortunately for young Lord Kew. The meeting was inevitable: after the public acts and insult of the morning, the maddened Frenchman went to it convinced that his antagonist had wilfully outraged him, eager to show his bravery upon the body of an Englishman, and as proud as if he had been going into actual war. That commandment, the sixth in our decalogue, which forbids the doing of murder, and the injunction which directly follows on the same table, have been repealed by a very great number of Frenchmen for many years past; and to take the neighbour's wife, and his life subsequently, has not been an uncommon practice with the politest people in the world. Castillonnes had no idea but that he was going to the field of honour; stood with an undaunted scowl before his enemy's pistol; and discharged his own and brought down his opponent with a grim satisfaction, and a comfortable conviction afterwards that he had acted *en galant homme*. "It was well for this milor that he fell at the first shot, my dear," the exemplary young Frenchman remarked; "a second might have been yet more fatal to him; ordinarily I am sure of my coup, and you conceive that in an affair so grave it was absolutely necessary that one or other should remain on the ground." Nay, should M. de Kew recover from his wound, it was M. de Castillonnes' intention to propose a second encounter between himself and that nobleman. It had been Lord Kew's determination never to fire upon his opponent, a confession which he made not to his second, poor scared Lord Rooster, who bore the young Earl to Kehl, but to some of his nearest relatives, who happened fortunately to be not far from him when he received his wound, and who came with all the eagerness of love to watch by his bedside.

We have said that Lord Kew's mother, Lady Walham, and her second son were staying at Hombourg, when the Earl's disaster occurred. They had proposed to come to Baden to see Kew's new bride, and to welcome her; but the presence of her mother-in-law deterred Lady Walham, who gave up her heart's wish in bitterness of spirit, knowing very well that a meeting between the old Countess and herself could only produce the wrath, pain, and humiliation which their coming together always occasioned. It was Lord Kew who bade Rooster send for his mother, and not for Lady Kew; and as soon as she received those sad tidings, you may be sure the poor lady hastened to the bed where her wounded boy lay.

The fever had declared itself, and the young man had been delirious more than once. His wan face lighted up with joy when he saw his mother; he put his little feverish hand out of the bed to her — "I knew you would come, dear," he said, "and you know I never would have fired upon the poor Frenchman." The fond mother allowed no sign of terror or grief to appear upon her face, so as to disturb her first-born and darling; but no doubt she prayed by his side as such loving hearts know how to pray, for the forgiveness of his trespass, who had forgiven those who sinned against him. "I knew I should be hit, George," said Kew to his brother when they were alone; "I always expected some such end as this. My life has been very wild and reckless; and you, George, have always been faithful to our mother. You will make a better Lord Kew than I have been, George. God bless you." George flung himself down with sobs by his brother's bedside, and swore Frank had always been the best fellow, the best brother, the kindest heart, the warmest friend in the world. Love — prayer — repentance, thus met over the young man's bed. Anxious and humble hearts, his own the least anxious and the most humble, awaited the dread award of life or death; and the world, and its ambition and vanities, were shut out from the darkened chamber where the awful issue was being tried.

Our history has had little to do with characters resembling this lady. It is of the world, and things pertaining to it. Things beyond it, as the writer imagines, scarcely belong to the novelist's province. Who is he, that he should assume the divine's office; or turn his desk into a preacher's pulpit? In that career of pleasure, of idleness, of crime we might call it (but that the chronicler of worldly matters had best be chary of applying hard names to acts which young men are doing in the world every day), the gentle widowed lady, mother of Lord Kew, could but keep aloof, deploring the course upon which her dear young prodigal had entered; and praying with that saintly love, those pure supplications, with which good mothers follow their children, for her boy's repentance and return. Very likely her mind was narrow; very likely the precautions which she had used in the lad's early days, the tutors and directors she had set about him, the religious studies and practices to which she would have subjected him, had served only to vex and weary the young pupil, and to drive his high spirit into revolt. It is hard to convince a woman perfectly pure in her life and intentions, ready to die if need were for her

own faith, having absolute confidence in the instruction of her teachers, that she and they (with all their sermons) may be doing harm. When the young catechist yawns over his reverence's discourse, who knows but it is the doctor's vanity which is enraged, and not Heaven which is offended? It may have been, in the differences which took place between her son and her, the good Lady Walham never could comprehend the lad's side of the argument; or how his Protestantism against her doctrines should exhibit itself on the turf, the gaming-table, or the stage of the opera-house; and thus but for the misfortune under which poor Kew now lay bleeding, these two loving hearts might have remained through life asunder. But by the boy's bedside; in the paroxysms of his fever; in the wild talk of his delirium; in the sweet patience and kindness with which he received his dear nurse's attentions; the gratefulness with which he thanked the servants who waited on him; the fortitude with which he suffered the surgeon's dealings with his wounds; — the widowed woman had an opportunity to admire with an exquisite thankfulness the generous goodness of her son; and in those hours, those sacred hours passed in her own chamber, of prayers, fears, hopes, recollections, and passionate maternal love, wrestling with fate for her darling's life; — no doubt the humbled creature came to acknowledge that her own course regarding him had been wrong; and, even more for herself than for him, implored forgiveness.

For some time George Barnes had to send but doubtful and melancholy bulletins to Lady Kew and the Newcome family at Baden, who were all greatly moved and affected by the accident which had befallen poor Kew. Lady Kew broke out in wrath, and indignation. We may be sure the Duchesse d'Ivry offered to condole with her upon Kew's mishap the day after the news arrived at Baden; and, indeed, came to visit her. The old lady had just received other disquieting intelligence. She was just going out, but she bade her servant to inform the Duchess that she was never more at home to the Duchesse d'Ivry. The message was not delivered properly, or the person for whom it was intended did not choose to understand it, for presently, as the Countess was hobbling across the walk on her way to her daughter's residence, she met the Duchesse d'Ivry, who saluted her with a demure curtsy and a commonplace expression of condolence. The Queen of Scots was surrounded by the chief part of her court, saving of course MM. Castillonnes and Punter absent on service. "We were speaking of this deplorable affair," said Madame d'Ivry (which indeed was the truth, although she said it). "How we pity you, madame!" Blackball and Loder, Cruchecassee and Schlangenbad, assumed sympathetic countenances.

Trembling on her cane, the old Countess glared out upon Madame d'Ivry. "I pray you, madame," she said in French, "never again to address me the word. If I had, like you, assassins in my pay, I would have you killed; do you hear me?" and she hobbled on her way. The household to which she went was in terrible agitation; the kind Lady Anne frightened beyond measure, poor Ethel full of dread, and feeling guilty almost as if she had been the cause, as indeed she was the occasion, of Kew's misfortune. And the family had further cause of alarm from the shock which the news had given to Sir Brian. It has been said that he had had illnesses of late which caused his friends much anxiety. He had passed two months at Aix-la-Chapelle, his physicians dreading a paralytic attack; and Madame d'Ivry's party still sauntering on the walk, the men smoking their cigars, the women breathing their scandal, now beheld Dr. Finck issuing from Lady Anne's apartments, and wearing such a face of anxiety, that the Duchesse asked with some emotion, "Had there been a fresh bulletin from Kehl?"

"No, there had been no fresh bulletin from Kehl; but two hours since Sir Brian Newcome had had a paralytic seizure."

"Is he very bad?"

"No," says Dr. Finck, "he is not very bad."

"How inconsolable M. Barnes will be!" said the Duchesse, shrugging her haggard shoulders. Whereas the fact was that Mr. Barnes retained perfect presence of mind under both of the misfortunes which had befallen his family. Two days afterwards the Duchesse's husband arrived himself, when we may presume that exemplary woman was too much engaged with her own affairs to be able to be interested about the doings of other people. With the Duke's arrival the court of Mary Queen of Scots was broken up. Her Majesty was conducted to Lochleven, where her tyrant soon dismissed her very last lady-in-waiting, the confidential Irish secretary, whose performance had produced such a fine effect amongst the Newcomes.

Had poor Sir Brian Newcome's seizure occurred at an earlier period of the autumn, his illness no doubt would have kept him for some months confined at Baden; but as he was pretty nearly the last of Dr. Von Finck's bath patients, and that eminent physician longed to be off to the Residenz, he was pronounced in a fit condition for easy travelling in rather a brief period after his attack, and it was determined to transport him to Mannheim, and thence by water to London and Newcome.

During all this period of their father's misfortune no sister of charity could have been more tender, active, cheerful, and watchful than Miss Ethel. She had to wear a kind face, and exhibit no anxiety when occasionally the feeble invalid made inquiries regarding poor Kew at Baden; to catch the phrases as they came from him; to acquiesce, or not to deny, when Sir Brian talked of the marriages — both marriages — taking place at Christmas. Sir Brian was especially eager for his daughter's, and repeatedly, with his broken words, and smiles, and caresses, which were now quite senile, declared that his Ethel would make the prettiest countess in England. There came a letter or two from Clive, no doubt, to the young nurse in her sick-room. Manly and generous, full of tenderness and affection, as those letters surely were, they could give but little pleasure to the young lady — indeed, only add to her doubts and pain.

She had told none of her friends as yet of those last words of Kew's, which she interpreted as a farewell on the young nobleman's part. Had she told them they were likely would not have understood Kew's meaning as she did, and persisted in thinking that the two were reconciled. At any rate, whilst he and her father were still lying stricken by the blows which had prostrated them both, all questions of love and marriage had been put aside. Did she love him? She felt such a kind pity for his misfortune, such an admiration for his generous gallantry, such a remorse for her own wayward conduct and cruel behaviour towards this most honest, and kindly, and affectionate gentleman, that the sum of regard which she could bestow upon him might surely be said to amount to love. For such a union as that contemplated between them, perhaps for any marriage, no greater degree of attachment was necessary as the common cement. Warm friendship and thorough esteem and confidence (I do not say that our young lady calculated in this matter-of-fact way) are safe properties invested in the prudent marriage stock, multiplying and bearing an increasing value with every year. Many a young couple of spendthrifts get through their capital of passion in the first twelve months, and have no love left for the daily demands of after life. O me! for the day when the bank account is closed, and the cupboard is empty, and the firm of Damon and Phyllis insolvent!

Miss Newcome, we say, without doubt, did not make her calculations in this debtor and creditor fashion; it was only the gentlemen of that family who went to Lombard Street. But suppose she thought that regard, and esteem, and, affection being sufficient, she could joyfully, and with almost all her heart bring such a portion to Lord Kew; that her harshness towards him as contrasted with his own generosity, and above all with his present pain, infinitely touched her; and suppose she fancied that there was another person in the world to whom, did fates permit, she could offer not esteem, affection, pity only, but something ten thousand times more precious? We are not in the young lady's secrets, but if she has some as she sits by her father's chair and bed, who day or night will have no other attendant; and, as she busies herself to interpret his wants, silently moves on his errands, administers his potions, and watches his sleep, thinks of Clive absent and unhappy, of Kew wounded and in danger, she must have subject enough of thought and pain. Little wonder that her cheeks are pale and her eyes look red; she has her cares to endure now in the world, and her burden to bear in it, and somehow she feels she is alone, since that day when poor Clive's carriage drove away.

In a mood of more than ordinary depression and weakness Lady Kew must have found her granddaughter, upon one of the few occasions after the double mishap when Ethel and her elder were together. Sir Brian's illness, as it may be imagined, affected a lady very slightly, who was of an age when these calamities occasion but small disquiet, and who, having survived her own father, her husband, her son, and witnessed their lordships' respective demises with perfect composure, could not reasonably be called upon to feel any particular dismay at the probable departure from this life of a Lombard Street banker, who happened to be her daughter's husband. In fact, not Barnes Newcome himself could await that event more philosophically. So, finding Ethel in this melancholy mood, Lady Kew thought a drive in the fresh air would be of service to her, and Sir Brian happening to be asleep, carried the young girl away in her barouche.

They talked about Lord Kew, of whom the accounts were encouraging, and who is mending in spite of his silly mother and her medicines, "and as soon as he is able to move we must go and fetch him, my dear," Lady Kew graciously said, "before that foolish woman has made a methodist of him. He is always led by the woman who is nearest him, and I know one who will make of him just the best little husband in England." Before they had come to this delicate point the lady and her grandchild had talked Kew's character over, the girl, you may be sure, having spoken feelingly and eloquently about his kindness and courage, and many admirable qualities. She kindled when she heard the report of his behaviour at the commencement of the fracas with M. de Castillonnes, his great forbearance and good-nature, and his resolution and magnanimity when the moment of collision came.

But when Lady Kew arrived at that period of her discourse in which she stated that Kew would make the best little

husband in England, poor Ethel's eyes filled with tears; we must remember that her high spirit was worn down by watching and much varied anxiety, and then she confessed that there had been no reconciliation, as all the family fancied, between Frank and herself — on the contrary, a parting, which she understood to be final; and she owned that her conduct towards her cousin had been most captious and cruel, and that she could not expect they should ever again come together. Lady Kew, who hated sick-beds and surgeons except for herself, who hated her daughter-inlaw above all, was greatly annoyed at the news which Ethel gave her; made light of it, however, and was quite confident that a very few words from her would place matters on their old footing, and determined on forthwith setting out for Kehl. She would have carried Ethel with her, but that the poor Baronet with cries and moans insisted on retaining his nurse, and Ethel's grandmother was left to undertake this mission by herself, the girl remaining behind acquiescent, not unwilling, owning openly a great regard and esteem for Kew, and the wrong which she had done him, feeling secretly a sentiment which she had best smother. She had received a letter from that other person, and answered it with her mother's cognisance, but about this little affair neither Lady Anne nor her daughter happened to say a word to the manager of the whole family.



CHAPTER XXXVIII

IN WHICH LADY KEW LEAVES HIS LORDSHIP QUITE CONVALESCENT

Immediately after Lord Kew's wound, and as it was necessary to apprise the Newcome family of the accident which had occurred, the good-natured young Kew had himself written a brief note to acquaint his relatives with his mishap, and had even taken the precaution to antedate a couple of billets to be despatched on future days; kindly forgeries, which told the Newcome family and the Countess of Kew, that Lord Kew was progressing very favourably, and that his hurt was trifling. The fever had set in, and the young patient was lying in great danger, as most of the laggards at Baden knew, when his friends there were set at ease by this fallacious bulletin. On the third day after the accident, Lady Walham arrived with her younger son, to find Lord Kew in the fever which ensued after the wound. As the terrible anxiety during the illness had been Lady Walham's, so was hers the delight of the recovery. The commander-in-chief of the family, the old lady at Baden, showed her sympathy by sending couriers, and repeatedly issuing orders to have news of Kew. Sick-beds scared her away invariably. When illness befell a member of her family she hastily retreated from before the sufferer, showing her agitation of mind, however, by excessive ill-humour to all the others within her reach.

A fortnight passed, a ball had been found and extracted, the fever was over, the wound was progressing favourably, the patient advancing towards convalescence, and the mother, with her child once more under her wing, happier than she had been for seven years past, during which her young prodigal had been running the thoughtless career of which he himself was weary, and which had occasioned the fond lady such anguish. Those doubts which perplex many a thinking man, and, when formed and uttered, give many a fond and faithful woman pain so exquisite, had most fortunately never crossed Kew's mind. His early impressions were such as his mother had left them, and he came back to her, as she would have him, as a little child; owning his faults with a hearty humble repentance, and with a thousand simple confessions, lamenting the errors of his past days. We have seen him tired and ashamed of the pleasures which he was pursuing, of the companions who surrounded him, of the brawls and dissipations which amused him no more; in those hours of danger and doubt, when he had lain, with death perhaps before him, making up his account of the vain life which probably he would be called upon to surrender, no wonder this simple, kindly, modest, and courageous soul thought seriously of the past and of the future; and prayed, and resolved, if a future were awarded to him, it should make amends for the days gone by; and surely as the mother and son read together the beloved assurance of the divine forgiveness, and of that joy which angels feel in heaven for a sinner repentant, we may fancy in the happy mother's breast a feeling somewhat akin to that angelic felicity, a gratitude and joy of all others the loftiest, the purest, the keenest. Lady Walham might shrink with terror at the Frenchman's name, but her son could forgive him, with all his heart, and kiss his mother's hand, and thank him as the best friend of his life.

During all the days of his illness, Kew had never once mentioned Ethel's name, and once or twice as his recovery progressed, when with doubt and tremor his mother alluded to it, he turned from the subject as one that was disagreeable and painful. Had she thought seriously on certain things? Lady Walham asked. Kew thought not, "but those who are bred up as you would have them, mother, are often none the better," the humble young fellow said. "I believe she is a very good girl. She is very clever, she is exceedingly handsome, she is very good to her parents and her brothers and sisters; but —" he did not finish the sentence. Perhaps he thought, as he told Ethel afterwards, that she would have agreed with Lady Walham even worse than with her imperious old grandmother.

Lady Walham then fell to deplore Sir Brian's condition, accounts of whose seizure of course had been despatched to the Kehl party, and to lament that a worldly man as he was should have such an affliction, so near the grave and so little prepared for it. Here honest Kew, however, held out. "Every man for himself, mother," says he. "Sir Brian was bred up very strictly, perhaps too strictly as a young man. Don't you know that that good Colonel, his elder brother, who seems to me about the most honest and good old gentleman I ever met in my life, was driven into rebellion and all sorts of wild courses by old Mrs. Newcome's tyranny over him? As for Sir Brian, he goes to church every Sunday: has prayers in the family every day: I'm sure has led a hundred times better life than I have, poor old Sir Brian. I often have thought, mother, that though our side was wrong, you could not be altogether right, because I remember how my tutor, and Mr. Bonner, and Dr. Laud, when they used to come down to us at Kewbury, used to make themselves so unhappy about other people." So the widow

withdrew her unhappiness about Sir Brian; she was quite glad to hope for the best regarding that invalid.

With some fears yet regarding her son — for many of the books with which the good lady travelled could not be got to interest him; at some he would laugh outright — with fear mixed with the maternal joy that he was returned to her, and had quitted his old ways; with keen feminine triumph, perhaps, that she had won him back, and happiness at his daily mending health, all Lady Walham's hours were passed in thankful and delighted occupation. George Barnes kept the Newcomes acquainted with the state of his brother's health. The skilful surgeon from Strasbourg reported daily better and better of him, and the little family were living in great peace and contentment, with one subject of dread, however, hanging over the mother of the two young men, the arrival of Lady Kew, as she was foreboding, the fierce old mother-inlaw who had worsted Lady Walham in many a previous battle.

It was what they call the summer of St. Martin, and the weather was luckily very fine; Kew could presently be wheeled into the garden of the hotel, whence he could see the broad turbid current of the swollen Rhine: the French bank fringed with alders, the vast yellow fields behind them, the great avenue of poplars stretching away to the Alsatian city, and its purple minster yonder. Good Lady Walham was for improving the shining hour by reading amusing extracts from her favourite volumes, gentle anecdotes of Chinese and Hottentot converts, and incidents from missionary travel. George Barnes, a wily young diplomatist, insinuated Galignani, and hinted that Kew might like a novel; and a profane work called *Oliver Twist* having appeared about this time, which George read out to his family with admirable emphasis, it is a fact that Lady Walham became so interested in the parish boy's progress, that she took his history into her bedroom (where it was discovered, under *Blatherwick's Voice from Mesopotamia*, by her ladyship's maid), and that Kew laughed so immensely at Mr. Bumble, the Beadle, as to endanger the reopening of his wound.

While, one day, they were so harmlessly and pleasantly occupied, a great whacking of whips, blowing of horns, and whirring of wheels was heard in the street without. The wheels stopped at their hotel gate; Lady Walham started up; ran through the garden door, closing it behind her; and divined justly who had arrived. The landlord was bowing; the courier pushing about; waiters in attendance; one of them, coming up to pale-faced Lady Walham; said, "Her Excellency the Frau Graefinn von Kew is even now absteiging."

"Will you be good enough to walk into our salon, Lady Kew?" said the daughter-inlaw, stepping forward and opening the door of that apartment. The Countess, leaning on her staff, entered that darkened chamber. She ran up towards an easy-chair, where she supposed Lord Kew was. "My dear Frank!" cries the old lady; "my dear boy, what a pretty fright you have given us all! They don't keep you in this horrid noisy room facing that — Ho — what is this?" cries the Countess, closing her sentence abruptly.

"It is not Frank. It is only a bolster, Lady Kew, and I don't keep him in a noisy room towards the street," said Lady Walham.

"Ho! how do you do? This is the way to him, I suppose;" and she went to another door — it was a cupboard full of the relics of Frank's illness, from which Lady Walham's mother-inlaw shrunk back aghast. "Will you please to see that I have a comfortable room, Maria; and one for my maid, next me? I will thank you to see yourself," the Empress of Kew said, pointing with her stick, before which many a time the younger lady had trembled.

This time Lady Walham only rang the bell. "I don't speak German; and have never been on any floor of the house but this. Your servant had better see to your room, Lady Kew. That next is mine; and I keep the door, which you are trying, locked on other side."

"And I suppose Frank is locked up there!" cried the old lady, "with a basin of gruel and a book of Watts's hymns." A servant entered at this moment, answering Lady Walham's summons. "Peacock, the Countess of Kew says that she proposes to stay here this evening. Please to ask the landlord to show her ladyship rooms," said Lady Walham; and by this time she had thought of a reply to Lady Kew's last kind speech.

"If my son were locked up in my room, madam, his mother is surely the best nurse for him. Why did you not come to him three weeks sooner, when there was nobody with him?"

Lady Kew said nothing, but glared and showed her teeth — those pearls set in gold.

"And my company may not amuse Lord Kew —"

"He-e-e!" grinned the elder, savagely.

"— But at least it is better than some to which you introduced my son," continued Lady Kew's daughter-inlaw,

gathering force and wrath as she spoke. "Your ladyship may think lightly of me, but you can hardly think so ill of me as of the Duchesse d'Ivry, I should suppose, to whom you sent my boy, to form him, you said; about whom, when I remonstrated — for though I live out of the world I hear of it sometimes — you were pleased to tell me that I was a prude and a fool. It is you I thank for separating my child from me — yes, you — for so many years of my life; and for bringing me to him when he was bleeding and almost a corpse, but that God preserved him to the widow's prayers; — and you, you were by, and never came near him."

"I— I did not come to see you — or — or — for this kind of scene, Lady Walham," muttered the other. Lady Kew was accustomed to triumph, by attacking in masses, like Napoleon. Those who faced her routed her.

"No; you did not come for me, I know very well," the daughter went on. "You loved me no better than you loved your son, whose life, as long as you meddled with it, you made wretched. You came here for my boy. Haven't you done him evil enough? And now God has mercifully preserved him, you want to lead him back again into ruin and crime. It shall not be so, wicked woman! bad mother! cruel, heartless parent! — George!" (Here her younger son entered the room, and she ran towards him with fluttering robes and seized his hands.) "Here is your grandmother; here is the Countess of Kew, come from Baden at last; and she wants — she wants to take Frank from us, my dear, and to — give — him — back to the — Frenchwoman again. No, no! Oh, my God! Never! never!" And she flung herself into George Barnes's arms, fainting with an hysteric burst of tears.

"You had best get a strait-waistcoat for your mother, George Barnes," Lady Kew said, scorn and hatred in her face. (If she had been Iago's daughter, with a strong likeness to her sire, Lord Steyne's sister could not have looked more diabolical.) "Have you had advice for her? Has nursing poor Kew turned her head? I came to see him. Why have I been left alone for half an hour with this madwoman? You ought not to trust her to give Frank medicine. It is positively —"

"Excuse me," said George, with a bow; "I don't think the complaint has as yet exhibited itself in my mother's branch of the family. (She always hated me," thought George; "but if she had by chance left me a legacy, there it goes.) You would like, ma'am, to see the rooms upstairs? Here is the landlord to conduct your ladyship. Frank will be quite ready to receive you when you come down. I am sure I need not beg of your kindness that nothing may be said to agitate him. It is barely three weeks since M. de Castillonnes's ball was extracted; and the doctors wish he should be kept as quiet as possible."

Be sure that the landlord, the courier, and the persons engaged in showing the Countess of Kew the apartments above spent an agreeable time with Her Excellency the Frau Graefinn von Kew. She must have had better luck in her encounter with these than in her previous passages with her grandson and his mother; for when she issued from her apartment in a new dress and fresh cap, Lady Kew's face wore an expression of perfect serenity. Her attendant may have shook her fist behind her, and her man's eyes and face looked Blitz and Donnerwetter; but their mistress's features wore that pleased look which they assumed when she had been satisfactorily punishing somebody. Lord Kew had by this time got back from the garden to his own room, where he awaited grandmamma. If the mother and her two sons had in the interval of Lady Kew's toilette tried to resume the history of Bumble the Beadle, I fear they could not have found it very comical.

"Bless me, my dear child! How well you look! Many a girl would give the world to have such a complexion. There is nothing like a mother for a nurse! Ah, no! Maria, you deserve to be the Mother Superior of a House of Sisters of Charity, you do. The landlord has given me a delightful apartment, thank you. He is an extortionate wretch; but I have no doubt I shall be very comfortable. The Dodsburys stopped here, I see by the travellers' book—quite right, instead of sleeping at that odious buggy Strasbourg. We have had a sad, sad time, my dears, at Baden. Between anxiety about poor Sir Brian, and about you, you naughty boy, I am sure I wonder how I have got through it all. Doctor Finck would not let me come away today; would I would come."

"I am sure it was uncommonly kind, ma'am," says poor Kew, with a rueful face.

"That horrible woman against whom I always warned but you — but young men will not take the advice of old grandmamas — has gone away these ten days. Monsieur le Duc fetched her; and if he locked her up at Moncontour, and kept her on bread-and-water; for the rest of her life, I am sure he would serve her right. When a woman once forgets religious principles, Kew, she is sure to go wrong. The Conversation-room is shut up. The Dorkings go on Tuesday. Clara is really a dear little artless creature; one that you will like, Maria — and as for Ethel, I really think she is an angel. To see her nursing her poor father is the most beautiful sight; night after night she has sate up with him. I know where she would like to be, the dear child. And if Frank falls ill again, Maria, he won't need a mother or useless old grandmother to nurse him. I

have got some pretty messages to deliver from her; but they are for your private ears, my lord; not even mammas and brothers may hear them."

"Do not go, mother! Pray stay, George!" cried the sick man (and again Lord Steyne's sister looked uncommonly like that lamented marquis). "My cousin is a noble young creature," he went on. "She has admirable good qualities, which I appreciate with all my heart; and her beauty, you know how I admire it. I have thought of her a great deal as I was lying on the bed yonder" (the family look was not so visible in Lady Kew's face), "and — and — I wrote to her this very morning; she will have the letter by this time, probably."

"Bien! Frank!" Lady Kew smiled (in her supernatural way) almost as much as her portrait, by Harlowe, as you may see it at Kewbury to this very day. She is represented seated before an easel, painting a miniature of her son, Lord Walham.

"I wrote to her on the subject of the last conversation we had together," Frank resumed, in rather a timid voice, "the day before my accident. Perhaps she did not tell you, ma'am, of what passed between us. We had had a quarrel; one of many. Some cowardly hand, which we both of us can guess at, had written to her an account of my past life, and she showed me the letter. Then I told her, that if she loved me she never would have showed it me: without any other words of reproof. I bade her farewell. It was not much, the showing that letter; but it was enough. In twenty differences we have had together, she had been unjust and captious, cruel towards me, and too eager, as I thought, for other people's admiration. Had she loved me, it seemed to me Ethel would have shown less vanity and better temper. What was I to expect in life afterwards from a girl who before her marriage used me so? Neither she nor I could be happy. She could be gentle enough, and kind, and anxious to please any man whom she loves, God bless her! As for me, I suppose, I'm not worthy of so much talent and beauty, so we both understood that that was a friendly farewell; and as I have been lying on my bed yonder, thinking, perhaps, I never might leave it, or if I did, that I should like to lead a different sort of life to that which ended in sending me there, my resolve of last month was only confirmed. God forbid that she and I should lead the lives of some folks we know; that Ethel should marry without love, perhaps to fall into it afterwards; and that I, after this awful warning I have had, should be tempted to back into that dreary life I was leading. It was wicked, ma'am, I knew it was; many and many a day I used to say so to myself, and longed to get rid of it. I am a poor weak devil, I know, I am only too easily led into temptation, and I should only make matters worse if I married a woman who cares for the world more than for me, and would not make me happy at home."

"Ethel care for the world!" gasped out Lady Kew; "a most artless, simple, affectionate creature; my dear Frank, she —"

He interrupted her, as a blush came rushing over his pale face. "Ah!" said he, "if I had been the painter, and young Clive had been Lord Kew, which of us do you think she would have chosen? And she was right. He is a brave, handsome, honest young fellow, and is a thousand times cleverer and better than I am."

"Not better, dear, thank God," cried his mother, coming round to the other side of his sofa, and seizing her son's hand.

"No, I don't think he is better, Frank," said the diplomatist, walking away to the window. And as for grandmamma at the end of this little speech and scene, her ladyship's likeness to her brother, the late revered Lord Steyne, was more frightful than ever.

After a minute's pause, she rose up on her crooked stick, and said, "I really feel I am unworthy to keep company with so much exquisite virtue. It will be enhanced, my lord, by the thought of the pecuniary sacrifice which you are making, for I suppose you know that I have been hoarding — yes, and saving, and pinching — denying myself the necessities of life, in order that my grandson might one day have enough to support his rank. Go and live and starve in your dreary old house, and marry a parson's daughter, and sing psalms with your precious mother; and I have no doubt you and she — she who has thwarted me all through life, and whom I hated, — yes, I hated from the moment she took my son from me, and brought misery into my family, will be all the happier when she thinks that she has made a poor, fond, lonely old woman more lonely and miserable. If you please, George Barnes, be good enough to tell my people that I shall go back to Baden," and waving her children away from her, the old woman tottered out of the room on her crutch.

So the wicked fairy drove away disappointed in the chariot with the very dragons which had brought her away in the morning, and just had time to get their feed of black bread. I wonder whether they were the horses Clive and J. J. and Jack Belsize had used when they passed on their road to Switzerland? Black Care sits behind all sorts of horses, and gives a trinkgelt to postillions all over the map. A thrill of triumph may be permitted to Lady Walham after her victory over her

mother-in-law. What Christian woman does not like to conquer another? and if that other were a mother-in-law, would the victory be less sweet? Husbands and wives both will be pleased that Lady Walham has had the better of this bout: and you, young boys and virgins, when your turn comes to be married, you will understand the hidden meaning of this passage. George Barnes got *Oliver Twist* out, and began to read therein. Miss Nancy and Fanny again were summoned before this little company to frighten and delight them. I dare say even Fagin and Miss Nancy failed with the widow, so absorbed was she with the thoughts of the victory which she had just won. For the evening service, in which her sons rejoiced her fond heart by joining, she lighted on a psalm which was as a *Te Deum* after the battle — the battle of Kehl by Rhine, where Kew's soul, as his mother thought, was the object of contention between the enemies. I have said, this book is all about the world and a respectable family dwelling in it. It is not a sermon, except where it cannot help itself, and the speaker pursuing the destiny of his narrative finds such a homily before him. O friend, in your life and mine, don't we light upon such sermons daily? — don't we see at home as well as amongst our neighbours that battle betwixt Evil and Good? Here on one side is Self and Ambition and Advancement; and Right and Love on the other. Which shall we let to triumph for ourselves — which for our children?

The young men were sitting smoking the vesper cigar. (Frank would do it, and his mother actually lighted his cigar for him now, enjoining him straightway after to go to bed.) Kew. smoked and looked at a star — shining above in the heaven. "Which is that star?" he asked: and the accomplished young diplomatist answered it was Jupiter.

"What a lot of things you know, George!" cries the senior, delighted; "you ought to have been the elder, you ought, by Jupiter! But you have lost your chance this time."

"Yes, thank God!" says George.

"And I am going to be all right — and to turn over a new leaf, old boy — and paste down the old ones, eh? I wrote to Martins this morning to have all my horses sold; and I'll never beg — so help me — so help me, Jupiter. I made a vow — a promise to myself, you see, that I wouldn't if I recovered. And I wrote to Cousin Ethel this morning. — As I thought over the matter yonder, I felt quite certain I was right, and that we could never, never pull together. Now the Countess is gone, I wonder whether I was right — to give up sixty thousand pounds, and the prettiest girl in London?"

"Shall I take horses and go after her? My mother's gone to bed, she won't know," asked George. "Sixty thousand is a lot of money to lose."

Kew laughed. "If you were to go and tell our grandmother that I could not live the night through, and that you would be Lord Kew in the morning, and your son Viscount Walham, I think the Countess would make up a match between you and the sixty thousand pounds, and the prettiest girl in England: she would, by — by Jupiter. I intend only to swear by the heathen gods now, Georgy. — No, I am not sorry I wrote to Ethel. What a fine girl she is! — I don't mean her beauty merely, but such a noble-bred one! And to think that there she is in the market to be knocked down to — I say, I was going to call that three-year-old, Ethelinda. — We must christen her over again for Tattersall's, Georgy."

A knock is heard through an adjoining door, and a maternal voice cries, "It is time to go to bed." So the brothers part, and, let us hope, sleep soundly.

The Countess of Kew, meanwhile, has returned to Baden; where, though it is midnight when she arrives, and the old lady has had two long bootless journeys, you will be grieved to hear, that she does not sleep a single wink. In the morning she hobbles over to the Newcome quarters; and Ethel comes down to her pale and calm. How is her father? He has had a good night: he is a little better, speaks more clearly, has a little more the use of his limbs.

"I wish I had had a good night!" groans out the Countess.

"I thought you were going to Lord Kew, at Kehl," remarked her granddaughter.

"I did go, and returned with wretches who would not bring me more than five miles an hour! I dismissed that brutal grinning courier; and I have given warning to that fiend of a maid."

"And Frank is pretty well, grandmamma?"

"Well! He looks as pink as a girl in her first season! I found him, and his brother George, and their mamma. I think Maria was hearing them their catechism," cries the old lady.

"N. and M. together! Very pretty," says Ethel, gravely. "George has always been a good boy, and it is quite time for my Lord Kew to begin."

The elder lady looked at her descendant, but Miss Ethel's glance was impenetrable. "I suppose you can fancy, my dear,

why I came back?" said Lady Kew.

"Because you quarrelled with Lady Walham, grandmamma. I think I have heard that there used to be differences between you." Miss Newcome was armed for defence and attack; in which cases we have said Lady Kew did not care to assault her. "My grandson told me that he had written to you," the Countess said.

"Yes: and had you waited but half an hour yesterday, you might have spared me the humiliation of that journey."

"You — the humiliation — Ethel!"

"Yes, me," Ethel flashed out. "Do you suppose it is none to have me bandied about from bidder to bidder, and offered for sale to a gentleman who will not buy me? Why have you and all my family been so eager to get rid of me? Why should you suppose or desire that Lord Kew should like me? Hasn't he the Opera; and such friends as Madame la Duchesse d'Ivry, to whom your ladyship introduced him in early life? He told me so: and she was good enough to inform me of the rest. What attractions have I in comparison with such women? And to this man from whom I am parted by good fortune; to this man who writes to remind me that we are separated — your ladyship must absolutely go and entreat him to give me another trial! It is too much, grandmamma. Do please to let me stay where I am; and worry me with no more schemes for my establishment in life. Be contented with the happiness which you have secured for Clara Pulleyn and Barnes; and leave me to take care of my poor father. Here I know I am doing right. Here, at least, there is no such sorrow, and doubt, and shame, for me, as my friends have tried to make me endure. There is my father's bell. He likes me to be with him at breakfast and to read his paper to him."

"Stay a little, Ethel," cried the Countess, with a trembling voice. "I am older than your father, and you owe me a little obedience — that is, if children do owe any obedience to their parents nowadays. I don't know. I am an old woman — the world perhaps has changed since my time; and it is you who ought to command, I dare say, and we to follow. Perhaps I have been wrong all through life, and in trying to teach my children to do as I was made to do. God knows I have had very little comfort from them: whether they did or whether they didn't. You and Frank I had set my heart on; I loved you out of all my grandchildren — was it very unnatural that I should wish to see you together? For that boy I have been saving money these years past. He flies back to the arms of his mother, who has been pleased to hate me as only such virtuous people can; who took away my own son from me; and now his son — towards whom the only fault I ever committed was to spoil him and be too fond of him. Don't leave me too, my child. Let me have something that I can like at my years. And I like your pride, Ethel, and your beauty, my dear; and I am not angry with your hard words; and if I wish to see you in the place in life which becomes you — do I do wrong? No. Silly girl! There — give me the little hand. How hot it is! Mine is as cold as a stone — and shakes, doesn't it? — Eh! it was a pretty hand once! What did Anne — what did your mother say to Frank's letter.

"I did not show it to her," Ethel answered.

"Let me see it, my dear," whispered Lady Kew, in a coaxing way.

"There it is," said Ethel pointing to the fireplace, where there lay some torn fragments and ashes of paper. It was the same fireplace at which Clive's sketches had been burned.



CHAPTER XXXIX

AMONGST THE PAINTERS

When Clive Newcome comes to be old, no doubt he will remember his Roman days as amongst the happiest which fate ever awarded him. The simplicity of the student's life there, the greatness and friendly splendour of the scenes surrounding him, the delightful nature of the occupation in which he is engaged, the pleasant company of comrades, inspired by a like pleasure over a similar calling, the labour, the meditation, the holiday and the kindly feast afterwards, should make the Art-students the happiest of youth, did they but know their good fortune. Their work is for the most part delightfully easy. It does not exercise the brain too much, but gently occupies it, and with a subject most agreeable to the scholar. The mere poetic flame, or jet of invention, needs to be lighted up but very seldom, namely, when the young painter is devising his subject, or settling the composition thereof. The posing of figures and drapery; the dexterous copying of the line; the artful processes of cross-hatching, of stumping, of laying on lights, and what not; the arrangement of colour, and the pleasing operations of glazing and the like, are labours for the most part merely manual. These, with the smoking of a proper number of pipes, carry the student through his day's work. If you pass his door you will very probably hear him singing at his easel. I should like to know what young lawyer, mathematician, or divinity scholar can sing over his volumes, and at the same time advance with his labour? In every city where Art is practised there are old gentlemen who never touched a pencil in their lives, but find the occupation and company of artists so agreeable that they are never out of the studios; follow one generation of painters after another; sit by with perfect contentment while Jack is drawing his pifferaro, or Tom designing his cartoon, and years afterwards when Jack is established in Newman Street, and Tom a Royal Academician, shall still be found in their rooms, occupied now by fresh painters and pictures, telling the youngsters, their successors, what glorious fellows Jack and Tom were. A poet must retire to privy places and meditate his rhymes in secret; a painter can practise his trade in the company of friends. Your splendid chef d'ecole, a Rubens or a Horace Vernet, may sit with a secretary reading to him; a troop of admiring scholars watching the master's hand; or a company of court ladies and gentlemen (to whom he addresses a few kind words now and again) looking on admiringly; whilst the humblest painter, be he ever so poor, may have a friend watching at his easel, or a gentle wife sitting by with her work in her lap, and with fond smiles or talk or silence cheering his labour.

Amongst all ranks and degrees of painters assembled at Rome, Mr. Clive found companions and friends. The cleverest man was not the best artist very often: the ablest artist not the best critic nor the best companion. Many a man could give no account of the faculty within him, but achieved success because he could not help it; and did, in an hour and without effort, that which another could not effect with half a life's labour. There were young sculptors who had never read a line of Homer, who took on themselves nevertheless to interpret and continue the heroic Greek art. There were young painters with the strongest natural taste for low humour, comic singing, and Cyder-Cellar jollifications, who would imitate nothing under Michael Angelo, and whose canvases teemed with tremendous allegories of fates, furies, genii of death and battle. There were long-haired lads who fancied the sublime lay in the Peruginesque manner, and depicted saintly personages with crisp draperies, crude colours, and haloes of gold-leaf. Our friend marked all these practitioners of Art with their various oddities and tastes, and was welcomed in the ateliers of all of them, from the grave dons and seniors, the senators of the French and English Academy, down to the jovial students who railed at the elders over their cheap cups at the Lepre. What a gallant, starving, generous, kindly life, many of them led! What fun in their grotesque airs, what friendship and gentleness in their poverty! How splendidly Carlo talked of the marquis his cousin, and the duke his intimate friend! How great Federigo was on the subject of his wrongs, from the Academy at home, a pack of tradesmen who could not understand high art, and who had never seen a good picture! With what haughtiness Augusto swaggered about at Sir John's soirees, though he was known to have borrowed Fernando's coat, and Luigi's dress-boots! If one or the other was ill, how nobly and generously his companions flocked to comfort him, took turns to nurse the sick man through nights of fever, contributed out of their slender means to help him through his difficulty. Max, who loves fine dresses and the carnival so, gave up a costume and a carriage so as to help Paul, when he sold his picture (through the agency of Pietro, with whom he had quarrelled, and who recommended him to a patron), gave a third of the money back to Max, and took another third portion to Lazaro, with his poor wife and children, who had not got a single order all that winter — and so the

story went on. I have heard Clive tell of two noble young Americans who came to Europe to study their art; of whom the one fell sick, whilst the other supported his penniless comrade, and out of sixpence a day absolutely kept but a penny for himself, giving the rest to his sick companion. "I should like to have known that good Samaritan, Sir," our Colonel said, twirling his mustachios, when we saw him again, and his son told him that story.

J. J., in his steady silent way, worked on every day, and for many hours every day. When Clive entered their studio of a morning, he found J. J. there, and there he left him. When the Life Academy was over, at night, and Clive went out to his soirees, J. J. lighted his lamp and continued his happy labour. He did not care for the brawling supper-parties of his comrades; liked better to stay at home than to go into the world, and was seldom abroad of a night except during the illness of Luigi before mentioned, when J. J. spent constant evenings at the other's bedside. J. J. was fortunate as well as skilful: people in the world took a liking to the modest young man, and he had more than one order for pictures. The Artists' Club, at the Lepre, set him down as close with his money; but a year after he left Rome, Lazaro and his wife, who still remained there, told a different tale. Clive Newcome, when he heard of their distress, gave them something — as much as he could spare; but J. J. gave more, and Clive was as eager in acknowledging and admiring his friend's generosity as he was in speaking of his genius. His was a fortunate organisation indeed. Study was his chief amusement. Self-denial came easily to him. Pleasure, or what is generally called so, had little charm for him. His ordinary companions were pure and sweet thoughts; his out-door enjoyment the contemplation of natural beauty; for recreation, the hundred pleasant dexterities and manipulations of his craft were ceaselessly interesting to him: he would draw every knot in an oak panel, or every leaf in an orange-tree, smiling, and taking a gay delight over the simple feats of skill: whenever you found him he seemed watchful and serene, his modest virgin-lamp always lighted and trim. No gusts of passion extinguished it; no hopeless wandering in the darkness afterwards led him astray. Wayfarers through the world, we meet now and again with such purity; and salute it, and hush whilst it passes on.

We have it under Clive Newcome's own signature, that he intended to pass a couple of years in Italy, devoting himself exclusively to the study of his profession. Other besides professional reasons were working secretly in the young man's mind, causing him to think that absence from England was the best cure for a malady under which he secretly laboured. But change of air may cure some sick people more speedily than the sufferers ever hoped; and also it is on record, that young men with the very best intentions respecting study, do not fulfil them, and are led away from their scheme by accident, or pleasure, or necessity, or some good cause. Young Clive worked sedulously two or three months at his vocation at Rome, secretly devouring, no doubt, the pangs of sentimental disappointment under which he laboured; and he drew from his models, and he sketched round about everything that suited his pencil on both sides of Tiber; and he laboured at the Life Academy of nights — a model himself to other young students. The symptoms of his sentimental malady began to abate. He took an interest in the affairs of Jack, and Tom, and Harry round about him: Art exercised its great healing influence on his wounded spirit, which to be sure had never given in. The meeting of the painters at the Cafe Greco, and at their private houses, was very jovial, pleasant, and lively. Clive smoked his pipe, drank his glass of Marsala, sang his song, and took part in the general chorus as gaily as the jolliest of the boys. He was the cock of the whole painting school, the favourite of all; and to be liked by the people, you may be pretty sure that we for our parts must like them.

Then, besides the painters, he had, as he has informed us, the other society of Rome. Every winter there is a gay and pleasant English colony in that capital, of course more or less remarkable for rank, fashion, and agreeability with every varying year. In Clive's year some very pleasant folks set up their winter quarters in the usual foreigners' resort round about the Piazza di Spagna. I was amused to find, lately, looking over the travels of the respectable M. de Poellnitz, that, a hundred and twenty years ago, the same quarter, the same streets and palaces, scarce changed from those days, were even then polite foreigners' resort. Of one or two of the gentlemen Clive had made the acquaintance in the hunting-field; others he had met during his brief appearance in the London world. Being a youth of great personal agility, fitted thereby to the graceful performance of polkas, etc.; having good manners, and good looks, and good credit with Prince Poloni, or some other banker, Mr. Newcome was thus made very welcome to the Anglo-Roman society; and as kindly received in genteel houses, where they drank tea and danced the galop, as in those dusky taverns and retired lodgings where his bearded comrades, the painters held their meetings.

Thrown together every day, and night after night; flocking to the same picture-galleries, statue-galleries, Pincian drives, and church functions, the English colonists at Rome perforce became intimate, and in many cases friendly. They have an English library where the various meets for the week are placarded: on such a day the Vatican galleries are open:

the next is the feast of Saint So-and-so: on Wednesday there will be music and vespers at the Sistine Chapel — on Thursday, the Pope will bless the animals — sheep, horses, and what-not: and flocks of English accordingly rush to witness the benediction of droves of donkeys. In a word, the ancient city of the Caesars, the august fanes of the Popes, with their splendour and ceremony, are all mapped out and arranged for English diversion; and we run in a crowd to high mass at St. Peter's, or to the illumination on Easter Day, as we run when the bell rings to the Bosjesmen at Cremorne, or the fireworks at Vauxhall.

Running to see fireworks alone, rushing off to examine Bosjesmen by one's self, is a dreary work: I should think very few men would have the courage to do it unattended, and personally would not prefer a pipe in their own rooms. Hence if Clive went to see all these sights, as he did, it is to be concluded that he went in company; and if he went in company and sought it, we may suppose that little affair which annoyed him at Baden no longer tended to hurt his peace of mind very seriously. The truth is, our countrymen are pleasanter abroad than at home; most hospitable, kindly, and eager to be pleased and to please. You see a family half a dozen times in a week in the little Roman circle, whom you shall not meet twice in a season afterwards in the enormous London round. When Easter is over and everybody is going away at Rome, you and your neighbour shake hands, sincerely sorry to part: in London we are obliged to dilute our kindness so that there is hardly any smack of the original milk. As one by one the pleasant families dropped off with whom Clive had spent his happy winter; as Admiral Freeman's carriage drove away, whose pretty girls he had caught at St. Peter's kissing St. Peter's toe; as Dick Denby's family ark appeared with all Denby's sweet young children kissing farewells to him out of the window; as those three charming Miss Baliols with whom he had that glorious day in the Catacombs; as friend after friend quitted the great city with kind greetings, warm pressures of the hand, and hopes of meeting in a yet greater city on the banks of the Thames, young Clive felt a depression of spirit. Rome was Rome, but it was pleasanter to see it in company; our painters are smoking still at the Oafs Greco, but a society all smoke and all painters did not suit him. If Mr. Clive is not a Michael Angelo or a Beethoven, if his genius is not gloomy, solitary, gigantic, shining alone, like a lighthouse, a storm round about him, and breakers dashing at his feet, I cannot help myself: he is as Heaven made him, brave, honest, gay, and friendly, and persons of a gloomy turn must not look to him as a hero.

So Clive and his companion worked away with all their hearts from November until far into April when Easter came, and the glorious gala with which the Roman Church celebrates that holy season. By this time Clive's books were full of sketches. Ruins, imperial and mediaeval; peasants and bagpipemen; Passionists with shaven polls; Capuchins and the equally hairy frequenters of the Cafe Greco; painters of all nations who resort there; Cardinals and their queer equipages and attendants; the Holy Father himself (it was Gregory sixteenth of the name); the dandified English on the Pincio and the wonderful Roman members of the hunt — were not all these designed by the young man and admired by his friends in after-days? J. J.'s sketches were few, but he had painted two beautiful little pictures, and sold them for so good a price that Prince Polonia's people were quite civil to him. He had orders for yet more pictures, and having worked very hard, thought himself authorised to accompany Mr. Clive upon a pleasure-trip to Naples, which the latter deemed necessary after his own tremendous labours. He for his part had painted no pictures, though he had commenced a dozen and turned them to the wall; but he had sketched, and dined, and smoked, and danced, as we have seen. So the little britzska was put behind horses again, and our two friends set out on their tour, having quite a crowd of brother-artists to cheer them, who had assembled and had a breakfast for the purpose at that comfortable osteria near the Lateran Gate. How the fellows flung their hats up, and shouted, "Lebe wohl," and "Adieu," and "God bless you, old boy," in many languages! Clive was the young swell of the artists of that year, and adored by the whole of the jolly company. His sketches were pronounced on all hands to be admirable: it was agreed that if he chose he might do anything.

So with promises of a speedy return they left behind them the noble city, which all love who once have seen it, and of which we think afterwards ever with the kindness and the regard of home. They dashed across the Campagna and over the beautiful hills of Albano, and sped through the solemn Pontine Marshes, and stopped to roost at Terracing (which was not at all like Fra Diavolo's Terracing at Covent Garden, as J. J. was distressed to remark), and so, galloping onwards through a hundred ancient cities that crumble on the shores of the beautiful Mediterranean, behold, on the second day as they ascended a hill about noon. Vesuvius came in view, its great shape shimmering blue in the distant haze, its banner of smoke in the cloudless sky. And about five o'clock in the evening (as everybody will who starts from Terracing early and pays the postboy well), the travellers came to an ancient city walled and fortified, with drawbridges over the shining moats.

"Here is CAPUA," says J. J., and Clive burst out laughing: thinking of his Capua which he had left — how many months

— years it seemed ago! From Capua to Naples is a fine straight road, and our travellers were landed at the latter place at suppertime; where, if they had quarters at the Vittoria Hotel, they were as comfortable as any gentlemen painters need wish to be in this world.

The aspect of the place was so charming and delightful to Clive:— the beautiful sea stretched before his eyes when waking, Capri a fairy island in the distance, in the amethyst rocks of which Sirens might be playing — that fair line of cities skirting the shore glittering white along the purple water — over the whole brilliant scene Vesuvius rising with cloudlets playing round its summit, and the country bursting out into that glorious vegetation with which sumptuous nature decorates every spring — this city and scene of Naples were so much to Clive's liking that I have a letter from him dated a couple of days after the young man's arrival, in which he announces his intention of staying there for ever, and gives me an invitation to some fine lodgings in a certain palazzo, on which he has cast his eye. He is so enraptured with the place, that he says to die and be buried there even would be quite a treat, so charming is the cemetery where the Neapolitan dead repose.

The Fates did not, however, ordain that Clive Newcome should pass all his life at Naples. His Roman banker presently forwarded a few letters to his address; some which had arrived after his departure, others which had been lying at the Poste Restante, with his name written in perfectly legible characters, but which the authorities of the post, according to their custom, would not see when Clive sent for them.

It was one of these letters which Clive clutched the most eagerly. It had been lying since October, actually, at the Roman post, though Clive had asked for letters there a hundred times. It was that little letter from Ethel, in reply to his own, whereof we have made mention in a previous chapter. There was not much in the little letter. Nothing, of course, that Virtue or Grandmamma might not read over the young writer's shoulder. It was affectionate, simple, rather melancholy; described in a few words Sir Brian's seizure and present condition; spoke of Lord Kew, who was mending rapidly, as if Clive, of course, was aware of his accident; of the children, of Clive's father, and ended with a hearty "God bless you," to Clive, from his sincere Ethel.

"You boast of its being over. You see it is not over," says Clive's monitor and companion. "Else, why should you have dashed at that letter before all the others, Clive?" J. J. had been watching, not without interest, Clive's blank face as he read the young lady's note.

"How do you know who wrote the letter?" asks Clive.

"I can read the signature in your face," says the other; "and I could almost tell the contents of the note. Why have you such a tell-tale face, Clive?"

"It is over; but when a man has once, you know, gone through an affair like that," says Clive, looking very grave, "he — he's anxious to hear of Alice Grey, and how she's getting on, you see, my good friend." And he began to shout out as of old —

"Her heart it is another's, she — never — can — be — mine;"

and to laugh at the end of the song. "Well, well," says he; "it is a very kind note, a very proper little note; the expression elegant, J. J., the sentiment is most correct. All the little t's most properly crossed, and all the little i's have dots over their little heads. It's a sort of a prize note, don't you see; and one such, as in the old spelling-book story, the good boy received a plum-cake for writing. Perhaps you weren't educated on the old spelling-book, J. J.? My good old father taught me to read out of his — I say, I think it was a shame to keep the old boy waiting whilst I have been giving an audience to this young lady. Dear old father!" and he apostrophised the letter. "I beg your pardon, sir; Miss Newcome requested five minutes' conversation, and I was obliged, from politeness, you know, to receive. There's nothing between us; nothing but what's most correct, upon my honour and conscience." And he kissed his father's letter, and calling out again, "Dear old father!" proceeded to read as follows:—

"Your letters, my dearest Clive, have been the greatest comfort to me. I seem to hear you as I read them. I can't but think that this, the modern and natural style, is a great progress upon the old-fashioned manner of my day, when we used to begin to our fathers, 'Honoured Father,' or even 'Honoured Sir' some precisians used to write still from Mr. Lord's Academy, at Tooting, where I went before Grey Friars — though I suspect parents were no more honoured in those days than nowadays. I know one who had rather be trusted than honoured; and you may call me what you please, so as you do that.

“It is not only to me your letters give pleasure. Last week I took yours from Baden Baden, No. 3, September 15, into Calcutta, and could not help showing it at Government House, where I dined. Your sketch of the old Russian Princess and her little boy, gambling, was capital. Colonel Buckmaster, Lord Bagwig’s private secretary, knew her, and says it is to a T. And I read out to some of my young fellows what you said about play, and how you had given it over. I very much fear some of the young rogues are at dice and brandy-pawnee before tiffin. What you say of young Ridley, I take cum grano. His sketches I thought very agreeable; but to compare them to a certain gentleman’s — Never mind, I shall not try to make him think too well of himself. I kissed dear Ethel’s hand in your letter. I write her a long letter by this mail.

“If Paul de Florac in any way resembles his mother, between you and him there ought to be a very warm regard. I knew her when I was a boy, long before you were born or thought of; and in wandering forty years through the world since, I have seen no woman in my eyes so good or so beautiful. Your cousin Ethel reminded me of her; as handsome, but not so lovely. Yes, it was that pale lady you saw at Paris, with eyes full of care, and hair streaked with grey. So it will be the turn of you young folks, come eight more lustres, and your heads will be bald like mine, or grey like Madame de Florac’s, and bending over the ground where we are lying in quiet. I understand from you that young Paul is not in very flourishing circumstances. If he still is in need, mind and be his banker, and I will be yours. Any child of hers must never want when I have a spare guinea. I do not mind telling you, sir, that I cared for her more than millions of guineas once; and half broke my heart about her when I went to India, as a young chap. So, if any such misfortunes happen to you, consider, my boy, you are not the only one.

“Binnie writes me word that he has been ailing. I hope you are a good correspondent with him. What made me turn to him just after speaking of unlucky love affairs? Could I be thinking about little Rosie Mackenzie? She is a sweet little lass, and James will leave her a pretty piece of money. Verbum sap. I should like you to marry; but God forbid you should marry for a million of gold mohurs.

“And gold mohurs bring me to another subject. Do you know I narrowly missed losing half a lakh of rupees which I had at an agent’s here? And who do you think warned me about him? Our friend Rummun Loll, who has lately been in England, and with whom I made the voyage from Southampton. He is a man of wonderful tact and observation. I used to think meanly of the honesty of natives and treat them haughtily, as I recollect doing this very gentleman at your Uncle Newcome’s in Bryanstone Square. He heaped coals of fire on my head by saving my money for me; and I have placed it with interest in his house. If I would but listen to him, my capital might be trebled in a year, he says, and the interest immensely increased. He enjoys the greatest esteem among the moneyed men here; keeps a splendid establishment and house here in Barrackpore; is princely in his benefactions. He talks to me about the establishment of a bank, of which the profits are so enormous and the scheme so (seemingly) clear, that I don’t know whether I mayn’t be tempted to take a few shares. Nous verrons. Several of my friends are longing to have a finger in it; but be sure this, I shall do nothing rashly and without the very best advice.

“I have not been frightened yet by your draughts upon me. Draw as many of these as you please. You know I don’t half like the other kind of drawing, except as a delassement: but if you chose to be a weaver, like my grandfather, I should not say you nay. Don’t stint yourself of money or of honest pleasure. Of what good is money, unless we can make those we love happy with it? There would be no need for me to save, if you were to save too. So, and as you know as well as I what our means are, in every honest way use them. I should like you not to pass the whole of next year in Italy, but to come home and pay a visit to honest James Binnie. I wonder how the old barrack in Fitzroy Square looks without me? Try and go round by Paris on your way home, and pay your visit, and carry your father’s fond remembrances to Madame la Comtesse de Florac. I don’t say remember me to my brother, as I write Brian by this mail. Adieu, mon fils! je t’embrasse! — and am always my Clive’s affectionate father,

T. N.”

“Isn’t he a noble old trump?” That point had been settled by the young men any time these three years. And now Mr. J. J. remarked that when Clive had read his father’s letter once, then he read Ethel’s over again, and put it in his breast-pocket, and was very disturbed in mind that day, pishing and pshawing at the statue-gallery which they went to see at the Museo.

“After all,” says Clive, “what rubbish these second-rate statues are! what a great hulking abortion is this brute of a Farnese Hercules! There’s only one bit in the whole gallery that is worth a twopenny-piece.”

It was the beautiful fragment called Psyche. J. J. smiled as his comrade spoke in admiration of this statue — in the slim

shape, in the delicate formation of the neck, in the haughty virginal expression, the Psyche is not unlike the Diana of the Louvre — and the Diana of the Louvre we have said was like a certain young lady.

“After all,” continues Clive, looking up at the great knotted legs of that clumsy caricatured porter which Glykon the Athenian sculptured in bad times of art surely — “she could not write otherwise than she did — don’t you see? Her letter is quite kind and affectionate. You see she says she shall always hear of me with pleasure: hopes I’ll come back soon, and bring some good pictures with me, since pictures I will do. She thinks small beer of painters, J. J. — well, we don’t think small beer of ourselves, my noble friend. I— I suppose it must be over by this time, and I may write to her as the Countess of Kew.” The custode of the apartment had seen admiration and wonder expressed by hundreds of visitors to his marble Giant: but he had never known Hercules occasion emotion before, as in the case of the young stranger; who, after staring a while at the statue, dashed his hand across his forehead with a groan, and walked away from before the graven image of the huge Strongman, who had himself been made such a fool by women.

“My father wants me to go and see James and Madame de Florac,” says Clive, as they stride down the street to the Toledo.

J. J. puts his arm through his companion’s, which is deep the pocket of his velvet paletot. “You must not go home till you hear it is over, Clive,” whispers J. J.

“Of course not, old boy,” says the other, blowing tobacco out of his shaking head.

Not very long after their arrival, we may be sure they went to Pompeii, of which place, as this is not an Italian tour, but a history of Clive Newcome, Esquire, and his most respectable family, we shall offer to give no description. The young man had read Sir Bulwer Lytton’s delightful story, which has become the history of Pompeii, before they came thither, and Pliny’s description, apud the Guide-Book. Admiring the wonderful ingenuity with which the English writer had illustrated the place by his text, as if the houses were so many pictures to which he had appended a story, Clive, the wag, who was always indulging his vein for caricature, was proposing that that they should take the same place, names, people, and make a burlesque story: “What would be a better figure,” says he, “than Pliny’s mother, whom the historian describes as exceedingly corpulent, and walking away from the catastrophe with slaves holding cushions behind her, to shield her plump person from the cinders! Yes, old Mrs Pliny shall be my heroine!” says Clive. A picture of her on a dark grey paper and touched up with red at the extremities, exists in Clive’s album to the present day.

As they were laughing, rattling, wondering, mimicking, the cicerone attending them with his nasal twaddle, anon pausing and silent, yielding to the melancholy pity and wonder which the aspect of that strange and smiling place inspires — behold they come upon another party of English, two young men accompanying a lady.

“What, Clive!” cries one.

“My dear, dear Lord Kew!” shouts the other; and as the young man rushes up and grasps the two hands of the other, they begin to blush —

Lord Kew and his family resided in a neighbouring hotel on the Chiafa at Naples; and that very evening on returning from the Pompeian excursion, the two painters were invited to take tea by those friendly persons. J. J. excused himself, and sate at home drawing all night. Clive went, and passed a pleasant evening; in which all sorts of future tours and pleasure-parties were projected by the young men. They were to visit Paestum, Capri, Sicily; why not Malta and the East? asked Lord Kew.

Lady Walham was alarmed. Had not Kew been in the East already? Clive was surprised and agitated too. Could Kew think of going to the East, and making long journeys when he had — he had other engagements that would necessitate his return home? No, he must not go to the East, Lord Kew’s mother avowed; Kew had promised to stay with her during the summer at Castellammare, and Mr. Newcome must come and paint their portraits there — all their portraits. She would like to have an entire picture-gallery of Kews, if her son would remain at home during the sittings.

At an early hour Lady Walham retired to rest, exacting Clive’s promise to come to Castellammare; and George Barnes disappeared to array himself in an evening costume, and to pay his round of visits as became a young diplomatist. This part of diplomatic duty does not commence until after the opera at Naples; and society begins when the rest of the world has gone to bed.

Kew and Clive sate till one o’clock in the morning, when the latter returned to his hotel. Not one of those fine parties at Paestum, Sicily, etc. was carried out. Clive did not go to the East at all, and it was J. J., who painted Lord Kew’s portrait that

summer at Castellammare. The next day Clive went for his passport to the embassy; and a steamer departing direct for Marseilles on that very afternoon, behold Mr. Newcome was on board of her; Lord Kew and his brother and J. J. waving their hats to him as the vessel left the shore.

Away went the ship cleaving swiftly through the azure waters; but not swiftly enough for Clive. J. J. went back with a sigh to his sketchbook and easels. I suppose the other young disciple of Art had heard something which caused him to forsake his sublime mistress for one who was much more capricious and earthly.



CHAPTER XL

RETURNS FROM ROME TO PALL MALL

One morning in the month of July, when there was actually sunshine in Lamb Court, and the two gentlemen who occupied the third-floor chambers there in partnership, were engaged, as their custom was, over their pipes, and their manuscripts, and their Times newspaper, behold a fresh sunshine burst into their room in the person of a young Clive, with a bronzed face, and a yellow beard and mustachios, and those bright cheerful eyes, the sight of which was always so welcome to both of us. "What, Clive! What, the young one! What, Benjamin!" shout Pendennis and Warrington. Clive had obtained a very high place indeed in the latter's affections, so much so, that if I could have found it in my heart to be jealous of such a generous brave fellow, I might have grudged him his share of Warrington's regard. He blushed up with pleasure to see us again. Pidgeon, our boy, introduced him with a jubilant countenance; and Flanagan, the laundress, came smirking out of the bedroom, eager to get a nod of recognition from him, and bestow a smile of welcome upon everybody's favourite, Clive.

In two minutes an arm-chair full of magazines, slips of copy, and books for review, was emptied over the neighbouring coal-scuttle, and Clive was in the seat, a cigar in his mouth, as comfortable as if he had never been away. When did he come? Last night. He was back in Charlotte Street, at his old lodgings: he had been to breakfast in Fitzroy Square that morning; James Binnie chirped for joy at seeing him. His father had written to him desiring him to come back and see James Binnie; pretty Miss Rosey was very well, thank you: and Mrs. Mack? Wasn't Mrs. Mackenzie delighted to behold him? "Come, sir, on your honour and conscience, didn't the widow give you a kiss on your return?" Clive sends an uncult number of the Pall Mall Gazette flying across the room at the head of the inquirer; but blushes as sweetly, that I have very little doubt some such pretty meeting had taken place.

What a pity it is he had not been here a short while since for a marriage in high life, to give away his dear Barnes, and sign the book, along with the other dignitaries! We described that ceremony to him, and announced the promotion of his friend, Florac, now our friend also, Director of the Great Anglo-Gallic Railway, the Prince de Moncontour. Then Clive told us of his deeds during the winter; of the good fun he had had at Rome, and the jolly fellows he had met there. Was he going to astonish the world by some grand pictures? He was not. The more he worked, the more discontented he was with his performances somehow: but J. J. was coming out very strong, J. J. was going to be a stunner. We turned with pride and satisfaction to that very number of the Pall Mall Gazette which the youth had flung at us, and showed him a fine article by F. Bayham, Esq., in which the picture sent home by J. J. was enthusiastically lauded by the great critic.

So he was back amongst us, and it seemed but yesterday he had quitted us. To Londoners everything seems to have happened but yesterday; nobody has time to miss his neighbour who goes away. People go to the Cape, or on a campaign, or on a tour round the world, or to India, and return with a wife and two or three children, and we fancy it was only the other day they left us, so engaged is every man in his individual speculations, studies, struggles; so selfish does our life make us:— selfish but not ill-natured. We are glad to see an old friend, though we do not weep when he leaves us. We humbly acknowledge, if fate calls us away likewise, that we are no more missed than any other atom.

After talking for a while, Mr. Clive must needs go into the City, whither I accompanied him. His interview with Messrs. Jolly and Baines, at the house in Fog Court, must have been very satisfactory; Clive came out of the parlour with a radiant countenance. "Do you want any money, old boy?" says he; "the dear old governor has placed a jolly sum to my account, and Mr. Baines has told me how delighted Mrs. Baines and the girls will be to see me at dinner. He says my father has made a lucky escape out of one house in India, and a famous investment in another. Nothing could be more civil; how uncommonly kind and friendly everybody is in London! Everybody!" Then bestowing ourselves in a hansom cab, which had probably just deposited some other capitalist in the City, we made for the West End of the town, where Mr. Clive had some important business to transact with his tailors. He discharged his outstanding little account with easy liberality, blushing as he pulled out of his pocket a new chequebook, page 1 of which he bestowed on the delighted artist. From Mr. B.'s shop to Mr. Truefitt's. is but a step. Our young friend was induced to enter the hairdresser's, and leave behind him a great portion of the flowing locks and the yellow beard, which he had brought with him from Rome. With his mustachios he could not be induced to part; painters and cavalry officers having a right to those decorations. And why should not this

young fellow wear smart clothes, and a smart moustache, and look handsome, and take his pleasure, and bask in his sun when it shone? Time enough for flannel and a fire when the winter comes; and for grey hair and cork-soled boots in the natural decline of years.

Then we went to pay a visit at a hotel in Jermyn Street to our friend Florac who was now magnificently lodged there. A powdered giant lolling in the hall, his buttons emblazoned with prodigious coronets, took our cards up to the Prince. As the door of an apartment on the first floor opened, we heard a cry as of joy; and that nobleman in a magnificent Persian dressing-gown, rushing from the room, plunged down the stairs, and began kissing Clive, to the respectful astonishment of the Titan in livery.

"Come that I present you, my friends," our good little Frenchman exclaimed "to Madame la — to my wife!" We entered the drawing-room; a demure little lady, of near sixty years of age, was seated there, and we were presented in form to Madame Princesse de Moncontour, nee Higg, of Manchester. She made us a stiff little curtsy, but looked not ill-natured; indeed, few women could look at Clive Newcome's gallant figure and brave smiling countenance and keep a frown on their own very long.

"I have 'eard of you from somebodys else besides the Prince," said the lady, with rather a blush "Your uncle has spoke to me hoften about you, Mr. Clive, and about your good father."

"C'est son Directeur," whispers Florac to me. I wondered which of the firm of Newcome had taken that office upon him.

"Now you are come to England," the lady continued (whose Lancashire pronunciation being once indicated, we shall henceforth, out of respect to the Princess's rank generally pretermit) — "now you are come to England we hope to see you often. Not here in this noisy hotel, which I can't bear, but in the country. Our house is only three miles from Newcome — not such a grand place as your uncle's; but I hope we shall see you there a great deal, and your friend Mr Pendennis, if he is passing that way." The invitation to Mr. Pendennis, I am bound to say, was given in terms by no means so warm as those in which the Princess's hospitality to Clive were professed.

"Shall we meet you at your Huncle 'Obson's?" the lady continued to Clive; "his wife is a most charming, well-informed woman, has been most kind and civil and we dine there today. Barnes and his wife is gone to spend the honeymoon at Newcome. Lady Clara is a sweet dear thing, and her pa and ma most affable, I am sure. What a pity Sir Brian couldn't attend the marriage! There was everybody there in London, a'most. Sir Harvey Diggs says he is mending very slowly. In life we are in death, Mr. Newcome! Isn't it sad to think of him, in the midst of all his splendour and prosperity, and he so infirm and unable to enjoy them! But let us hope for the best, and that his health will soon come round!"

With these and similar remarks, in which poor Florac took but a very small share (for he seemed dumb and melancholy in the company of the Princess, his elderly spouse), the visit sped on. Mr. Pendennis, to whom very little was said, having leisure to make his silent observations upon the person to whom he had been just presented.

As there lay on the table two neat little packages, addressed "The Princess de Moncontour"— an envelope to the same address, with "The Prescription, No. 9396," further inscribed on the paper, and a sheet of notepaper, bearing cabalistic characters, and the signature of that most fashionable physician, Sir Harvey Diggs, I was led to believe that the lady of Moncontour was, or fancied herself, in a delicate state of health. By the side of the physic for the body was medicine for the soul — a number of pretty little books in middle-age bindings, in antique type many of theist, adorned with pictures of the German school, representing demure ecclesiastics, with their heads on one side, children in long starched nightgowns, virgins bearing lilies, and so forth, from which it was to be concluded that the owner of the volumes was not so hostile to Rome as she had been at an earlier period of her religious life; and that she had migrated (in spirit) from Clapham to Knightsbridge — so many wealthy mercantile families have likewise done in the body. A long strip of embroidery, of the Gothic pattern, furthermore betrayed her present inclinations; and the person observing these things, whilst nobody was taking any notice of him, was amused when the accuracy of his conjectures was confirmed by the reappearance of the gigantic footman, calling out "Oneyman," in a loud voice, and preceding that divine into the room.

"C'est le Directeur. Venez fumer dans ma chambre, Pen," growled Florac as Honeyman came sliding over the carpet, his elegant smile changing to a blush when he beheld Clive, his nephew, seated by the Princess's side. This, then, was the uncle who had spoken about Clive and his father to Madame de Florac. Charles seemed in the best condition. He held out two bran-new lavender-coloured kid gloves to shake hands with his dear Clive; Florac and Mr. Pendennis vanished out of

the room as he appeared, so that no precise account can be given of this affecting interview.

When I quitted the hotel, a brown brougham, with a pair of beautiful horses, the harness and panels emblazoned with the neatest little ducal coronets you ever saw, and a cypher under each crown as easy to read as the arrow-headed inscriptions on one of Mr. Layard's Assyrian chariots, was in waiting, and I presumed that Madame la Princesse was about to take an airing.

Clive had passed the avuncular banking-house in the City, without caring to face his relatives there. Mr. Newcome was now in sole command, Mr. Barnes being absent at Newcome, the Baronet little likely ever to enter bank-parlour again. But his bounden duty was to wait on the ladies; and of course, only from duty's sake, he went the very first day and called in Park Lane.

"The family was habsent ever since the marriage simminery last week," the footman, who had accompanied the party to Baden, informed Clive when he opened the door, and recognised that gentleman. "Sir Brian pretty well, thank you, sir. The family was at Brighting. That is Miss Newcome is in London staying with her grandmamma in Queen Street, Mayfair, sir." The varnished doors closed upon Jeames within; the brazen knockers grinned their familiar grin at Clive, and he went down the blank steps discomfited. Must it be owned that he went to a Club, and looked in the Directory for the number of Lady Kew's house in Queen Street? Her ladyship had a furnished house for the season. No such noble name to be found among the inhabitants of Queen Street.

Mr. Hobson was from home; that is, Thomas had orders not to admit strangers on certain days, or before certain hours; so that Aunt Hobson saw Clive without being seen by the young man. I cannot say how much he regretted that mischance. His visits of propriety were thus all paid; and he went off to dine dutifully with James Binnie, after which meal he came to a certain rendezvous given to him by some bachelors friends for the evening.

James Binnie's eyes lightened up with pleasure on beholding his young Clive; the youth, obedient to his father's injunction, had hastened to Fitzroy Square immediately after taking possession of his old lodgings — his, during the time of his absence. The old properties and carved cabinets, the picture of his father looking melancholy out of the canvas, greeted Clive strangely on the afternoon of his arrival. No wonder he was glad to get away from a solitude peopled with a number of dismal recollections, to the near hospitality of Fitzroy Square and his guardian and friend there.

James had not improved in health during Clive's ten months' absence. He had never been able to walk well, or take his accustomed exercise, after his fall. He was no more used to riding than the late Mr. Gibbon, whose person James's somewhat resembled, and of whose philosophy our Scottish friend was an admiring scholar. The Colonel gone, James would have arguments with Mr. Honeyman over their claret, bring down the famous XVth and XVIth chapters of the Decline and Fall upon him, and quite get the better of the clergyman. James, like many other sceptics, was very obstinate, and for his part believed that almost all parsons had as much belief as the Roman augurs in their ceremonies. Certainly, poor Honeyman, in their controversies, gave up one article after another, flying from James's assault; but the battle over, Charles Honeyman would pick up these accoutrements which he had flung away in his retreat, wipe them dry, and put them on again.

Lamed by his fall, and obliged to remain much within doors, where certain society did not always amuse him, James Binnie sought excitement in the pleasures of the table, partaking of them the more freely now that his health could afford them the less. Clive, the sly rogue, observed a great improvement in the commissariat since his good father's time, ate his dinner with thankfulness, and made no remarks. Nor did he confide to us for a while his opinion that Mrs. Mack bored the good gentleman most severely; that he pined away under her kindnesses; sneaked off to his study-chair and his nap; was only too glad when some of the widow's friends came, or she went out; seeming to breathe more freely when she was gone, and drink his wine more cheerily when rid of the intolerable weight of her presence.

I protest the great ills of life are nothing — the loss of your fortune is a mere flea-bite; the loss of your wife — how many men have supported it and married comfortably afterwards? It is not what you lose, but what you have daily to bear that is hard. I can fancy nothing more cruel, after a long easy life of bachelorhood, than to have to sit day after day with a dull, handsome woman opposite; to have to answer her speeches about the weather, housekeeping and what not; to smile appropriately when she is disposed to be lively (that laughing at the jokes is the hardest part), and to model your conversation so as to suit her intelligence, knowing that a word used out of its downright signification will not be understood by your fair breakfast-maker. Women go through this simpering and smiling life, and bear it quite easily.

Theirs is a life of hypocrisy. What good woman does not laugh at her husband's or father's jokes and stories time after time, and would not laugh at breakfast, lunch, and dinner, if he told them? Flattery is their nature — to coax, flatter and sweetly befool some one is every woman's business. She is none if she declines this office. But men are not provided with such powers of humbug or endurance — they perish and pine away miserably when bored — or they shrink off to the club or public-house for comfort. I want to say as delicately as I can, and never liking to use rough terms regarding a handsome woman, that Mrs. Mackenzie, herself being in the highest spirits and the best humour, extinguished her half-brother, James Binnie, Esq.; that she was as a malaria to him, poisoning his atmosphere, numbing his limbs, destroying his sleep — that day after day as he sate down at breakfast, and she levelled commonplaces at her dearest James, her dearest James became more wretched under her. And no one could see what his complaint was. He called in the old physicians at the Club. He dosed himself with poppy, and mandragora and blue pill — lower and lower went poor James's mercury. If he wanted to move to Brighton or Cheltenham, well and good. Whatever were her engagements, or whatever pleasures darling Rosey might have in store, dear thing! — at her age, my dear Mrs. Newcome, would not one do all to make a young creature happy? — under no circumstances could I think of leaving my poor brother.

Mrs. Mackenzie thought herself a most highly principled woman, Mrs. Newcome had also a great opinion of her. These two ladies had formed a considerable friendship in the past months, the captain's widow having an unaffected reverence for the banker's lady and thinking her one of the best informed and most superior women in the world. When she had a high opinion of a person Mrs. Mack always wisely told it. Mrs. Newcome in her turn thought Mrs. Mackenzie a very clever, agreeable, ladylike woman — not accomplished, but one could not have everything. "No, no, my dear," says simple Hobson, "never would do to have every woman as clever as you are, Maria. Women would have it all their own way then."

Maria, as her custom was, thanked God for being so virtuous and clever, and graciously admitted Mrs. and Miss Mackenzie into the circle of adorers of that supreme virtue and talent. Mr. Newcome took little Rosey and her mother to some parties. When any took place in Bryanstone Square, they were generally allowed to come to tea.

When on the second day of his arrival the dutiful Clive went to dine with Mr. James, the ladies, in spite of their raptures at his return and delight at seeing him, were going in the evening to his aunt. Their talk was about the Princess all dinner-time. The Prince and Princess were to dine in Bryanstone Square. The Princess had ordered such and such things at the jeweller's — the Princess would take rank over an English Earl's daughter — over Lady Anne Newcome, for instance. "Oh, dear! I wish the Prince and Princess were smothered in the Tower," growled James Binnie; "since you have got acquainted with 'em I have never heard of anything else."

Clive, like a wise man, kept his counsel about the Prince and Princess, with whom we have seen that he had had the honour of an interview that very day. But after dinner Rosey came round and whispered to her mamma, and after Rosey's whisper mamma flung her arms round Rosey's neck and kissed her, and called her a thoughtful darling. "What do you think this creature says, Clive?" says Mrs. Mack, still holding her darling's little hand. "I wonder I had not thought of it myself."

"What is it, Mrs. Mackenzie?" asks Clive, laughing.

"She says why should not you come to your aunt's with us? We are sure Mrs. Newcome would be most happy to see you"

Rosey, with a little hand put to mamma's mouth, said, "Why did you tell? — you naughty mamma! Isn't she a naughty mamma, Uncle James?" More kisses follow after this sally, of which Uncle James receives one with perfect complacency: mamma crying out as Rosey retires to dress, "That darling child is always thinking of others — always!"

Clive says, "he will sit and smoke a cheroot with Mr. Binnie, if they please." James's countenance falls. "We have left off that sort of thing here, my dear Clive, a long time," cries Mrs. Mackenzie, departing from the dining-room.

"But we have improved the claret, Clive, my boy!" whispers Uncle James. "Let us have another bottle, and we will drink to the dear Colonel's good health and speedy return — God bless him! I say, Clive, Tom seems to have had a most fortunate escape out of Winter's house — thanks to our friend Rummun Loll, and to have got into a capital good thing with this Bundelcund bank. They speak famously of it at Hanover Square, and I see the Hurkara quotes the shares at a premium already."

Clive did not know anything about the Bundelcund bank, except a few words found in a letter from his father, which he had in the City this morning, "and an uncommonly liberal remittance the governor has sent me home, sir." Upon which they fill another bumper to the Colonel's health. Mamma and Rosey come and show their pretty pink dresses before going to Mrs. Newcome's, and Clive lights a cigar in the hall — and isn't there a jubilation at the Haunt when the young fellow's face appears above the smoke-clouds there?

CHAPTER XLI

AN OLD STORY

Many of Clive's Roman friends were by this time come to London, and the young man renewed his acquaintance with them, and had speedily a considerable circle of his own. He thought fit to allow himself a good horse or two, and appeared in the Park among other young dandies. He and Monsieur de Moncontour were sworn allies. Lord Fareham, who had purchased J. J.'s picture, was Clive's very good friend: Major Pendennis himself pronounced him to be a young fellow of agreeable manners, and very favourably vu (as the Major happened to know) in some very good quarters.

Ere many days Clive had been to Brighton to see Lady Anne and Sir Brian, and good Aunt Honeyman, in whose house the Baronet was lodged: and I suppose he found out, by some means or other, where Lady Kew lived in Mayfair.

But her ladyship was not at home, nor was she at home on the second day, nor did there come any note from Ethel to her cousin. She did not ride in the Park as of old. Clive, bien vu as he was, did not belong to that great world as yet, in which he would be pretty sure to meet her every night at one of those parties where everybody goes. He read her name in the paper morning after morning, as having been present at Lady This's entertainment and Lady That's ministerial reunion. At first he was too shy to tell what the state of the case was, and took nobody into his confidence regarding his little tendre.

There he was riding through Queen Street, Mayfair, attired in splendid raiment: never missing the Park; actually going to places of worship in the neighbourhood; and frequenting the opera — a waste of time which one would never have expected in a youth of his nurture. At length a certain observer of human nature remarking his state, rightly conjectured that he must be in love, and taxed him with the soft impeachment — on which the young man, no doubt anxious to open his heart to some one, poured out all that story which has before been narrated; and told how he thought his passion cured, and how it was cured; but when he heard from Kew at Naples that the engagement was over between him and Miss Newcome, Clive found his own flame kindle again with new ardour. He was wild to see her. He dashed off from Naples instantly on receiving the news that she was free. He had been ten days in London without getting a glimpse of her. "That Mrs. Mackenzie bothers me so I hardly know where to turn," said poor Clive, "and poor little Rosey is made to write me a note about something twice a day. She's a good dear little thing — little Rosey — and I really had thought once of — of — oh, never mind that! Oh, Pen! I'm up another tree now! and a poor miserable young beggar I am!" In fact, Mr. Pendennis was installed as confidant, vice J. J. — absent on leave.

This is a part, which, especially for a few days, the present biographer has always liked well enough. For a while, at least, I think almost every man or woman is interesting when in love. If you know of two or three such affairs going on in any soiree to which you may be invited — is not the party straightway amusing? Yonder goes Augustus Tomkins, working his way through the rooms to that far corner where demure Miss Hopkins is seated, to whom the stupid grinning Bumpkins thinks he is making himself agreeable. Yonder sits Miss Fanny distraite, and yet trying to smile as the captain is talking his folly the parson his glib compliments. And see, her face lights up all of a sudden: her eyes beam with delight at the captain's stories, and at that delightful young clergyman likewise. It is because Augustus has appeared; their eyes only meet for one semi-second, but that is enough for Miss Fanny. Go on, captain, with your twaddle! — Proceed, my reverend friend, with your smirking commonplaces! In the last two minutes the world has changed for Miss Fanny. That moment has come for which she has been fidgeting and longing and scheming all day! How different an interest, I say, has a meeting of people for a philosopher who knows of a few such little secrets, to that which your vulgar looker-on feels who comes but to eat the ices, and stare at the ladies' dresses and beauty! There are two frames of mind under which London society is bearable to a man — to be an actor in one of those sentimental performances above hinted at; or to be a spectator and watch it. But as for the mere dessus de cartes — would not an arm-chair and the dullest of books be better than that dull game?

So I not only became Clive's confidant in this affair, but took a pleasure in extracting the young fellow's secrets from him, or rather in encouraging him to pour them forth. Thus was the great part of the previous tale revealed to me: thus Jack Belsize's misadventures, of the first part of which we had only heard in London (and whither he returned presently to be reconciled to his father, after his elder brother's death). Thus my Lord Kew's secret history came into my possession; let

us hope for the public's future delectation, and the chronicler's private advantage. And many a night until daylight did appear has poor Clive stamped his chamber or my own, pouring his story out to me, his griefs and raptures; recalling, in his wild young way, recollections of Ethel's sayings and doings; uttering descriptions of her beauty, and raging against the cruelty which she exhibited towards him.

As soon as the new confidant heard the name of the young lover's charmer, to do Mr. Pendennis justice, he endeavoured to fling as much cold water upon Clive's flame as a small private engine could be brought to pour on such a conflagration. "Miss Newcome! my dear Clive," says the confidant, "do you know what you are aspiring to? For the last three months Miss Newcome has been the greatest lioness in London: the reigning beauty winning the horse: the first favourite out of the whole Belgravian harem. No young woman of this year has come near her: those of past seasons she has distanced and utterly put to shame. Miss Blackcap, Lady Blanch Blackcap's daughter, was (as perhaps you are not aware) considered by her mamma the great beauty of last season; and it was considered rather shabby of the young Marquis of Farintosh to leave town without offering to change Miss Blackcap's name. Heaven bless you! this year Farintosh will not look at Miss Blackcap! He finds people at home when (ha! I see you wince, my suffering innocent!)—when he calls in Queen Street; yes, and Lady Kew, who is one of the cleverest women in England, will listen for hours to Lord Farintosh's conversation; than whom the Rotten Row of Hyde Park cannot show a greater booby. Miss Blackcap may retire, like Jephthah's daughter, for all Farintosh will relieve her. Then, my dear fellow, there were, as possibly you do not know, Lady Hermengilde and Lady Yseult, Lady Rackstraw's lovely twins, whose appearance created such a sensation at Lady Hautbois' first — was it her first or was it her second? — yes, it was her second — breakfast. Whom weren't they going to marry? Crackthorpe as mad, they said, about both. — Bustington, Sir John Fobsby, the young Baronet with the immense Northern property — the Bishop of Windsor was actually said to be smitten with one of them, but did not like to offer, as her present M— y, like Qu — n El-z-b-th of gracious memory, is said to object to bishops, as bishops, marrying. Where is Bustington? Where is Crackthorpe? Where is Fobsby, the young Baronet of the North? My dear fellow, when those two girls come into a room now, they make no more sensation than you or I. Miss Newcome has carried their admirers away from them: Fobsby has actually, it is said, proposed for her: and the real reason of that affair between Lord Bustington and Captain Crackthorpe of the Royal Horse Guards Green, was a speech of Bustington's, hinting that Miss Newcome had not behaved well in throwing Lord Kew over. Don't you know what old Lady Kew will do with this girl, Clive? She will marry Miss Newcome to the best man. If a richer and better parti than Lord Farintosh presents himself — then it will be Farintosh's turn to find that Lady Kew is not at home. Is there any young man in the Peerage unmarried and richer than Farintosh? I forget. Why does not some one publish a list of the young male nobility and baronetage, their names, weights, and probable fortunes? I don't mean for the matrons of Mayfair — they have the list by heart and study it in secret — but for young men in the world; so that they may know what their chances are, and who naturally has the pull over them. Let me see — there is young Lord Gaunt, who will have a great fortune, and is desirable because you know his father is locked up — but he is only ten years old — no — they can scarcely bring him forward as Farintosh's rival.

"You look astonished, my poor boy? You think it is wicked in me to talk in this brutal way about bargain and sale; and say that your heart's darling is, at this minute, being paced up and down the Mayfair market to be taken away by the best bidder. Can you count purses with Sultan Farintosh? Can you compete even with Sir John Fobsby of the North? What I say is wicked and worldly, is it? So it is; but it is true, as true as Tattersall's — as true as Circassia or Virginia. Don't you know that the Circassian girls are proud of their bringing up, and take rank according to the prices which they fetch? And you go and buy yourself some new clothes, and a fifty-pound horse, and put a penny rose in your button-hole, and ride past her window, and think to win this prize? Oh, you idiot! A penny rosebud! Put money in your purse. A fifty-pound hack when a butcher rides as good a one! — Put money in your purse. A brave young heart, all courage and love and honour! Put money in thy purse — t'other coin don't pass in the market — at least, where old Lady Kew has the stall."

By these remonstrances, playful though serious, Clive's adviser sought to teach him wisdom about his love affair; and the advice was received as advice upon those occasions usually is.

After calling thrice and writing to Miss Newcome, there came a little note from that young lady, saying, "Dear Clive — We were so sorry we were out when you called. We shall be at home tomorrow at lunch, when Lady Kew hopes you will come, and see yours ever, E. N."

Clive went — poor Clive! He had the satisfaction of shaking Ethel's hand and a finger of Lady Kew; of eating a mutton-chop in Ethel's presence; of conversing about the state of art at Rome with Lady Kew, and describing the last works of

Gibson and Macdonald. The visit lasted but for half an hour. Not for one minute was Clive allowed to see Ethel alone. At three o'clock Lady Kew's carriage was announced, and our young gentleman rose to take his leave, and had the pleasure of seeing the most noble Peer, Marquis of Farintosh and Earl of Rossmont, descend from his lordship's brougham and enter at Lady Kew's door, followed by a domestic bearing a small stack of flowers from Covent Garden.

It befell that the good-natured Lady Fareham had a ball in these days; and meeting Clive in the Park, her lord invited him to the entertainment. Mr. Pendennis had also the honour of a card. Accordingly Clive took me up at Bays's, and we proceeded to the ball together.

The lady of the house, smiling upon all her guests, welcomed with particular kindness her young friend from Rome. "Are you related to the Miss Newcome, Lady Anne Newcome's daughter? Her cousin? She will be here to-night." Very likely Lady Fareham did not see Clive wince and blush at this announcement, her ladyship having to occupy herself with a thousand other people. Clive found a dozen of his Roman friends in the room, ladies young and middle-aged, plain and handsome, all glad to see his kind face. The house was splendid; the ladies magnificently dressed; the ball beautiful, though it appeared a little dull until that event took place whereof we treated two pages back (in the allegory of Mr. Tomkins and Miss Hopkins), and Lady Kew and her granddaughter made their appearance.

That old woman, who began to look more and more like the wicked fairy of the stories, who is not invited to the Princess's Christening Feast, had this advantage over her likeness, that she was invited everywhere; though how she, at her age, could fly about to so many parties, unless she was a fairy, no one could say. Behind the fairy, up the marble stairs, came the most noble Farintosh, with that vacuous leer which distinguishes his lordship. Ethel seemed to be carrying the stack of flowers which the Marquis had sent to her. The noble Bustington (Viscount Bustington, I need scarcely tell the reader, is the heir of the house of Podbury), the Baronet of the North, the gallant Crackthorpe, the first men in town, in a word, gathered round the young beauty, forming her court; and little Dick Hitchin, who goes everywhere, you may be sure was near her with a compliment and a smile. Ere this arrival, the twins had been giving themselves great airs in the room — the poor twins! when Ethel appeared they sank into shuddering insignificance, and had to put up with the conversation and attentions of second-rate men, belonging to second-rate clubs in heavy dragoon regiments. One of them actually walked with a dancing barrister; but he was related to a duke, and it was expected the Lord Chancellor would give him something very good.

Before he saw Ethel, Clive vowed he was aware of her. Indeed, had not Lady Fareham told him Miss Newcome was coming? Ethel, on the contrary, not expecting him, or not having the prescience of love, exhibited signs of surprise when she beheld him, her eyebrows arching, her eyes darting looks of pleasure. When grandmamma happened to be in another room, she beckoned Clive to her, dismissing Crackthorpe and Fobsby, Farintosh and Bustington, the amorous youth who around her bowed, and summoning Mr. Clive to an audience with the air of a young princess.

And so she was a princess; and this the region of her special dominion. The wittiest and handsomest, she deserved to reign in such a place, by right of merit and by general election. Clive felt her superiority, and his own shortcomings: he came up to her as to a superior person. Perhaps she was not sorry to let him see how she ordered away grantees and splendid Bustingtons, informing them, with a superb manner, that she wished to speak to her cousin — that handsome young man with the light moustache yonder.

"Do you know many people? This is your first appearance in society? Shall I introduce you to some nice girls to dance with?" What very pretty buttons!"

"Is that what you wanted to say?" asked Clive, rather bewildered.

"What does one say at a ball? One talks conversation suited to the place. If I were to say to Captain Crackthorpe, 'What pretty buttons!' he would be delighted. But you — you have a soul above buttons, I suppose."

"Being, as you say, a stranger in this sort of society, you see I am not accustomed to — to the exceeding brilliancy of its conversation," said Clive.

"What! you want to go away, and we haven't seen each other for near a year!" cries Ethel, in quite a natural voice. "Sir John Fobsby, I'm very sorry — but do let me off this dance. I have just met my cousin, whom I have not seen for a whole year, and I want to talk to him."

"It was not my fault that you did not see me sooner. I wrote to you that I only got your letter a month ago. You never answered the second I wrote you from Rome. Your letter lay there at the post ever so long, and was forwarded to me at

Naples.”

“Where?” asked Ethel.

“I saw Lord Kew there.” Ethel was smiling with all her might, and kissing her hand to the twins, who passed at that moment with their mamma. “Oh, indeed, you saw — how do you do? — Lord Kew.”

“And, having seen him, I came over to England,” said Clive.

Ethel looked at him, gravely. “What am I to understand by that, Clive? — You came over because it was very hot at Naples, and because you wanted to see your friends here, n’est-ce pas? How glad mamma was to see you! You know she loves you as if you were her own son.”

“What, as much as that angel, Barnes!” cries Clive, bitterly; “impossible.”

Ethel looked once more. Her present mood and desire was to treat Clive as a chit, as a young fellow without consequence — a thirteenth younger brother. But in his looks and behaviour there was that which seemed to say not too many liberties were to be taken with him.

“Why weren’t you here a month sooner, and you might have seen the marriage? It was a very pretty thing. Everybody was there. Clara, and so did Barnes really, looked quite handsome.”

“It must have been beautiful,” continued Clive; “quite a touching sight, I am sure. Poor Charles Belsize could not be present because his brother was dead; and —”

“And what else, pray, Mr. Newcome!” cries Miss, in great wrath, her pink nostrils beginning to quiver. “I did not think, really, that when we met after so many months, I was to be insulted; yes, insulted, by the mention of that name.”

“I most humbly ask pardon,” said Clive, with a grave bow. “Heaven forbid that I should wound your sensibility, Ethel! It is, as you say, my first appearance in society. I talk about things or persons that I should not mention. I should talk about buttons, should I? which you were good enough to tell me was the proper subject of conversation. Mayn’t I even speak of connexions of the family? Mr. Belsize, through this marriage, has the honour of being connected with you; and even I, in a remote degree, may boast of a sort of an ever — so — distant cousinship with him. What an honour for me!”

“Pray, what is the meaning of all this?” cries Miss Ethel, surprised, and perhaps alarmed. Indeed, Clive scarcely knew. He had been chafing all the while he talked with her; smothering anger as he saw the young men round about her; revolting against himself for the very humility of his obedience, and angry at the eagerness and delight with which he had come at her call.

“The meaning is, Ethel” — he broke out, seizing the opportunity — “that when a man comes a thousand miles to see you, and shake your hand, you should give it him a little more cordially than you choose to do to me; that when a kinsman knocks at your door, time after time, you should try and admit him; and that when you meet him you should treat him like an old friend not as you treated me when my Lady Kew vouchsafed to give me admittance; not as you treat these fools that are fribbling round about you,” cries Mr. Clive, in a great rage, folding his arms, and glaring round on a number of the most innocent young swells; and he continued looking as if he would like to knock a dozen of their heads together. “Am I keeping Miss Newcome’s admirers from her?”

“That is not for me to say,” she said, quite gently. He was; but to see him angry did not displease Miss Newcome.

“That young man who came for you just now,” Clive went on — “that Sir John —”

“Are you angry with me because I sent him away?” said Ethel, putting out a hand. “Hark! there is the music. Take me in and waltz with me. Don’t you know it is not my door at which you knocked?” she said, looking up into his face as simply and kindly as of old. She whirled round the dancing-room with him in triumph, the other beauties dwindling before her: she looked more and more beautiful with each rapid move of the waltz, her colour heightening and her eyes seeming to brighten. Not till the music stopped did she sink down on a seat, panting, and smiling radiant — as many many hundred years ago I remember to have seen Taglioni after a conquering pas seul. She nodded a “thank you” to Clive. It seemed that there was a perfect reconciliation. Lady Kew came in just at the end of the dance, scowling when she beheld Ethel’s partner; but in reply to her remonstrances, Ethel shrugged her fair shoulders, with a look which seemed to say *je le veux*, gave an arm to her grandmother, and walked off, saucily protecting her.

Clive’s friend had been looking on observingly and curiously as the scene between them had taken place, and at the dance with which the reconciliation had been celebrated. I must tell you that this arch young creature had formed the

object of my observation for some months past, and that I watched her as I have watched a beautiful panther at the Zoological Gardens, so bright of eye, so sleek of coat, so slim in form, so sweet and agile in her spring.

A more brilliant young coquette than Miss Newcome, in her second season, these eyes never looked upon, that is the truth. In her first year, being engaged to Lord Kew, she was perhaps a little more reserved and quiet. Besides, her mother went out with her that first season, to whom Miss Newcome except for a little occasional flightiness, was invariably obedient and ready to come to call. But when Lady Kew appeared as her duenna, the girl's delight seemed to be to plague the old lady, and she would dance with the very youngest sons merely to put grandmamma in a passion. In this way poor young Cubley (who has two hundred a year of allowance, besides eighty, and an annual rise of five in the Treasury) actually thought that Ethel was in love with him, and consulted with the young men in his room in Downing Street, whether two hundred and eighty a year, with five pound more next year, would be enough for them to keep house on? Young Tandy of the Temple, Lord Skibbereen's younger son, who sate in the House for some time on the Irish Catholic side, was also deeply smitten, and many a night in our walks home from the parties at the other end of the town, would entertain me with his admiration and passion for her.

"If you have such a passion for her, why not propose?" it was asked of Mr. Tandy.

"Propose! propose to a Russian Archduchess," cries young Tandy. "She's beautiful, she's delightful, she's witty. I have never seen anything like her eyes; they send me wild — wild," says Tandy —(slapping his waistcoat under Temple Bar) —"but a more audacious little flirt never existed since the days of Cleopatra."

With this opinion likewise in my mind, I had been looking on during Clive's proceedings with Miss Ethel — not, I say, without admiration of the young lady who was leading him such a dance. The waltz over, I congratulated him on his own performance. His Continental practice had greatly improved him. "And as for your partner, it is delightful to see her," I went on. "I always like to be by when Miss Newcome dances. I had sooner see her than anybody since Taglioni. Look at her now, with her neck up, and her little foot out, just as she is preparing to start! Happy Lord Bustington!"

"You are angry with her because she cut you," growls Clive. "You know you said she cut you, or forgot you; and your vanity's wounded, that is why you are so satirical."

"How can Miss Newcome remember all the men who are presented to her?" says the other. "Last year she talked to me because she wanted to know about you. This year she doesn't talk: because I suppose she doesn't want to know about you any more."

"Hang it. Do — on't, Pen," cries Clive, as a schoolboy cries out to another not to hit him.

"She does not pretend to observe: and is in full conversation with the amiable Bustington. Delicious interchange of noble thoughts! But she is observing us talking, and knows that we are talking about her. If ever you marry her, Clive, which is absurd, I shall lose you for a friend. You will infallibly tell her what I think of her: and she will order you to give me up." Clive had gone off in a brown study, as his interlocutor continued. "Yes, she is a flirt. She can't help her nature. She tries to vanquish every one who comes near her. She is a little out of breath from waltzing, and so she pretends to be listening to poor Bustington, who is out of breath too, but puffs out his best in order to make himself agreeable, with what a pretty air she appears to listen! Her eyes actually seem to brighten."

"What?" says Clive, with a start.

I could not comprehend the meaning of the start: nor did I care much to know: supposing that the young man was waking up from some lover's reverie: and the evening sped away, Clive not quitting the ball until Miss Newcome and the Countess of Kew had departed. No further communication appeared to take place between the cousins that evening. I think it was Captain Crackthorpe who gave the young lady an arm into her carriage; Sir John Fobsby having the happiness to conduct the old Countess, and carrying the pink bag for the shawls, wrappers, etc., on which her ladyship's coronet and initials are emblazoned. Clive may have made a movement as if to step forward, but a single finger from Miss Newcome warned him back.

Clive and his two friends in Lamb Court had made an engagement for the next Saturday to dine at Greenwich; but on the morning of that day there came a note from him to say that he thought of going down to see his aunt, Miss Honeyman, and begged to recall his promise to us. Saturday is a holiday with gentlemen of our profession. We had invited F. Bayham, Esquire, and promised ourselves a merry evening, and were unwilling to baulk ourselves of the pleasure on account of the absence of our young Roman. So we three went to London Bridge Station at an early hour, proposing to breathe the fresh

air of Greenwich Park before dinner. And, at London Bridge, by the most singular coincidence, Lady Kew's carriage drove up to the Brighton entrance, and Miss Ethel and her maid stepped out of the brougham.

When Miss Newcome and her maid entered the Brighton station, did Mr. Clive, by another singular coincidence, happen also to be there? What more natural and dutiful than that he should go and see his aunt, Miss Honeyman? What more proper than that Miss Ethel should pass the Saturday and Sunday with her sick father; and take a couple of wholesome nights' rest after those five weary past evenings, for each of which we may reckon a couple of soirees and a ball? And that relations should travel together, the young lady being protected by her *femme-de-chambre*; that surely, as every one must allow, was perfectly right and proper.

That a biographer should profess to know everything which passes, even in a confidential talk in a first-class carriage between two lovers, seems perfectly absurd; not that grave historians do not pretend to the same wonderful degree of knowledge — reporting meetings of the most occult of conspirators; private interviews between monarchs and their ministers, even the secret thoughts and motives of those personages, which possibly the persons themselves did not know; — all for which the present writer will pledge his known character for veracity is, that on a certain day certain parties had a conversation, of which the upshot was so-and-so. He guesses, of course, at a great deal of what took place; knowing the characters, and being informed at some time of their meeting. You do not suppose that I bribed the *femme-de-chambre*, or that those two City gents, who sate in the same carriage with our young friends, and could not hear a word they said, reported their talk to me? If Clive and Ethel had had a coupe to themselves, I would yet boldly tell what took place, but the coupe was taken by other three young City gents who smoked the whole way.

"Well, then," the bonnet begins close up to the hat, "tell me, sir, is it true that you were so very much epris of the Miss Freemans at Rome; and that afterwards you were so wonderfully attentive to the third Miss Baliol? Did you draw her portrait? You know you drew her portrait. You painters always pretend to admire girls with auburn hair, because Titian and Raphael painted it. Has the Fornarina red hair? Why, we are at Croydon, I declare!"

"The Fornarina"— the hat replies to the bonnet, "if that picture at the Borghese Palace be an original, or a likeness of her — is not a handsome woman, with vulgar eyes and mouth, and altogether a most mahogany-coloured person. She is so plain, in fact, I think that very likely it is the real woman; for it is with their own fancies that men fall in love — or rather every woman is handsome to the lover. You know how old Helen must have been."

"I don't know any such thing, or anything about her. Who was Helen?" asks the bonnet; and indeed she did not know.

"It's a long story, and such an old scandal now, that there is no use in repeating it," says Clive.

"You only talk about Helen because you wish to turn away the conversation from Miss Freeman," cries the young lady — "from Miss Baliol, I mean."

"We will talk about whichever you please. Which shall we begin to pull to pieces?" says Clive. You see, to be in this carriage — to be actually with her — to be looking into those wonderful lucid eyes — to see her sweet mouth dimpling, and hear her sweet voice ringing with its delicious laughter — to have that hour and a half his own, in spite of all the world-dragons, grandmothers, convenances, the future — made the young fellow so happy, filled his whole frame and spirit with a delight so keen, that no wonder he was gay, and brisk, and lively.

"And so you knew of my goings-on?" he asked. O me! they were at Reigate by this time; there was Gatton Park flying before them on the wings of the wind.

"I know of a number of things," says the bonnet, nodding with ambrosial curls.

"And you would not answer the second letter I wrote to you?"

"We were in great perplexity. One cannot be always answering young gentlemen's letters. I had considerable doubt about answering a note I got from Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square," says the lady's chapeau. "No, Clive, we must not write to one another," she continued more gravely, "or only very, very seldom. Nay, my meeting you here today is by the merest chance, I am sure; for when I mentioned at Lady Fareham's the other evening that I was going to see papa at Brighton today, I never for one moment thought of seeing you in the train. But as you are here, it can't be helped; and I may as well tell you that there are obstacles."

"What, other obstacles?" Clive gasped out.

"Nonsense — you silly boy! No other obstacles but those which always have existed, and must. When we parted — that is, when you left us at Baden, you knew it was for the best. You had your profession to follow, and could not go on idling

about — about a family of sick people and children. Every man has his profession, and you yours, as you would have it. We are so nearly allied that we may — we may like each other like brother and sister almost. I don't know what Barnes would say if he heard me! Wherever you and your father are, how can I ever think of you but — but you know how? I always shall, always. There are certain feelings we have which I hope never can change; though, if you please, about them I intend never to speak any more. Neither you nor I can alter our conditions, but must make the best of them. You shall be a fine clever painter; and I — who knows what will happen to me? I know what is going to happen today; I am going to see papa and mamma, and be as happy as I can till Monday morning."

"I know what I wish would happen now," said Clive — they were going screaming through a tunnel.

"What?" said the bonnet in the darkness: and the engine was roaring so loudly, that he was obliged to put his head quite close to say —

"I wish the tunnel would fall in and close upon us, or that we might travel on for ever and ever."

Here there was a great jar of the carriage, and the lady's-maid, and I think Miss Ethel, gave a shriek. The lamp above was so dim that the carriage was almost totally dark. No wonder the lady's-maid was frightened! but the daylight came streaming in, and all poor Clive's wishes of rolling and rolling on for ever were put an end to by the implacable sun in a minute.

Ah, why was it the quick train? Suppose it had been the parliamentary train? — even that too would have come to an end. They came and said, "Tickets, please," and Clive held out the three of their party — his, and Ethel's, and her maid's. I think for such a ride as that he was right to give up Greenwich. Mr. Kuhn was in waiting with a carriage for Miss Ethel. She shook hands with Clive, returning his pressure.

"I may come and see you?" he said.

"You may come and see mamma — yes."

"And where are you staying?"

"Bless my soul — they were staying at Miss Honeyman's!" Clive burst into a laugh. Why, he was going there too! Of course Aunt Honeyman had no room for him, her house being quite full with the other Newcomes.

It was a most curious coincidence their meeting; but altogether Lady Anne thought it was best to say nothing about the circumstance to grandmamma. I myself am puzzled to say which would have been the better course to pursue under the circumstances; there were so many courses open. As they had gone so far, should they go on farther together? Suppose they were going to the same house at Brighton, oughtn't they to have gone in the same carriage, with Kuhn and the maid of course? Suppose they met by chance at the station, ought they to have travelled in separate carriages? I ask any gentleman and father of a family, when he was immensely smitten with his present wife, Mrs. Brown, if he had met her travelling with her maid, in the mail, when there was a vacant place, what would he himself have done?



CHAPTER XLII

INJURED INNOCENCE

From Clive Newcome, Esq., to Lieut.-Col. Newcome, C.B.
"Brighton, June 12, 18 —.

"My Dearest Father — As the weather was growing very hot at Naples, and you wished I should come to England to see Mr. Binnie, I came accordingly, and have been here three weeks, and write to you from Aunt Honeyman's parlour at Brighton, where you ate your last dinner before embarking for India. I found your splendid remittance calling in Fog Court, and have invested a part of the sum in a good horse to ride, upon which I take my diversion with other young dandies in the Park. Florac is in England, but he has no need of your kindness. Only think! he is Prince de Moncontour now, the second title of the Duc d'Ivry's family; and M. le Comte de Florac is Duc d'Ivry in consequence of the demise of t'other old gentleman. I believe the late duke's wife shortened his life. Oh, what a woman! She caused a duel between Lord Kew and a Frenchman, which has in its turn occasioned all sorts of evil and division in families, as you shall hear.

"In the first place, in consequence of the duel and of incompatibility of temper, the match between Kew and E. N. has been broken off. I met Lord Kew at Naples with his mother and brother, nice quiet people as you would like them. Kew's wound and subsequent illness have altered him a good deal. He has become much more serious than he used to be; not ludicrously so at all, but he says he thinks his past life has been useless and even criminal, and he wishes to change it. He has sold his horses, and sown his wild oats. He has turned quite a sober quiet gentleman.

"At our meeting he told me of what had happened between him and Ethel, of whom he spoke most kindly and generously, but avowing his opinion that they never could have been happy in married life. And now I think my dear old father will see that there may be another reason besides my desire to see Mr. Binnie, which has brought me tumbling back to England again. If need be to speak, I never shall have, I hope, any secrets from you. I have not said much about one which has given me the deuce's disquiet for ten months past, because there was no good in talking about it, or vexing you needlessly with reports of my griefs and woes.

"Well, when we were at Baden in September last, and E. and I wrote those letters in common to you, I dare say you can fancy what my feelings might have been towards such a beautiful young creature, who has a hundred faults, for which I love her just as much as for the good that is in her. I became dreadfully smitten indeed, and knowing that she was engaged to Lord Kew, I did as you told me you did once when the enemy was too strong for you — I ran away. I had a bad time of it for two or three months. At Rome, however, I began to take matters more easily, my naturally fine appetite returned, and at the end of the season I found myself uncommonly happy in the society of the Miss Baliols and the Miss Freemans; but when Kew told me at Naples of what had happened, there was straightway a fresh eruption in my heart, and I was fool enough to come almost without sleep to London in order to catch a glimpse of the bright eyes of E. N.

"She is now in this very house upstairs with one aunt, whilst the other lets lodgings to her. I have seen her but very seldom indeed since I came to London, where Sir Brian and Lady Anne do not pass the season, and Ethel goes about to a dozen parties every week with old Lady Kew, who neither loves you nor me. Hearing E. say she was coming down to her parents at Brighton, I made so bold as to waylay her at the train (though I didn't tell her that I passed three hours in the waiting-room); and we made the journey together, and she was very kind and beautiful; and though I suppose I might just as well ask the Royal Princess to have me, I can't help hoping and longing and hankering after her. And Aunt Honeyman must have found out that I am fond of her, for the old lady has received me with a scolding. Uncle Charles seems to be in very good condition again. I saw him in full clerical feather — at Madame de Moncontour's, a good-natured body who drops her h's, though Florac is not aware of their absence. Pendennis and Warrington, I know, would send you their regards. Pen is conceited, but much kinder in reality than he has the air of being. Fred Bayham is doing well, and prospering in his mysterious way.

"Mr. Binnie is not looking at all well: and Mrs. Mack — well, as I know you never attack a lady behind her lovely back, I won't say a word of Mrs. Mack — but she has taken possession of Uncle James, and seems to me to weigh upon him somehow. Rosey is as pretty and good-natured as ever, and has learned two new songs; but you see, with my sentiments in

another quarter, I feel as it were guilty and awkward in company of Rosey and her mamma. They have become the very greatest friends with Bryanstone Square, and Mrs. Mack is always citing Aunt Hobson as the most superior of women, in which opinion, I daresay, Aunt Hobson concurs.

“Good-bye, my dearest father; my sheet is full; I wish I could put my arm in yours and pace up and down the pier with you, and tell you more and more. But you know enough now, and that I am your affectionate son always, C. N.”

In fact, when Mr. Clive appeared at Steyne Gardens stepping out of the fly, and handing Miss Ethel thence, Miss Honeyman of course was very glad to see her nephew, and saluted him with a little embrace to show her sense of pleasure at his visit. But the next day, being Sunday, when Clive, with a most engaging smile on his countenance, walked over to breakfast from his hotel, Miss Honeyman would scarcely speak to him during the meal, looked out at him very haughtily from under her Sunday cap, and received his stories about Italy with “Oh! ah! indeed!” in a very unkind manner. And when breakfast was over, and she had done washing her age chins, she fluttered up to Clive with such an agitation of plumage, redness of craw, and anger of manner, as a maternal hen shows if she has reason to think you menace her chickens. She fluttered up to Clive, I say, and cried out, “Not in this house, Clive — not in this house, I beg you to understand that!”

Clive, looking amazed, said, “Certainly not, ma’am; I never did do it in the house, as I know you don’t like it. I was going into the Square.” The young man meaning that he was about to smoke, and conjecturing that his aunt’s anger applied to that practice.

“You know very well what I mean, sir! Don’t try to turn me off in that highy-tighty way. My dinner today is at half-past one. You can dine or not as you like,” and the old lady flounced out of the room.

Poor Clive stood rolling his cigar in sad perplexity of spirit, until Mrs. Honeyman’s servant Hannah entered, who, for her part, grinned and looked particularly sly. “In the name of goodness, Hannah, what is the row about?” cries Mr. Clive. “What is my aunt scolding at? What are you grinning at, you old Cheshire cat?”

“Git long, Master Clive,” says Hannah, patting the cloth.

“Get along! why get along, and where am I to get along to?”

“Did ‘ee do ut really now, Master Clive?” cries Mrs. Honeyman’s attendant, grinning with the utmost good-humour. “Well, she be as pretty a young lady as ever I saw; and as I told my missis, ‘Miss Martha,’ says I, ‘there’s a pair on ‘em.’ Though missis was mortal angry to be sure. She never could bear it.”

“Bear what? you old goose!” cries Clive, who by these playful names had been wont to designate Hannah these twenty years past.

“A young gentleman and a young lady a kissing of each other in the railway coach,” says Hannah, jerking up with her finger to the ceiling, as much as to say, “There she is! Lar, she be a pretty young creature, that she be! and so I told Miss Martha.” Thus differently had the news which had come to them on the previous night affected the old lady and her maid.

The news was, that Miss Newcome’s maid (a giddy thing from the county, who had not even learned as yet to hold her tongue) had announced with giggling delight to Lady Anne’s maid, who was taking tea with Mrs. Hicks, that Mr. Clive had given Miss Ethel a kiss in the tunnel, and she supposed it was a match. This intelligence Hannah Hicks took to her mistress, of whose angry behaviour to Clive the next morning you may now understand the cause.

Clive did not know whether to laugh or to be in a rage. He swore that he was as innocent of all intention of kissing Miss Ethel as of embracing Queen Elizabeth. He was shocked to think of his cousin, walking above, fancy-free in maiden meditation, whilst this conversation regarding her was carried on below. How could he face her, or her mother, or even her maid, now he had cognisance of this naughty calumny? “Of course Hannah had contradicted it?” “Of course I have a done no such indeed,” replied Master Clive’s old friend; “of course I have set ‘em down a bit; for when little Trimmer said it, and she supposed it was all settled between you, seeing how it had been a going on in foreign parts last year, Mrs. Pincott says, ‘Hold your silly tongue, Trimmer,’ she says; ‘Miss Ethel marry a painter, indeed, Trimmer!’ says she, ‘while she has refused to be a Countess,’ she says; ‘and can be a Marchioness any day, and will be a Marchioness. Marry a painter, indeed!’ Mrs. Pincott says; ‘Trimmer, I’m surprised at your impidence.’ So, my dear, I got angry at that,” Clive’s champion continued, “and says I, if my young master ain’t good enough for any young lady in this world, says I, I’d like you to show her to me: and if his dear father, the Colonel, says I, ain’t as good as your old gentleman upstairs, says I, who has gruel and dines upon doctor’s stuff, the Mrs. Pincott, says I, my name isn’t what it is, says I. Those were my very words, Master Clive, my dear; and then Mrs. Pincott says, Mrs. Hicks, she says, you don’t understand society, she says; you don’t understand

society, he! he!" and the country lady, with considerable humour, gave an imitation of the town lady's manner.

At this juncture Miss Honeyman re-entered the parlour, arrayed in her Sunday bonnet, her stiff and spotless collar, her Cashmere shawl, and Agra brooch, and carrying her Bible and Prayer-Book each stitched in its neat cover of brown silk. "Don't stay chattering here, you idle woman," she cried to her attendant with extreme asperity. "And you, sir, if you wish to smoke your cigar, you had best walk down to the cliff where the Cockneys are!" she added, glowering at Clive.

"Now I understand it all," Clive said, trying to deprecate her anger. "My dear good aunt, it's a most absurd mistake; upon my honour, Miss Ethel is as innocent as you are."

"Innocent or not, this house is not intended for assignations, Clive! As long as Sir Brian Newcome lodges here, you will be pleased to keep away from it, sir; and though I don't approve of Sunday travelling, I think the very best thing you can do is to put yourself in the train and go back to London."

And now, young people, who read my moral pages, you will see how highly imprudent it is to sit with your cousins in railway carriages; and how, though you may not mean the slightest harm in the world, a great deal may be attributed to you; and how, when you think you are managing your little absurd love-affairs ever so quietly, Jeames and Betsy in the servants'-hall are very likely talking about them, and you are putting yourself in the power of those menials. If the perusal of these lines has rendered one single young couple uncomfortable, surely my amiable end is answered, and I have written not altogether in vain.

Clive was going away, innocent though he was, yet quivering under his aunt's reproof, and so put out of countenance that he had not even thought of lighting the great cigar which he stuck into his foolish mouth; when a shout of "Clive! Clive!" from half a dozen little voices roused him, and presently as many little Newcomes came toddling down the stairs, and this one clung round his knees, and that at the skirts of his coat, and another took his hand and said, he must come and walk with them on the beach.

So away went Clive to walk with his cousins, and then to see his old friend Miss Cann, with whom and the elder children he walked to church, and issuing thence greeted Lady Anne and Ethel (who had also attended the service) in the most natural way in the world.

While engaged in talking with these, Miss Honeyman came out of the sacred edifice, crisp and stately in the famous Agra brooch and Cashmere shawls. The good-natured Lady Anne had a smile and a kind word for her as for everybody. Clive went up to his maternal aunt to offer his arm. "You must give him up to us for dinner, Miss Honeyman, if you please to be so very kind. He was so good-natured in escorting Ethel down," Lady Anne said.

"Hm! my lady," says Miss Honeyman, perking her head up in her collar. Clive did not know whether to laugh or not, but a fine blush illuminated his countenance. As for Ethel, she was and looked perfectly unconscious. So, rustling in her stiff black silk, Martha Honeyman walked with her nephew silent by the shore of the much-sounding sea. The idea of courtship, of osculatory processes, of marrying and giving in marriage, made this elderly virgin chafe and fume, she never having, at any period of her life, indulged in any such ideas or practices, and being angry against them, as childless wives will sometimes be angry and testy against matrons with their prattle about their nurseries. Now, Miss Cann was a different sort of spinster, and loved a bit of sentiment with all her heart from which I am led to conclude — but, pray, is this the history of Miss Cann or of the Newcomes?

All these Newcomes then entered into Miss Honeyman's house, where a number of little knives and forks were laid for them. Ethel was cold and thoughtful; Lady Anne was perfectly good-natured as her wont was. Sir Brian came in on the arm of his valet presently, wearing that look of extra neatness which invalids have, who have just been shaved and combed, and made ready by their attendants to receive company. He was voluble: though there was a perceptible change in his voice: he talked chiefly of matters which had occurred forty years ago, and especially of Clive's own father, when he was a boy, in a manner which interested the young man and Ethel. "He threw me down in a chaise — sad chap — always reading Orme's History of India — wanted marry Frenchwoman. He wondered Mrs. Newcome didn't leave Tom anything — 'pon my word, quite s'prise." The events of today, the House of Commons, the City, had little interest for him. All the children went up and shook him by the hand, with awe in their looks, and he patted their yellow heads vacantly and kindly. He asked Clive (several times) where he had been? and said he himself had had a slight 'tack — vay slight — was getting well ev'y day — strong as a horse — go back to Parliament d'rectly. And then he became a little peevish with Parker, his man, about his broth. The man retired, and came back presently, with profound bows and gravity, to tell Sir Brian dinner was ready, and

he went away quite briskly at this news, giving a couple of fingers to Clive before he disappeared into the upper apartments. Good-natured Lady Anne was as easy about this as about the other events of this world. In later days, with what a strange feeling we remember that last sight we have of the old friend; that nod of farewell, and shake of the hand, that last look of the face and figure as the door closes on him, or the coach drives away! So the roast mutton was ready, and all the children dined very heartily.

The infantile meal had not been long concluded, when servants announced “the Marquis of Farintosh;” and that nobleman made his appearance to pay his respects to Miss Newcome and Lady Anne. He brought the very last news of the very last party in London, where “Really, upon my honour, now, it was quite a stupid party, because Miss Newcome wasn’t there. It was now, really.”

Miss Newcome remarked, “If he said so upon his honour, of course she was satisfied.”

“As you weren’t there,” the young nobleman continued, “the Miss Rackstraws came out quite strong; really they did now, upon my honour. It was quite a quiet thing. Lady Merriborough hadn’t even got a new gown on. Lady Anne, you shirk London society this year, and we miss you: we expected you to give us two or three things this season; we did now, really. I said to Tufthunt, only yesterday, Why has not Lady Anne Newcome given anything? You know Tufthunt? They say he’s a clever fellow, and that — but he’s a low little beast, and I hate him.”

Lady Anne said, “Sir Brian’s bad state of health prevented her from going out this season, or receiving at home.”

“It don’t prevent your mother from going out, though,” continued my lord. “Upon my honour, I think unless she got two or three things every night, I think she’d die. Lady Kew’s like one of those horses, you know, that unless they go they drop.”

“Thank you for my mother,” said Lady Anne.

“She is, upon my honour. Last night I know she was at ever so many places. She dined at the Bloxams’, for I was there. Then she said she was going to sit with old Mrs. Crackthorpe, who has broke her collar-bone (that Crackthorpe in the Life Guards, her grandson, is a brute, and I hope she won’t leave him a shillin’); and then she came on to Lady Hawkstone’s, where I heard her say she had been at the — at the Flowerdales’, too. People begin to go to those Flowerdales’. Hanged — if I know where they won’t go next. Cotton-spinner, wasn’t he?”

“So were we, my lord,” says Miss Newcome.

“Oh, yes, I forgot! But you’re of an old family — very old family.”

“We can’t help it,” said Miss Ethel, archly. Indeed, she thought she was.

“Do you believe in the barber-surgeon?” asked Clive. And my lord looked at him with a noble curiosity, as much as to say, “Who the deuce was the barber-surgeon? and who the devil are you?”

“Why should we disown our family?” Miss Ethel said, simply. “In those early days I suppose people did — did all sorts of things, and it was not considered at all out of the way to be surgeon to William the Conqueror.”

“Edward the Confessor,” interposed Clive. “And it must be true, because I have seen a picture of the barber-surgeon, a friend of mine, M’Collop, did the picture, and I dare say it is for sale still”

Lady Anne said “she should be delighted to see it.” Lord Farintosh remembered that the M’Collop had the moor next to his in Argyleshire, but did not choose to commit himself with the stranger, and preferred looking at his own handsome face and admiring it in the glass until the last speaker had concluded his remarks.

As Clive did not offer any further conversation, but went back to a table, where he began to draw the barber-surgeon, Lord Farintosh resumed the delightful talk. “What infernal bad glasses these are in these Brighton lodging-houses! They make a man look quite green, really they do — and there’s nothing green in me, is there, Lady Anne?”

“But you look very unwell, Lord Farintosh; indeed you do,” Miss Newcome said, gravely. “I think late hours, and smoking, and going to that horrid Platt’s, where I dare say you go —”

“Go? Don’t I? But don’t call it horrid; really, now, don’t call it horrid!” cried the noble Marquis.

“Well — something has made you look far from well. You know how very well Lord Farintosh used to look, mamma — and to see him now, in only his second season — oh, it is melancholy!”

“God bless my soul, Miss Newcome! what do you mean? I think I look pretty well,” and the noble youth passed his hand through his hair. “It is a hard life, I know; that tearin’ about night after night, and sittin’ up till ever so much o’clock;

and then all these races, you know, comin' one after another — it's enough to knock up any fellow. I'll tell you what I'll do, Miss Newcome. I'll go down to Codlington, to my mother; I will, upon my honour, and lie quiet all July, and then I'll go to Scotland — and you shall see whether I don't look better next season."

"Do, Lord Farintosh!" said Ethel, greatly amused, as much, perhaps, at the young Marquis as at her cousin Clive, who sat whilst the other was speaking, fuming with rage, at his table.

"What are you doing, Clive?" she asks.

"I was trying to draw; Lord knows who — Lord Newcome, who was killed at the battle of Bosworth," said the artist, and the girl ran to look at the picture.

"Why, you have made him like Punch!" cries the young lady.

"It's a shame caricaturing one's own flesh and blood, isn't it?" asked Clive, gravely.

"What a droll, funny picture!" exclaims Lady Anne. "Isn't it capital, Lord Farintosh?"

"I dare say — I confess I don't understand that sort of thing," says his lordship. "Don't, upon my honour. There's Odo Carton, always making those caricatures — I don't understand 'em. You'll come up to town tomorrow, won't you? And you're goin' to Lady Hm's, and to Hm and Hm's, ain't you?" (The names of these aristocratic places of resort were quite inaudible.) "You mustn't let Miss Blackcap have it all her own way, you know, that you mustn't."

"She won't have it all her own way," says Miss Ethel. "Lord Farintosh, will you do me a favour? Lady Innishowan is your aunt?"

"Of course she is my aunt."

"Will you be so very good as to get a card for her party on Tuesday, for my cousin, Mr. Clive Newcome? Clive, please be introduced to the Marquis of Farintosh."

The young Marquis perfectly well recollected those mustachios and their wearer on a former night, though he had not thought fit to make any sign of recognition. "Anything you wish, Miss Newcome," he said; "delighted, I'm sure," and turning to Clive — In the army, I suppose?"

"I am an artist," says Clive, turning very red.

"Oh, really, I didn't know!" cries the nobleman; and my lord bursting out laughing presently as he was engaged in conversation with Miss Ethel on the balcony, Clive thought, very likely with justice, "He is making fun of my mustachios. Confound him! I should like to pitch him over into the street." But this was only a kind wish on Mr. Newcome's part; not followed out by any immediate fulfilment.

As the Marquis of Farintosh seemed inclined to prolong his visit, and his company was exceedingly disagreeable to Clive, the latter took his departure for an afternoon walk, consoled to think that he should have Ethel to himself at the evening's dinner, when Lady Anne would be occupied about Sir Brian, and would be sure to be putting the children to bed, and, in a word, would give him a quarter of an hour of delightful *tete-a-tete* with the beautiful Ethel.

Clive's disgust was considerable when he came to dinner at length, and found Lord Farintosh, likewise invited, and sprawling in the drawing-room. His hopes of a *tete-a-tete* were over. Ethel and Lady Anne and my lord talked, as all people will, about their mutual acquaintance: what parties were coming off, who was going to marry whom, and so forth. And as the persons about whom they conversed were in their own station of life, and belonged to the fashionable world, of which Clive had but a slight knowledge, he chose to fancy that his cousin was giving herself airs, and to feel sulky and uneasy during their dialogue.

Miss Newcome had faults of her own, and was worldly enough as perhaps the reader has begun to perceive; but in this instance no harm, sure, was to be attributed to her. If two gossips in Aunt Honeyman's parlour had talked over the affairs of Mr. Jones and Mr. Brown, Clive would not have been angry; but a young man of spirit not unfrequently mistakes his vanity for independence: and it is certain that nothing is more offensive to us of the middle class than to hear the names of great folks constantly introduced into conversation.

So Clive was silent and ate no dinner, to the alarm of Martha, who had put him to bed many a time, and always had a maternal eye over him. When he actually refused currant and raspberry tart, and custard, the chef d'oeuvre of Miss Honeyman, for which she had seen him absolutely cry in his childhood, the good Martha was alarmed.

"Law, Master Clive!" she said, "do 'ee eat some. Missis made it, you know she did;" and she insisted on bringing back

the tart to him.

Lady Anne and Ethel laughed at this eagerness on the worthy old woman's part. "Do 'ee eat some, Clive," says Ethel, imitating honest Mrs. Hicks, who had left the room.

"It's doosid good," remarked Lord Farintosh.

"Then do 'ee eat some more," said Miss Newcome: on which the young nobleman, holding out his plate, observed with much affability, that the cook of the lodgings was really a stunner for tarts.

"The cook! dear me, it's not the cook!" cries Miss Ethel. "Don't you remember the princess in the Arabian Nights, who was such a stunner for tarts, Lord Farintosh?"

Lord Farintosh couldn't say that he did.

"Well, I thought not; but there was a princess in Arabia or China, or somewhere, who made such delicious tarts and custards that nobody's could compare with them; and there is an old lady in Brighton who has the same wonderful talent. She is the mistress of this house."

"And she is my aunt, at your lordship's service," said Mr. Clive, with great dignity.

"Upon my honour! did you make 'em, Lady Anne?" asked my lord.

"The Queen of Hearts made tarts!" cried out Miss Newcome, rather eagerly, and blushing somewhat.

"My good old aunt, Miss Honeyman, made this one," Clive would go on to say.

"Mr. Honeyman's sister, the preacher, you know, where we go on Sunday," Miss Ethel interposed.

"The Honeyman pedigree is not a matter of very great importance," Lady Anne remarked gently. "Kuhn, will you have the goodness to take away these things? When did you hear of Colonel Newcome, Clive?"

An air of deep bewilderment and perplexity had spread over Lord Farintosh's fine countenance whilst this talk about pastry had been going on. The Arabian Princess, the Queen of Hearts making tarts, Miss Honeyman? Who the deuce were all these? Such may have been his lordship's doubts and queries. Whatever his cogitations were he did not give utterance to them, but remained in silence for some time, as did the rest of the little party. Clive tried to think he had asserted his independence by showing that he was not ashamed of his old aunt; but the doubt may be whether there was any necessity for presenting her in this company, and whether Mr. Clive had not much better have left the tart question alone.

Ethel evidently thought so: for she talked and rattled in the most lively manner with Lord Farintosh for the rest of the evening, and scarcely chose to say a word to her cousin. Lady Anne was absent with Sir Brian and her children for the most part of the time: and thus Clive had the pleasure of listening to Miss Newcome uttering all sorts of odd little paradoxes, firing the while sly shots at Mr. Clive, and, indeed, making fun of his friends, exhibiting herself in not the most agreeable light. Her talk only served the more to bewilder Lord Farintosh, who did not understand a tithe of her allusions: for Heaven, which had endowed the young Marquis with personal charms, a large estate, an ancient title and the pride belonging to it, had not supplied his lordship with a great quantity of brains, or a very feeling heart.

Lady Anne came back from the upper regions presently, with rather a grave face, and saying that Sir Brian was not so well this evening, upon which the young men rose to depart. My lord said he had "a most delightful dinner and a most delightful tart, 'pon his honour," and was the only one of the little company who laughed at his own remark. Miss Ethel's eyes flashed scorn at Mr. Clive when that unfortunate subject was introduced again.

My lord was going back to London tomorrow. Was Miss Newcome going back? Wouldn't he like to go back in the train with her! — another unlucky observation. Lady Anne said, "it would depend on the state of Sir Brian's health the next morning whether Ethel would return; and both of you gentlemen are too young to be her escort," added the kind lady. Then she shook hands with Clive, as thinking she had said something too for him.

Farintosh in the meantime was taking leave of Miss Newcome. "Pray, pray," said his lordship, "don't throw me over at Lady Innishowan's. You know I hate balls and never go to 'em, except when you go. I hate dancing, I do, 'pon my honour."

"Thank you," said Miss Newcome, with a curtsy.

"Except with one person — only one person, upon my honour. I'll remember and get the invitation for your friend. And if you would but try that mare, I give you my honour I bred her at Codlington. She's a beauty to look at, and as quiet as a lamb."

"I don't want a horse like a lamb," replied the young lady.

“Well — she’ll go like blazes now: and over timber she’s splendid now. She is, upon my honour.”

“When I come to London perhaps you may trot her out,” said Miss Ethel, giving him her hand and a fine smile.

Clive came up biting his lips. “I suppose you don’t condescend to ride Bhurtpore any more now?” he said.

“Poor old Bhurtpore! The children ride him now,” said Miss Ethel — giving Clive at the same time a dangerous look of her eyes, as though to see if her shot had hit. Then she added, “No — he has not been brought up to town this year: he is at Newcome, and I like him very much.” Perhaps she thought the shot had struck too deep.

But if Clive was hurt he did not show his wound. “You have had him these four years — yes, it’s four years since my father broke him for you. And you still continue to like him? What a miracle of constancy! You use him sometimes in the country — when you have no better horse — what a compliment to Bhurtpore!”

“Nonsense!” Miss Ethel here made Clive a sign in her most imperious manner to stay a moment when Lord Farintosh had departed.

But he did not choose to obey this order. “Good night,” he said. “Before I go I must shake hands with my aunt downstairs.” And he was gone, following close upon Lord Farintosh, who I dare say thought, “Why the deuce can’t he shake hands with his aunt up here?” and when Clive entered Miss Honeyman’s back-parlour, making a bow to the young nobleman, my lord went away more perplexed than ever: and the next day told friends at White’s what uncommonly queer people those Newcomes were. “I give you my honour there was a fellow at Lady Anne’s whom they call Clive, who is a painter by trade — his uncle is a preacher — his father is a horse-dealer, and his aunt lets lodgings and cooks the dinner.”



CHAPTER XLIII

RETURNS TO SOME OLD FRIENDS

The haggard youth burst into my chambers, in the Temple, on the very next morning, and confided to me the story which has been just here narrated. When he had concluded it, with many ejaculations regarding the heroine of the tale, "I saw her, sir," he added, "walking with the children and Miss Cann as I drove round in the fly to the station — and didn't even bow to her."

"Why did you go round by the cliff?" asked Clive's friend.

"That is not the way from the Steyne Arms to the railroad."

"Hang it," says Clive, turning very red, "I wanted to pass just under her windows, and if I saw her, not to see her: and that's what I did."

"Why did she walk on the cliff?" mused Clive's friend, "at that early hour? Not to meet Lord Farintosh, I should think, he never gets up before twelve. It must have been to see you. Didn't you tell her you were going away in the morning?"

"I tell you what she does with me," continues Mr. Clive. "Sometimes she seems to like me, and then she leaves me. Sometimes she is quite kind — kind she always is — I mean, you know, Pen — you know what I mean; and then up comes the old Countess, or a young Marquis, or some fellow with a handle to his name, and she whistles me off till the next convenient opportunity."

"Women are like that, my ingenuous youth," says Clive's counsellor.

"I won't stand it. I won't be made a fool of!" he continues. "She seems to expect everybody to bow to her, and moves through the world with her imperious airs. Oh, how confoundedly handsome she is with them! I tell you what. I feel inclined to tumble down and feel one of her pretty little feet on my neck and say, There! Trample my life out. Make a slave of me. Let me get a silver collar and mark 'Ethel' on it, and go through the world with my badge."

"And a blue ribbon for a footman to hold you by; and a muzzle to wear in the dog-days. Bow! wow!" says Mr. Pendennis.

(At this noise Mr. Warrington puts his head in from the neighbouring bedchamber, and shows a beard just lathered for shaving. "We are talking sentiment! Go back till you are wanted!" says Mr. Pendennis. Exit he of the soap-suds.)

"Don't make fun of a fellow," Clive continues, laughing ruefully. "You see I must talk about it to somebody. I shall die if I don't. Sometimes, sir, I rise up in my might and I defy her lightning. The sarcastic dodge is the best: I have borrowed that from you Pen, old boy. That puzzles her: that would beat her if I could but go on with it. But there comes a tone of her sweet voice, a look out of those killing grey eyes, and all my frame is in a thrill and a tremble. When she was engaged to Lord Kew I did battle with the confounded passion — and I ran away from it like an honest man, and the gods rewarded me with ease of mind after a while. But now the thing rages worse than ever. Last night, I give you my honour, I heard every one of the confounded hurs toll, except the last, when I was dreaming of my father, and the chambermaid woke me with a hot water jug."

"Did she scald you? What a cruel chambermaid! I see you have shaven the mustachios off."

"Farintosh asked me whether I was going in the army," said Clive, "and she laughed. I thought I had best dock them. Oh, I would like to cut my head off as well as my hair!"

"Have you ever asked her to marry you?" asked Clive's friend.

"I have seen her but five times since my return from abroad," the lad went on; "there has been always somebody by. Who am I? a painter with five hundred a year for an allowance. Isn't she used to walk up on velvet and dine upon silver; and hasn't she got marquises and barons, and all sorts of swells, in her train? I daren't ask her —"

Here his friend hummed Montrose's lines — "He either fears his fate too much, or his desert is small, who dares not put it to the touch, and win or lose it all."

"I own I dare not ask her. If she were to refuse me, I know I should never ask again. This isn't the moment, when all Swelldom is at her feet, for me to come forward and say, 'Maiden, I have watched thee daily, and I think thou lovest me

well.' I read that ballad to her at Baden, sir. I drew a picture of the Lord of Burleigh wooing the maiden, and asked what she would have done?"

"Oh, you did? I thought, when we were at Baden, we were so modest that we did not even whisper our condition?"

"A fellow can't help letting it be seen and hinting it," says Clive, with another blush. "They can read it in our looks fast enough; and what is going on in our minds, hang them! I recollect she said, in her grave, cool way, that after all the Lord and Lady of Burleigh did not seem to have made a very good marriage, and that the lady would have been much happier in marrying one of her own degree."

"That was a very prudent saying for a young lady of eighteen," remarks Clive's friend.

"Yes; but it was not an unkind one. Say Ethel thought — thought what was the case; and being engaged herself, and knowing how friends of mine had provided a very pretty little partner for me — she is a dear, good little girl, little Rosey; and twice as good, Pen, when her mother is away — knowing this and that, I say, suppose Ethel wanted to give me a hint to keep quiet, was she not right in the counsel she gave me? She is not fit to be a poor man's wife. Fancy Ethel Newcome going into the kitchen and making pies like Aunt Honeyman!"

"The Circassian beauties don't sell under so many thousand purses," remarked Mr. Pendennis. "If there's a beauty in a well-regulated Georgian family, they fatten her; they feed her with the best *Racahout des Arabes*. They give her silk robes, and perfumed baths; have her taught to play on the dulcimer and dance and sing; and when she is quite perfect, send her down to Constantinople for the Sultan's inspection. The rest of the family think never of grumbling, but eat coarse meat, bathe in the river, wear old clothes, and praise Allah for their sister's elevation. Bah! Do you suppose the Turkish system doesn't obtain all over the world? My poor Clive, this article in the Mayfair Market is beyond your worship's price. Some things in this world are made for our betters, young man. Let Dives say grace for his dinner, and the dogs and Lazarus be thankful for the crumbs. Here comes Warrington, shaven and smart as if he was going out a-courting."

Thus it will be seen, that in his communication with certain friends who approached nearer to his own time of life, Clive was much more eloquent and rhapsodical than in the letter which he wrote to his father, regarding his passion for Miss Ethel. He celebrated her with pencil and pen. He was for ever drawing the outline of her head, the solemn eyebrow, the nose (that wondrous little nose), descending from the straight forehead, the short upper lip, and chin sweeping in a full curve to the neck, etc. etc. A frequenter of his studio might see a whole gallery of Ethels there represented: when Mrs. Mackenzie visited that place, and remarked one face and figure repeated on a hundred canvases and papers, grey, white, and brown, I believe she was told that the original was a famous Roman model, from whom Clive had studied a great deal during his residence in Italy; on which Mrs. Mack gave it as her opinion that Clive was a sad wicked young fellow. The widow thought rather the better of him for being a sad wicked young fellow; and as for Miss Rosey, she, was of course of mamma's way of thinking. Rosey went through the world constantly smiling at whatever occurred. She was good-humoured through the dreariest long evenings at the most stupid parties; sate good-humouredly for hours at Shoolbred's whilst mamma was making purchases; heard good-humouredly those old old stories of her mother's day after day; bore an hour's joking or an hour's scolding with equal good-humour; and whatever had been the occurrences of her simple day, whether there was sunshine or cloudy weather, or flashes of lightning and bursts of rain, I fancy Miss Mackenzie slept after them quite undisturbedly, and was sure to greet the morrow's dawn with a smile.

Had Clive become more knowing in his travels, had Love or Experience opened his eyes, that they looked so differently now upon objects which before used well enough to please them? It is a fact that, until he went abroad, he thought widow Mackenzie a dashing, lively, agreeable woman: he used to receive her stories about Cheltenham, the colonies, the balls at Government House, the observations which the bishop made, and the peculiar attention of the Chief Justice to Mrs. Major M'Shane, with the Major's uneasy behaviour — all these to hear at one time did Clive not ungraciously incline. "Our friend, Mrs. Mack," the good old Colonel used to say, "is a clever woman of the world, and has seen a great deal of company." That story of Sir Thomas Sadman dropping a pocket-handkerchief in his court at Colombo, which the Queen's Advocate O'Goggarty picked up, and on which Laura MacS. was embroidered, whilst the Major was absolutely in the witness-box giving evidence against a native servant who had stolen one of his cocked-hats — that story always made good Thomas Newcome laugh, and Clive used to enjoy it too, and the widow's mischievous fun in narrating it; and now, behold, one day when Mrs. Mackenzie recounted the anecdote in her best manner to Messrs. Pendennis and Warrington, and Frederick Bayham, who had been invited to meet Mr. Clive in Fitzroy Square — when Mr. Binnie chuckled, when Rosey, as in duty bound, looked discomposed and said, "Law, mamma!" — not one sign of good-humour, not one ghost of a smile, made its

apparition on Clive's dreary face. He painted imaginary portraits with a strawberry stalk; he looked into his water-glass as though he would plunge and drown there; and Bayham had to remind him that the claret jug was anxious to have another embrace from its constant friend, F. B. When Mrs. Mack went away distributing smiles, Clive groaned out, "Good heavens! how that story does bore me!" and lapsed into his former moodiness, not giving so much as a glance to Rosey, whose sweet face looked at him kindly for a moment, as she followed in the wake of her mamma.

"The mother's the woman for my money," I heard F. B. whisper to Warrington. "Splendid figure-head, sir — magnificent build, sir, from bows to stern — I like 'em of that sort. Thank you, Mr. Binnie, I will take a back-hander, as Clive don't seem to drink. The youth, sir, has grown melancholy with his travels; I'm inclined to think some noble Roman has stolen the young man's heart. Why did you not send us over a picture of the charmer, Clive? Young Ridley, Mr. Binnie, you will be happy to hear, is bidding fair to take a distinguished place in the world of arts. His picture has been greatly admired; and my good friend Mrs. Ridley tells me that Lord Todmorden has sent him over an order to paint him a couple of pictures at a hundred guineas apiece."

"I should think so. J. J.'s pictures will be worth five times a hundred guineas ere five years are over," says Clive.

"In that case it wouldn't be a bad speculation for our friend Sherrick," remarked F. B., "to purchase a few of the young man's works. I would, only I haven't the capital to spare. Mine has been vested in an Odessa venture, sir, in a large amount of wild oats, which up to the present moment make me no return. But it will always be a consolation to me to think that I have been the means — the humble means — of furthering that deserving young man's prospects in life."

"You, F. B.! and how?" we asked.

"By certain humble contributions of mine to the press," answered Bayham, majestically. "Mr. Warrington, the claret happens to stand with you; and exercise does it good, sir. Yes, the articles, trifling as they may appear, have attracted notice," continued F. B., sipping his wine with great gusto. "They are noticed, Pendennis, give me leave to say, by parties who don't value so much the literary or even the political part of the Pall Mall Gazette, though both, I am told by those who read them, are conducted with considerable — consummate ability. John Ridley sent a hundred pounds over to his father, the other day, who funded it in his son's name. And Ridley told the story to Lord Todmorden, when the venerable nobleman congratulated him on having such a child. I wish F. B. had one of the same sort, sir." In which sweet prayer we all of us joined with a laugh.

One of us had told Mrs. Mackenzie (let the criminal blush to own that quizzing his fellow-creatures used at one time to form part of his youthful amusement) that F. B. was the son of a gentleman of most ancient family and vast landed possessions, and as Bayham was particularly attentive to the widow, and grandiloquent in his remarks, she was greatly pleased by his politeness, and pronounced him a most distingue man — reminding her, indeed, of General Hopkirk, who commanded in Canada. And she bade Rosey sing for Mr. Bayham, who was in a rapture at the young lady's performances, and said no wonder such an accomplished daughter came from such a mother, though how such a mother could have a daughter of such an age he, F. B., was at a loss to understand. Oh, sir! Mrs. Mackenzie was charmed and overcome at this novel compliment. Meanwhile the little artless Rosey warbled on her pretty ditties.

"It is a wonder," growled out Mr. Warrington, "that that sweet girl can belong to such a woman. I don't understand much about women, but that one appears to me to be — hum!"

"What, George?" asked Warrington's friend.

"Well, an ogling, leering, scheming, artful old campaigner," grumbled the misogynist. "As for the little girl, I should like to have her to sing to me all night long. Depend upon it she would make a much better wife for Clive than that fashionable cousin of his he is hankering after. I heard him bellowing about her the other day in chambers, as I was dressing. What the deuce does the boy want with a wife at all?" And Rosey's song being by this time finished, Warrington went up with a blushing face and absolutely paid a compliment to Miss Mackenzie — an almost unheard-of effort on George's part.

"I wonder whether it is every young fellow's lot," quoth George, as we trudged home together, "to pawn his heart away to some girl that's not worth the winning? Psha! it's all mad rubbish this sentiment. The women ought not to be allowed to interfere with us: married if a man must be, a suitable wife should be portioned out to him, and there an end of it. Why doesn't the young man marry this girl, and get back to his business and paint his pictures? Because his father wishes it — and the old Nabob yonder, who seems a kindly-disposed, easy-going, old heathen philosopher. Here's a pretty little girl:

money I suppose in sufficiency — everything satisfactory, except, I grant you, the campaigner. The lad might daub his canvases, christen a child a year, and be as happy as any young donkey that browses on this common of ours — but he must go and heehaw after a zebra forsooth! a *lusus naturae* is she! I never spoke to a woman of fashion, thank my stars — I don't know the nature of the beast; and since I went to our race-balls, as a boy, scarcely ever saw one; as I don't frequent operas and parties in London like you young flunkeys of the aristocracy. I heard you talking about this one; I couldn't help it, as my door was open and the young one was shouting like a madman. What! does he choose to hang on on sufferance and hope to be taken, provided Miss can get no better? Do you mean to say that is the genteel custom, and that women in your confounded society do such things every day? Rather than have such a creature I would take a savage woman, who should nurse my dusky brood; and rather than have a daughter brought up to the trade I would bring her down from the woods and sell her in Virginia." With which burst of indignation our friend's anger ended for that night.

Though Mr. Clive had the felicity to meet his cousin Ethel at a party or two in the ensuing weeks of the season, every time he perused the features of Lady Kew's brass knocker in Queen Street, no result came of the visit. At one of their meetings in the world Ethel fairly told him that her grandmother would not receive him. "You know, Clive, I can't help myself: nor would it be proper to make you signs out of the window. But you must call for all that: grandmamma may become more good-humoured: or if you don't come she may suspect I told you not to come: and to battle with her day after day is no pleasure, sir, I assure you. Here is Lord Farintosh coming to take me to dance. You must not speak to me all the evening, mind that, sir," and away goes the young lady in a waltz with the Marquis.

On the same evening — as he was biting his nails, or cursing his fate, or wishing to invite Lord Farintosh into the neighbouring garden of Berkeley Square, whence the policeman might carry to the station-house the corpse of the survivor — Lady Kew would bow to him with perfect graciousness; on other nights her ladyship would pass and no more recognise him than the servant who opened the door.

If she was not to see him at her grandmother's house, and was not particularly unhappy at his exclusion, why did Miss Newcome encourage Mr. Clive so that he should try and see her? If Clive could not get into the little house in Queen Street, why was Lord Farintosh's enormous cab-horse looking daily into the first-floor windows of that street? Why were little quiet dinners made for him, before the opera, before going to the play, upon a half-dozen occasions, when some of the old old Kew port was brought out of the cellar, where cobwebs had gathered round it ere Farintosh was born? The dining-room was so tiny that not more than five people could sit at the little round table: that is, not more than Lady Kew and her granddaughter, Miss Crochet, the late vicar's daughter, at Kewbury, one of the Miss Toadins, and Captain Walleye, or Tommy Henschman, Farintosh's kinsman, and admirer, who were of no consequence, or old Fred Tiddler, whose wife was an invalid, and who was always ready at a moment's notice? Crackthorpe once went to one of these dinners, but that young soldier being a frank and high-spirited youth, abused the entertainment and declined more of them. "I tell you what I was wanted for," the Captain told his mess and Clive at the Regent's Park barracks afterwards, "I was expected to go as Farintosh's Groom of the Stole, don't you know, to stand, or if I could sit, in the back seat of the box, whilst his Royal Highness made talk with the Beauty; to go out and fetch the carriage, and walk downstairs with that d ——— crooked old dowager, that looks as if she usually rode on a broomstick, by Jove, or else with that bony old painted sheep-faced companion, who's raddled like an old bell-wether. I think, Newcome, you seem rather hit by the Belle Cousine — so was I last season; so were ever so many of the fellows. By Jove, sir! there's nothing I know more comfortable or inspiriting than a younger son's position, when a marquis cuts in with fifteen thousand a year! We fancy we've been making running, and suddenly we find ourselves nowhere. Miss Mary, or Miss Lucy, or Miss Ethel, saving your presence, will no more look at us, than my dog will look at a bit of bread, when I offer her this cutlet. Will you — old woman! no, you old slut, that you won't!" (to Mag, an Isle of Skye terrier, who, in fact, prefers the cutlet, having snuffed disdainfully at the bread)—"that you won't, no more than any of your sex. Why, do you suppose, if Jack's eldest brother had been dead — Barebones Belsize they used to call him (I don't believe he was a bad fellow, though he was fond of psalm-singing)— do you suppose that Lady Clara would have looked at that cock-tail Barney Newcome? Beg your pardon, if he's your cousin — but a more odious little snob I never saw."

"I give you up Barnes," said Clive, laughing; "anybody may shy at him and I shan't interfere."

"I understand, but at nobody else of the family. Well, what I mean is, that that old woman is enough to spoil any young girl she takes in hand. She dries 'em up, and poisons 'em, sir; and I was never more glad than when I heard that Kew had got out of her old clutches. Frank is a fellow that will always be led by some woman or another; and I'm only glad it should

be a good one. They say his mother's serious, and that; but why shouldn't she bet?" continues honest Crackthorpe, puffing his cigar with great energy. "They say the old dowager doesn't believe in God nor devil: but that she's in such a funk to be left in the dark that she howls, and raises the doose's own delight if her candle goes out. Toppleton slept next room to her at Groningham, and heard her; didn't you, Top?"

"Heard her howling like an old cat on the tiles," says Toppleton — "thought she was at first. My man told me that she used to fling all sorts of things — boot-jacks and things, give you my honour — at her maid, and that the woman was all over black and blue."

"Capital head that is Newcome has done of Jack Belsize!" says Crackthorpe, from out of his cigar.

"And Kew's too — famous likeness! I say, Newcome, if you have 'em printed the whole brigade'll subscribe. Make your fortune, see if you won't," cries Toppleton.

"He's such a heavy swell, he don't want to make his fortune," ejaculates Butts.

"Butts, old boy, he'll paint you for nothing, and send you to the Exhibition, where some widow will fall in love with you, and you shall be put as frontispiece for the 'Book of Beauty,' by Jove," cries another military satirist — to whom Butts:

"You hold your tongue, you old Saracen's Head; they're going to have you done on the bear's-grease pots. I say, I suppose Jack's all right now. When did he write to you last, Cracky?"

"He wrote from Palermo — a most jolly letter from him and Kew. He hasn't touched a card for nine months; is going to give up play. So is Frank, too, grown quite a good boy. So will you, too, Butts, you old miscreant, repent of your sins, pay your debts, and do something handsome for that poor deluded milliner in Albany Street. Jack says Kew's mother has written over to Lord Highgate a beautiful letter — and the old boy's relenting, and they'll come together again — Jack's eldest son now, you know. Bore for Lady Susan only having girls."

"Not a bore for Jack, though," cries another. And what a good fellow Jack was; and what a trump Kew is; how famously he stuck by him: went to see him in prison and paid him out! and what good fellows we all are, in general, became the subject of the conversation, the latter part of which took place in the smoking-room of the Regent's Park Barracks, then occupied by that regiment of Life Guards of which Lord Kew and Mr. Belsize had been members. Both were still fondly remembered by their companions; and it was because Belsize had spoken very warmly of Clive's friendliness to him that Jack's friend the gallant Crackthorpe had been interested in our hero, and found an opportunity of making his acquaintance.

With these frank and pleasant young men Clive soon formed a considerable intimacy: and if any of his older and peaceful friends chanced to take their afternoon airing in the Park, and survey the horsemen there, we might have the pleasure of beholding Mr. Newcome in Rotten Row, riding side by side with other dandies who had mustachios blonde or jet, who wore flowers in their buttons (themselves being flowers of spring), who rode magnificent thoroughbred horses, scarcely touching their stirrups with the tips of their varnished boots, and who kissed the most beautiful primrose-coloured kid gloves to lovely ladies passing them in the Ride. Clive drew portraits of half the officers of the Life Guards Green; and was appointed painter in ordinary to that distinguished corps. His likeness of the Colonel would make you die with laughing: his picture of the Surgeon was voted a masterpiece. He drew the men in the saddle, in the stable, in their flannel dresses, sweeping their flashing swords about, receiving lancers, repelling infantry — nay, cutting — a sheep in two, as some of the warriors are known to be able to do at one stroke. Detachments of Life Guardsmen made their appearance in Charlotte Street, which was not very distant from their barracks; the most splendid cabs were seen prancing before his door; and curly-whiskered youths, of aristocratic appearance, smoking cigars out of his painting-room window. How many times did Clive's next-door neighbour, little Mr. Finch, the miniature-painter, run to peep through his parlour blinds, hoping that a sitter was coming, and "a carriage-party" driving up! What wrath Mr. Scowler, A.R.A., was in, because a young hop-o'-my-thumb dandy, who wore gold chains and his collars turned down, should spoil the trade and draw portraits for nothing! Why did none of the young men come to Scowler? Scowler was obliged to own that Mr. Newcome had considerable talent, and a good knack at catching a likeness. He could not paint a bit, to be sure, but his heads in black-and-white were really tolerable; his sketches of horses very vigorous and lifelike. Mr. Gandish said if Clive would come for three or four years into his academy he could make something of him. Mr. Smee shook his head, and said he was afraid, that kind of loose, desultory study, that keeping of aristocratic company, was anything but favourable to a young artist — Smee, who would walk five miles to attend an evening party of ever so little a great man!

CHAPTER XLIV

IN WHICH MR. CHARLES HONEYMAN APPEARS IN AN AMIABLE LIGHT

Mr. Frederick Bayham waited at Fitzroy Square while Clive was yet talking with his friends there, and favoured that gentleman with his company home to the usual smoky refreshment. Clive always rejoiced in F. B.'s society, whether he was in a sportive mood, or, as now, in a solemn and didactic vein. F. B. had been more than ordinarily majestic all the evening. "I dare say you find me a good deal altered, Clive," he remarked; "I am a good deal altered. Since that good Samaritan, your kind father, had compassion on a poor fellow fallen among thieves (though I don't say, mind you, he was much better than his company), F. B. has mended some of his ways. I am trying a course of industry, sir. Powers, perhaps naturally great, have been neglected over the wine-cup and the die. I am beginning to feel my way; and my chiefs yonder, who have just walked home with their cigars in their mouths, and without as much as saying, F. B., my boy, shall we go to the Haunt and have a cool lobster and a glass of table-beer — which they certainly do not consider themselves to be — I say, sir, the Politician and the Literary Critic" (there was a most sarcastic emphasis laid on these phrases, characterising Messrs. Warrington and Pendennis) "may find that there is a humble contributor to the Pall Mall Gazette, whose name, may be, the amateur shall one day reckon even higher than their own. Mr. Warrington I do not say so much — he is an able man, sir, an able man; — but there is that about your exceedin self-satisfied friend, Mr. Arthur Pendennis, which — well, well — let time show. You did not — get the — hem — paper at Rome and Naples, I suppose?"

"Forbidden by the Inquisition," says Clive, delighted; "and at Naples the king furious against it."

"I don't wonder they don't like it at Rome, sir. There's serious matter in it which may set the prelates of a certain Church rather in a tremor. You haven't read — the — ahem — the Pulpit Pencillings in the P. M. G.? Slight sketches, mental and corporeal, of our chief divines now in London — and signed Latimer?"

"I don't do much in that way," said Clive.

"So much the worse for you, my young friend. Not that I mean to judge any other fellow harshly — I mean any other fellow sinner harshly — or that I mean that those Pulpit Pencillings would be likely to do you any great good. But, such as they are, they have been productive of benefit. — Thank you, Mary, and my dear, the tap is uncommonly good, and I drink to your future husband's good health. — A glass of good sound beer refreshes after all that claret. Well, sir, to return to the Pencillings, pardon my vanity in saying, that though Mr. Pendennis laughs at them, they have been of essential service to the paper. They give it a character, they rally round it the respectable classes. They create correspondence. I have received many interesting letters, chiefly from females, about the Pencillings. Some complain that their favourite preachers are slighted; others applaud because the clergymen they sit under are supported by F. B. I am Laud Latimer, sir — though I have heard the letters attributed to the Rev. Mr. Bunker, and to a Member of Parliament eminent in the religious world."

"So you are the famous Laud Latimer?" cries Clive, who had, in fact, seen letters signed by those right reverend names in our paper.

"Famous is hardly the word. One who scoffs at everything — I need not say I allude to Mr. Arthur Pendennis — would have had the letters signed — the Beadle, of the Parish. He calls me the Venerable Beadle sometimes — it being, I grieve to say, his way to deride grave subjects. You wouldn't suppose now, my young Clive, that the same hand which pens the Art criticisms, occasionally, when His Highness Pendennis is lazy, takes a minor theatre, or turns the sportive epigram, or the ephemeral paragraph, should adopt a grave theme on a Sunday, and chronicle the sermons of British divines? For eighteen consecutive Sunday evenings, Clive, in Mrs. Ridley's front parlour, which I now occupy, vice Miss Cann promoted, I have written the Pencillings — scarcely allowing a drop of refreshment, except under extreme exhaustion, to pass my lips. Pendennis laughs at the Pencillings. He wants to stop them; and says they bore the public. — I don't want to think a man is jealous, who was himself the cause of my engagement at the P. M. G. — perhaps my powers were not developed then."

"Pen thinks he writes better now than when he began," remarked Clive; "I have heard him say so."

"His opinion of his own writings is high, whatever their date. Mine, sir, are only just coming into notice. They begin to know F. B., sir, in the sacred edifices of his metropolitan city. I saw the Bishop of London looking at me last Sunday week, and am sure his chaplain whispered him, 'It's Mr. Bayham, my lord, nephew of your lordship's right reverend brother, the

Lord Bishop of Bullocksmithy.' And last Sunday being at church — at Saint Mungo the Martyr's, Rev. Sawders — by Wednesday I got in a female hand — Mrs. Sawders's, no doubt — the biography of the Incumbent of St. Mungo; an account of his early virtues; a copy of his poems; and a hint that he was the gentleman destined for the vacant Deanery.

"Ridley is not the only man I have helped in this world," F. B. continued. "Perhaps I should blush to own it — I do blush: but I feel the ties of early acquaintance, and I own that I have puffed your uncle, Charles Honeyman, most tremendously. It was partly for the sake of the Ridleys and the tick he owes 'em: partly for old times' sake. Sir, are you aware that things are greatly changed with Charles Honeyman, and that the poor F. B. has very likely made his fortune?"

"I am delighted to hear it," cried Clive; "and how, F. B., have you wrought this miracle?"

"By common sense and enterprise, lad — by a knowledge of the world and a benevolent disposition. You'll see Lady Whittlesea's Chapel bears a very different aspect now. That miscreant Sherrick owns that he owes me a turn, and has sent me a few dozen of wine — without any stamped paper on my part in return — as an acknowledgment of my service. It chanced, sir, soon after your departure for Italy, that going to his private residence respecting a little bill to which a heedless friend had put his hand, Sherrick invited me to partake of tea in the bosom of his family. I was thirsty — having walked in from Jack Straw's Castle at Hampstead, where poor Kitely and I had been taking a chop — and accepted the proffered entertainment. The ladies of the family gave us music after the domestic muffin — and then, sir, a great idea occurred to me. You know how magnificently Miss Sherrick and the mother sing? Thy sang Mozart, sir. Why, I asked of Sherrick, should those ladies who sing Mozart to a piano, not sing Handel to an organ?"

"Dash it, you don't mean a hurdy-gurdy?"

"Sherrick," says I, 'you are no better than a heathen ignoramus. I mean why shouldn't they sing Handes Church Music, and Church Music in general in Lady Whittlesea's Chapel? Behind the screen up in the organ-loft what's to prevent 'em? By Jingo! Your singing-boys have gone to the Cave of Harmony; you and your choir have split — why should not these ladies lead it?' He caught at the idea. You never heard the chants more finely given — and they would be better still if the congregation would but hold their confounded tongues. It was an excellent though a harmless dodge, sir: and drew immensely, to speak profanely. They dress the part, sir, to admiration — a sort of nunlike costume they come in: Mrs. Sherrick has the soul of an artist still — by Jove, sir, when they have once smelt the lamps, the love of the trade never leaves 'em. The ladies actually practised by moonlight in the Chapel, and came over to Honeyman's to an oyster afterwards. The thing took, sir. People began to take box-seats, I mean, again:— and Charles Honeyman, easy in his mind through your noble father's generosity, perhaps inspirited by returning good fortune, has been preaching more eloquently than ever. He took some lessons of Husler, of the Haymarket, sir. His sermons are old, I believe; but so to speak, he has got them up with new scenery, dresses, and effects, sir. They have flowers, sir, about the buildin'— pious ladies are supposed to provide 'em, but, entre nous, Sherrick contracts for them with Nathan, or some one in Covent Garden. And — don't tell this now, upon your honour!"

"Tell what, F. B.?" asks Clive.

"I got up a persecution against your uncle for Popish practices summoned a meetin' at the Running Footman, in Bolingbroke Street. Billings the buttermilk; Sharwood, the turner and blacking-maker; and the Honourable Phelin O'Curragh, Lord Scullabogue's son, made speeches. Two or three respectable families (your aunt, Mrs. What-d'-you-call-'em Newcome, amongst the number) quitted the Chapel in disgust — I wrote an article of controversial biography in the P. M. G.; set the business going in the daily press; and the thing was done, sir. That property is a paying one to the Incumbent, and to Sherrick over him. Charles's affairs are getting all right, sir. He never had the pluck to owe much, and if it be a sin to have wiped his slate clean, satisfied his creditors, and made Charles easy — upon my conscience, I must confess that F. B. has done it. I hope I may never do anything worse in this life, Clive. It ain't bad to see him doing the martyr, sir: Sebastian riddled with paper pellets; Bartholomew on a cold gridiron. Here comes the lobster. Upon my word, Mary, a finer fish I've seldom seen."

Now surely this account of his uncle's affairs and prosperity was enough to send Clive to Lady Whittlesea's Chapel, and it was not because Miss Ethel had said that she and Lady Kew went there that Clive was induced to go there too? He attended punctually on the next Sunday, and in the incumbent's pew, whither the pew-woman conducted him, sate Mr. Sherrick in great gravity, with large gold pins, who handed him, at the anthem, a large, new, gilt hymn-book.

An odour of millefleurs rustled by them as Charles Honeyman accompanied by his ecclesiastical valet, passed the pew

from the vestry, and took his place at the desk. Formerly he used to wear a flaunting scarf over his surplice, which was very wide and full; and Clive remembered when as a boy he entered the sacred robing-room, how his uncle used to pat and puff out the scarf and the sleeves of his vestment, and to arrange the natty curl on his forehead and take his place, a fine example of florid church decoration. Now the scarf was trimmed down to be as narrow as your neckcloth, and hung loose and straight over the back; the ephod was cut straight and as close and short as might be — I believe there was a little trimming of lace to the narrow sleeves, and a slight arabesque of tape, or other substance, round the edge of the surplice. As for the curl on the forehead, it was no more visible than the Maypole in the Strand, or the Cross at Charing. Honeyman's hair was parted down the middle, short in front, and curling delicately round his ears and the back of his head. He read the service in a swift manner, and with a gentle twang. When the music began, he stood with head on one side, and two slim fingers on the book, as composed as a statue in a mediaeval niche. It was fine to hear Sherrick, who had an uncommonly good voice, join in the musical parts of the service. The produce of the market-gardener decorated the church here and there; and the impresario of the establishment, having picked up a Flemish painted window from old Moss in Wardour Street, had placed it in his chapel. Labels of faint green and gold, with long Gothic letters painted thereon, meandered over the organ-loft and galleries, and strove to give as mediaeval a look to Lady Whittlesea's as the place was capable of assuming.

In the sermon Charles dropped the twang with the surplice, and the priest gave way to the preacher. He preached short stirring discourses on the subjects of the day. It happened that a noble young prince, the hope of a nation, and heir of a royal house, had just then died by a sudden accident. Absalom, the son of David, furnished Honeyman with a parallel. He drew a picture of the two deaths, of the grief of kings, of the fate that is superior to them. It was, indeed, a stirring discourse, and caused thrills through the crowd to whom Charles imparted it. "Famous, ain't it?" says Sherrick, giving Clive a hand when the rite was over. "How he's come out, hasn't he? Didn't think he had it in him." Sherrick seemed to have become of late impressed with the splendour of Charles's talents, and spoke of him — was it not disrespectful? — as a manager would of a successful tragedian. Let us pardon Sherrick: he had been in the theatrical way. "That Irishman was no go at all," he whispered to Mr. Newcome, "got rid of him — let's see, at Michaelmas."

On account of Clive's tender years, and natural levity, a little inattention may be allowed to the youth, who certainly looked about him very eagerly during the service. The house was filled by the ornamental classes, the bonnets of the newest Parisian fashion. Away in a darkling corner, under the organ, sate a squad of footmen. Surely that powdered one in livery wore Lady Kew's colours? So Clive looked under all the bonnets, and presently spied old Lady Kew's face, as grim and yellow as her brass knocker, and by it Ethel's beauteous countenance. He dashed out of church when the congregation rose to depart. "Stop and see Honeyman, won't you?" asked Sherrick, surprised.

"Yes, yes; come back again," said Clive, and was gone.

He kept his word, and returned presently. The young Marquis and an elderly lady were in Lady Kew's company. Clive had passed close under Lady Kew's venerable Roman nose without causing that organ to bow in ever so slight a degree towards the ground. Ethel had recognised him with a smile and a nod. My lord was whispering one of his noble pleasantries in her ear. She laughed at the speech or the speaker. The steps of a fine belozenged carriage were let down with a bang. The Yellow One had jumped up behind it, by the side of his brother Giant Canary. Lady Kew's equipage had disappeared, and Mrs. Canterton's was stopping the way.

Clive returned to the chapel by the little door near to the Vestiarium. All the congregation had poured out by this time. Only two ladies were standing near the pulpit; and Sherrick, with his hands rattling his money in his pockets, was pacing up and down the aisle.

"Capital house, Mr. Newcome, wasn't it? I counted no less than fourteen nob. The Princess of Moncontour and her husband, I suppose, that chap with the beard, who yawns so during the sermon. I'm blessed, if I didn't think he'd have yawned his head off. Countess of Kew, and her daughter; Countess of Canterton, and the Honourable Miss Fetlock — no, Lady Fetlock. A Countess's daughter is a lady, I'm dashed if she ain't. Lady Glenlivat and her sons; the most noble the Marquis of Farintosh, and Lord Enry Roy; that makes seven — no, nine — with the Prince and Princess. — Julia, my dear, you came out like a good un today. Never heard you in finer voice. Remember Mr. Clive Newcome?"

Mr. Clive made bows to the ladies, who acknowledged him by graceful curtsies. Miss Sherrick was always looking to the vestry-door.

"How's the old Colonel? The best feller — excuse my calling him a feller — but he is, and a good one too. I went to see Mr. Binnie, my other tenant. He looks a little yellow about the gills, Mr. Binnie. Very proud woman that is who lives with him — uncommon haughty. When will you come down and take your mutton in the Regent's Park, Mr. Clive? There's some tolerable good wine down there. Our reverend gent drops in and takes a glass, don't he, missis?"

"We shall be most 'appy to see Mr. Newcome, I'm sure," says the handsome and good-natured Mrs. Sherrick. "Won't we, Julia?"

"Oh, certainly," says Julia, who seems rather absent. And behold, at this moment the reverend gent enters from the vestry. Both the ladies run towards him, holding forth their hands.

"Oh, Mr. Honeyman! What a sermon! Me and Julia cried so up in the organ-loft; we thought you would have heard us. Didn't we, Julia?"

"Oh, yes," says Julia, whose hand the pastor is now pressing.

"When you described the young man, I thought of my poor boy, didn't I, Julia?" cries the mother, with tears streaming down her face.

"We had a loss more than ten years ago," whispers Sherrick to Clive gravely. "And she's always thinking of it. Women are so."

Clive was touched and pleased by this exhibition of kind feeling.

"You know his mother was an Absalom," the good wife continues, pointing to her husband. "Most respectable diamond merchants in —"

"Hold your tongue, Betsy, and leave my poor old mother alone; do now," says Mr. Sherrick darkly. Clive is in his uncle's fond embrace by this time, who rebukes him for not having called in Walpole Street.

"Now, when will you two gents come up to my shop to 'ave a family dinner?" asks Sherrick.

"Ah, Mr. Newcome, do come," says Julia in her deep rich voice, looking up to him with her great black eyes. And if Clive had been a vain fellow like some folks, who knows but he might have thought he had made an impression on the handsome Julia?

"Thursday, now make it Thursday, if Mr. H. is disengaged. Come along, girls, for the flies bites the ponies when they're a-standing still and makes 'em mad this weather. Anything you like for dinner? Cut of salmon and cucumber? No, pickled salmon's best this weather."

"Whatever you give me, you know I'm thankful!" says Honeyman, in a sweet sad voice, to the two ladies, who were standing looking at him, the mother's hand clasped in the daughter's.

"Should you like that Mendelssohn for the Sunday after next? Julia sings it splendid!"

"No, I don't, ma."

"You do, dear! She's a good, good dear, Mr. H., that's what she is."

"You must not call — a — him, in that way. Don't say Mr. H., ma," says Julia.

"Call me what you please!" says Charles, with the most heart-rending simplicity; and Mrs. Sherrick straightway kisses her daughter. Sherrick meanwhile has been pointing out the improvement of the chapel to Clive (which now has indeed a look of the Gothic Hall at Rosherville), and has confided to him the sum for which he screwed the painted window out of old Moss. "When he come to see it up in this place, sir, the old man was mad, I give you my word! His son ain't no good: says he knows you. He's such a screw, that chap, that he'll overreach himself, mark my words. At least, he'll never die rich. Did you ever hear of me screwing? No, I spend my money like a man. How those girls are a-goin' on about their music with Honeyman! I don't let 'em sing in the evening, or him do duty more than once a day; and you can calc'late how the music draws, because in the evenin' there ain't half the number of people here. Rev. Mr. Journyman does the duty now — quiet Hogford man — ill, I suppose, this morning. H. sits in his pew, where we was; and coughs; that's to say, I told him to cough. The women like a consumptive parson, sir. Come, gals!"

Clive went to his uncle's lodgings, and was received by Mr. and Mrs. Ridley with great glee and kindness. Both of those good people had made it a point to pay their duty to Mr. Clive immediately on his return to England, and thank him over and over again for his kindness to John James. Never, never would they forget his goodness, and the Colonel's, they were sure. A cake, a heap of biscuits, a pyramid of jams, six frizzling mutton-chops, and four kinds of hot wine, came bustling up

to Mr. Honeyman's room twenty minutes after Clive had entered it — as a token of the Riddleys' affection for him.

Clive remarked, with a smile, the Pall Mall Gazette upon a side-table, and in the chimney-glass almost as many cards as in the time of Honeyman's early prosperity. That he and his uncle should be very intimate together, was impossible, from the nature of the two men; Clive being frank, clear-sighted, and imperious; Charles, timid, vain, and double-faced, conscious that he was a humbug, and that most people found him out, so that he would quiver and turn away, and be more afraid of young Clive and his direct straightforward way, than of many older men. Then there was the sense of the money transactions between him and the Colonel, which made Charles Honeyman doubly uneasy. In fine, they did not like each other; but, as he is a connection of the most respectable Newcome family, surely he is entitled to a page or two in these their memoirs.

Thursday came, and with it Mr. Sherrick's entertainment, to which also Mr. Binnie and his party had been invited to meet Colonel Newcome's son. Uncle James and Rosey brought Clive in their carriage; Mrs. Mackenzie sent a headache as an apology. She chose to treat Uncle James's landlord with a great deal of hauteur, and to be angry with her brother for visiting such a person. "In fact, you see how fond I must be of dear little Rosey, Clive, that I put up with all mamma's tantrums for her sake," remarks Mr. Binnie.

"Oh, uncle!" says little Rosey, and the old gentleman stopped her remonstrances with a kiss.

"Yes," says he, "your mother does have tantrums, miss; and though you never complain, there's no reason why I shouldn't. You will not tell on me" (it was "Oh, uncle!" again); "and Clive won't, I am sure. — This little thing, sir," James went on, holding Rosey's pretty little hand and looking fondly in her pretty little face, "is her old uncle's only comfort in life. I wish I had had her out to India to me, and never come back to this great dreary town of yours. But I was tempted home by Tom Newcome; and I'm too old to go back, sir. Where the stick falls let it lie. Rosey would have been whisked out of my house, in India, in a month after I had her there. Some young fellow would have taken her away from me; and now she has promised never to leave her old Uncle James, hasn't she?"

"No, never, uncle," said Rosey.

"We don't want to fall in love, do we, child? We don't want to be breaking our hearts like some young folks, and dancing attendance at balls night after night, and capering about in the Park to see if we can get a glimpse of the beloved object, eh, Rosey?"

Rosey blushed. It was evident that she and Uncle James both knew of Clive's love affair. In fact, the front seat and back seat of the carriage both blushed. And as for the secret, why Mrs. Mackenzie and Mrs. Hobson had talked it a hundred times over.

"This little Rosey, sir, has promised to take care of me on this side of Styx," continued Uncle James; "and if she could but be left alone and to do it without mamma — there, I won't say a word more against her — we should get on none the worse."

"Uncle James, I must make a picture of you, for Rosey," said Clive, good-humouredly. And Rosey said, "Oh, thank you, Clive," and held out that pretty little hand, and looked so sweet and kind and happy, that Clive could not but be charmed at the sight of so much innocence and candour.

"Quasty peecoly Rosiny," says James, in a fine Scotch Italian, "e la piu bella, la piu cara, ragazza ma la mawdry e il diav —"

"Don't, uncle!" cried Rosey, again; and Clive laughed at Uncle James's wonderful outbreak in a foreign tongue.

"Eh! I thought ye didn't know a word of the sweet language, Rosey! It's just the Lenguy Toscawny in Bocky Romawny that I thought to try in compliment to this young monkey who has seen the world." And by this time Saint John's Wood was reached, and Mr. Sherrick's handsome villa, at the door of which the three beheld the Rev. Charles Honeyman stepping out of a neat brougham.

The drawing-room contained several pictures of Mrs. Sherrick when she was in the theatrical line; Smee's portrait of her, which was never half handsome enough — for my Betsy, Sherrick said indignantly; the print of her in Artaxerxes, with her signature as Elizabeth Folthorpe (not in truth a fine specimen of calligraphy) the testimonial presented to her on the conclusion of the triumphal season of 18 — at Drury Lane, by her ever grateful friend Adolphus Smacker, Lessee, who, of course, went to law with her next year; and other Thespian emblems. But Clive remarked, with not a little amusement, that the drawing-room tables were now covered with a number of those books which he had seen at Madame de Moncontour's,

and many French and German ecclesiastical gimcracks, such as are familiar to numberless readers of mine. These were the Lives of St. Botibol of Islington and St. Willibald of Bareacres, with pictures of those confessors. Then there was the Legend of Margery Dawe, Virgin and Martyr, with a sweet double frontispiece, representing (1) the sainted woman selling her feather-bed for the benefit of the poor; and (2) reclining upon straw, the leanest of invalids. There was Old Daddy Longlegs, and how he was brought to say his Prayers; a Tale for Children, by a Lady, with a preface dated St. Chad's Eve, and signed "C. H." The Rev. Charles Honeyman's Sermons, delivered at Lady Whittlesea's Chapel. Poems of Early Days, by Charles Honeyman, A.M. The Life of good Dame Whittlesea, by do. do. Yes, Charles had come out in the literary line; and there in a basket was a strip of Berlin work, of the very same Gothic pattern which Madame de Moncontour was weaving; and which you afterwards saw round the pulpit of Charles's chapel. Rosey was welcomed most kindly by the kind ladies; and as the gentlemen sat over their wine after dinner in the summer evening, Clive beheld Rosey and Julia pacing up and down the lawn, Miss Julia's arm around her little friend's waist: he thought they would make a pretty little picture.

"My girl ain't a bad one to look at, is she?" said the pleased father. "A fellow might look far enough, and see not prettier than them two."

Charles sighed out that there was a German print, the "Two Leonoras," which put him in mind of their various styles of beauty.

"I wish I could paint them," said Clive.

"And why not, sir?" asks his host. "Let me give you your first commission now, Mr Clive; I wouldn't mind paying a good bit for a picture of my Julia. I forget how much old Smee got for Betsy's, the old humbug!"

Clive said it was not the will, but the power that was deficient. He succeeded with men, but the ladies were too much for him as yet.

"Those you've done up at Albany Street Barracks are famous: I've seen 'em," said Mr. Sherrick; and remarking that his guest looked rather surprised at the idea of his being in such company, Sherrick said, "What, you think they are too great swells for me? Law bless you, I often go there. I've business with several of 'em; had with Captain Belsize, with the Earl of Kew, who's every inch the gentleman — one of nature's aristocracy, and paid up like a man. The Earl and me has had many dealings together."

Honeyman smiled faintly, and nobody complying with Mr. Sherrick's boisterous entreaties to drink more, the gentlemen quitted the dinner-table, which had been served in a style of prodigious splendour, and went to the drawing-room for a little music.

This was all of the gravest and best kind; so grave indeed, that James Binnie might be heard in a corner giving an accompaniment of little snores to the singers and the piano. But Rosey was delighted with the performance, and Sherrick remarked to Clive, "That's a good gal, that is; I like that gal; she ain't jealous of Julia cutting her out in the music, but listens as pleased as any one. She's a sweet little pipe of her own, too. Miss Mackenzie, if ever you like to go to the opera, send a word either to my West End or my City office. I've boxes every week, and you're welcome to anything I can give you."

So all agreed that the evening had been a very pleasant one; and they of Fitzroy Square returned home talking in a most comfortable friendly way — that is, two of them, for Uncle James fell asleep again, taking possession of the back seat; and Clive and Rosey prattled together. He had offered to try and take all the young ladies' likenesses. "You know what a failure the last was, Rosey?" — he had very nearly said "dear Rosey."

"Yes, but Miss Sherrick is so handsome, that you will succeed better with her than with my round face, Mr. Newcome."

"Mr. What?" cries Clive.

"Well, Clive, then," says Rosey, in a little voice.

He sought for a little hand which was not very far away. "You know we are like brother and sister, dear Rosey?" he said this time.

"Yes," said she, and gave a little pressure of the hand. And then Uncle James woke up; and it seemed as if the whole drive didn't occupy a minute, and they shook hands very very kindly at the door of Fitzroy Square.

Clive made a famous likeness of Miss Sherrick, with which Mr. Sherrick was delighted, and so was Mr. Honeyman, who happened to call upon his nephew once or twice when the ladies happened to be sitting. Then Clive proposed to the Rev. Charles Honeyman to take his head off; and made an excellent likeness in chalk of his uncle — that one, in fact, from

which the print was taken which you may see any day at Hogarth's, in the Haymarket, along with a whole regiment of British divines. Charles became so friendly, that he was constantly coming to Charlotte Street, once or twice a week.

Mr. and Mrs. Sherrick came to look at the drawing, were charmed with it; and when Rosey was sitting, they came to see her portrait, which again was not quite so successful. One Monday, the Sherricks and Honeyman too happened to call to see the picture of Rosey, who trotted over with her uncle to Clive's studio, and they all had a great laugh at a paragraph in the Pall Mall Gazette, evidently from F. B.'s hand, to the following effect:—

“Conversion In High Life. — A foreign nobleman of princely rank, who has married an English lady, and has resided among us for some time, is likely, we hear and trust, to join the English Church. The Prince de M-ne-nt-r has been a constant attendant at Lady Whittlesea's Chapel, of which the Rev. C. Honeyman is the eloquent incumbent; and it is said this sound and talented divine has been the means of awakening the prince to a sense of the erroneous doctrines in which he has been bred. His ancestors were Protestant, and fought by the side of Henry IV. at Ivry. In Louis XIV.'s time, they adopted the religion of that persecuting monarch. We sincerely trust that the present heir of the house of Ivry will see fit to return to the creed which his forefathers so unfortunately abjured.”

The ladies received this news with perfect gravity; and Charles uttered a meek wish that it might prove true. As they went away, they offered more hospitalities to Clive and Mr. Binnie and his niece. They liked the music: would they not come and hear it again?

When they had departed with Mr. Honeyman, Clive could not help saying to Uncle James, “Why are those people always coming here; praising me; and asking me to dinner? Do you know, I can't help thinking that they rather want me as a pretender for Miss Sherrick?”

Binnie burst into a loud guffaw, and cried out, “O vanitas vanitawtum!” Rosa laughed too.

“I don't think it any joke at all,” said Clive.

“Why, you stupid lad, don't you see it is Charles Honeyman the girl's in love with?” cried Uncle James. “Rosey saw it in the very first instant we entered their drawing-room three weeks ago.”

“Indeed, and how?” asked Clive.

“By — by the way she looked at him,” said little Rosey.



CHAPTER XLV

A STAG OF TEN

The London season was very nearly come to an end, and Lord Farintosh had danced I don't know how many times with Miss Newcome, had drunk several bottles of the old Kew port, had been seen at numerous breakfasts, operas, races, and public places by the young lady's side, and had not as yet made any such proposal as Lady Kew expected for her granddaughter. Clive going to see his military friends in the Regent's Park once, and finish Captain Butts's portrait in barracks, heard two or three young men talking, and one say to another, "I bet you three to two Farintosh don't marry her, and I bet you even that he don't ask her." Then as he entered Mr. Butts's room, where these gentlemen were conversing, there was a silence and an awkwardness. The young fellows were making an "event" out of Ethel's marriage, and sporting their money freely on it.

To have an old countess hunting a young marquis so resolutely that all the world should be able to look on and speculate whether her game would be run down by that staunch toothless old pursuer — that is an amusing sport, isn't it? and affords plenty of fun and satisfaction to those who follow the hunt. But for a heroine of a story, be she ever so clever, handsome, and sarcastic, I don't think for my part, at this present stage of the tale, Miss Ethel Newcome occupies a very dignified position. To break her heart in silence for Tomkins who is in love with another; to suffer no end of poverty, starvation, capture by ruffians, ill-treatment by a bullying husband, loss of beauty by the small-pox, death even at the end of the volume; all these mishaps a young heroine must endure (and has endured in romances over and over again), without losing the least dignity, or suffering any diminution of the sentimental reader's esteem. But a girl of great beauty, high temper, and strong natural intellect, who submits to be dragged hither and thither in an old grandmother's leash, and in pursuit of a husband who will run away from the couple, such a person, I say, is in a very awkward position as a heroine; and I declare if I had another ready to my hand (and unless there were extenuating circumstances) Ethel should be deposed at this very sentence.

But a novelist must go on with his heroine, as a man with his wife, for better or worse, and to the end. For how many years have the Spaniards borne with their gracious queen, not because she was faultless, but because she was there? So Chambers and grandees cried, God save her. Alabarderos turned out: drums beat, cannons fired, and people saluted Isabella Segunda, who was no better than the humblest washerwoman of her subjects. Are we much better than our neighbours? Do we never yield to our peculiar temptation, our pride, or our avarice or our vanity, or what not? Ethel is very wrong certainly. But recollect, she is very young. She is in other people's hands. She has been bred up and governed by a very worldly family, and taught their traditions. We would hardly, for instance, the staunchest Protestant in England would hardly be angry with poor Isabella Segunda for being a Catholic. So if Ethel worships at a certain image which a great number of good folks in England bow to, let us not be too angry with her idolatry, and bear with our queen a little before we make our pronunciamiento.

No, Miss Newcome, yours is not a dignified position in life, however you may argue that hundreds of people in the world are doing like you. O me! what a confession it is, in the very outset of life and blushing brightness of youth's morning, to own that the aim with which a young girl sets out, and the object of her existence, is to marry a rich man; that she was endowed with beauty so that she might buy wealth, and a title with it; that as sure as she has a soul to be saved, her business here on earth is to try and get a rich husband. That is the career for which many a woman is bred and trained. A young man begins the world with some aspirations at least; he will try to be good and follow the truth; he will strive to win honours for himself, and never do a base action; he will pass nights over his books, and forgo ease and pleasure so that he may achieve a name. Many a poor wretch who is worn-out now and old, and bankrupt of fame and money too, has commenced life at any rate with noble views and generous schemes, from which weakness, idleness, passion, or overpowering hostile fortune have turned him away. But a girl of the world, bon Dieu! the doctrine with which she begins is that she is to have a wealthy husband: the article of faith in her catechism is, "I believe in elder sons, and a house in town, and a house in the country!" They are mercenary as they step fresh and blooming into the world out of the nursery. They have been schooled there to keep their bright eyes to look only on the prince and the duke, Croesus and Dives. By long cramping and careful process, their little natural hearts have been squeezed up, like the feet of their fashionable little

sisters in China. As you see a pauper's child, with an awful premature knowledge of the pawnshop, able to haggle at market with her wretched halfpence, and battle bargains at hucksters' stalls, you shall find a young beauty, who was a child in the schoolroom a year since, as wise and knowing as the old practitioners on that exchange; as economical of her smiles, as dexterous in keeping back or producing her beautiful wares; as skilful in setting one bidder against another; as keen as the smartest merchant in Vanity Fair.

If the young gentlemen of the Life Guards Green who were talking about Miss Newcome and her suitors, were silent when Clive appeared amongst them, it was because they were aware not only of his relationship to the young lady, but his unhappy condition regarding her. Certain men there are who never tell their love, but let concealment, like a worm in the bud, feed on their damask cheeks; others again must be not always thinking, but talking, about the darling object. So it was not very long before Captain Crackthorpe was taken into Clive's confidence, and through Crackthorpe very likely the whole mess became acquainted with his passion. These young fellows, who had been early introduced into the world, gave Clive small hopes of success, putting to him, in their downright phraseology, the point of which he was already aware, that Miss Newcome was intended for his superiors, and that he had best not make his mind uneasy by sighing for those beautiful grapes which were beyond his reach.

But the good-natured Crackthorpe, who had a pity for the young painter's condition, helped him so far (and gained Clive's warmest thanks for his good offices), by asking admission for Clive to entertain evening parties of the beau-monde, where he had the gratification of meeting his charmer. Ethel was surprised and pleased, and Lady Kew surprised and angry, at meeting Clive Newcome at these fashionable houses; the girl herself was touched very likely at his pertinacity in following her. As there was no actual feud between them, she could not refuse now and again to dance with her cousin; and thus he picked up such small crumbs of consolation as a youth in his state can get; lived upon six words vouchsafed to him in a quadrille, or brought home a glance of the eyes which she had presented to him in a waltz, or the remembrance of a squeeze of the hand on parting or meeting. How eager he was to get a card to this party or that! how attentive to the givers of such entertainments! Some friends of his accused him of being a tuft-hunter and flatterer of the aristocracy, on account of his politeness to certain people; the truth was, he wanted to go wherever Miss Ethel was; and the ball was blank to him which she did not attend.

This business occupied not only one season, but two. By the time of the second season, Mr. Newcome had made so many acquaintances that he needed few more introductions into society. He was very well known as a good-natured handsome young man, and a very good waltzer, the only son of an Indian officer of large wealth, who chose to devote himself to painting, and who was supposed to entertain an unhappy fondness for his cousin the beautiful Miss Newcome. Kind folks who heard of this little tendre, and were sufficiently interested in Mr. Clive, asked him to their houses in consequence. I dare say those people who were good to him may have been themselves at one time unlucky in their own love-affairs.

When the first season ended without a declaration from my lord, Lady Kew carried off her young lady to Scotland, where it also so happened that Lord Farintosh was going to shoot, and people made what surmises they chose upon this coincidence. Surmises, why not? You who know the world, know very well that if you see Mrs. So-and-so's name in the list of people at an entertainment, on looking down the list you will presently be sure to come on Mr. What-d'-you-call-'em's. If Lord and Lady of Suchandsuch Castle, received a distinguished circle (including Lady Dash), for Christmas or Easter, without reading farther the names of the guests, you may venture on any wager that Captain Asterisk is one of the company. These coincidences happen every day; and some people are so anxious to meet other people, and so irresistible is the magnetic sympathy, I suppose, that they will travel hundreds of miles in the worst of weather to see their friends, and break your door open almost, provided the friend is inside it.

I am obliged to own the fact, that for many months Lady Kew hunted after Lord Farintosh. This rheumatic old woman went to Scotland, where, as he was pursuing the deer, she stalked his lordship: from Scotland she went to Paris, where he was taking lessons in dancing at the Chaumiere; from Paris to an English country-house, for Christmas, where he was expected, but didn't come — not being, his professor said, quite complete in the polka, and so on. If Ethel were privy to these manoeuvres, or anything more than an unwittingly consenting party, I say we would depose her from her place of heroine at once. But she was acting under her grandmother's orders, a most imperious, irresistible, managing old woman, who exacted everybody's obedience, and managed everybody's business in her family. Lady Anne Newcome being in attendance on her sick husband, Ethel was consigned to the Countess of Kew, her grandmother, who hinted that she

should leave Ethel her property when dead, and whilst alive expected the girl should go about with her. She had and wrote as many letters as a Secretary of State almost. She was accustomed to set off without taking anybody's advice, or announcing her departure until within an hour or two of the event. In her train moved Ethel, against her own will, which would have led her to stay at home with her father, but at the special wish and order of her parents. Was such a sum as that of which Lady Kew had the disposal (Hobson Brothers knew the amount of it quite well) to be left out of the family? Forbid it, all ye powers! Barnes — who would have liked the money himself, and said truly that he would live with his grandmother anywhere she liked if he could get it — Barnes joined most energetically with Sir Brian and Lady Anne in ordering Ethel's obedience to Lady Kew. You know how difficult it is for one young woman not to acquiesce when the family council strongly orders. In fine, I hope there was a good excuse for the queen of this history, and that it was her wicked domineering old prime minister who led her wrong. Otherwise I say, we would have another dynasty. Oh, to think of a generous nature, and the world, and nothing but the world, to occupy it! — of a brave intellect, and the milliner's bandboxes, and the scandal of the coteries, and the fiddle-faddle etiquette of the Court for its sole exercise! of the rush and hurry from entertainment to entertainment; of the constant smiles and cares of representation; of the prayerless rest at night, and the awaking to a godless morrow! This was the course of life to which Fate, and not her own fault altogether, had for awhile handed over Ethel Newcome. Let those pity her who can feel their own weakness and misgoing; let those punish her who are without fault themselves.

Clive did not offer to follow her to Scotland. he knew quite well that the encouragement he had had was only of the smallest; that as a relation she received him frankly and kindly enough; but checked him when he would have adopted another character. But it chanced that they met in Paris, whither he went in the Easter of the ensuing year, having worked to some good purpose through the winter, and despatched as on a former occasion his three or four pictures, to take their chance at the Exhibition.

Of these it is our pleasing duty to be able to corroborate to some extent, Mr. F. Bayham's favourable report. Fancy sketches and historical pieces our young man had eschewed; having convinced himself either that he had not an epic genius, or that to draw portraits of his friends, was a much easier task than that which he had set himself formerly. Whilst all the world was crowding round a pair of J. J.'s little pictures, a couple of chalk heads were admitted into the Exhibition (his great picture of Captain Crackthorpe on horseback, in full uniform, I must admit was ignominiously rejected), and the friends of the parties had the pleasure of recognising in the miniature room, No. 1246, "Picture of an Officer,"— viz., Augustus Butts, Esq., of the Life Guards Green; and "Portrait of the Rev. Charles Honeyman," No. 1272. Miss Sherrick the hangers refused; Mr. Binnie, Clive had spoiled, as usual, in the painting; the heads, however, before-named, were voted to be faithful likenesses, and executed in a very agreeable and spirited manner. F. Bayham's criticism on these performances, it need not be said, was tremendous. "Since the days of Michael Angelo you would have thought there never had been such drawings." In fact, F. B., as some other critics do, clapped his friends so boisterously on the back, and trumpeted their merits with such prodigious energy, as to make his friends themselves sometimes uneasy.

Mr. Clive, whose good father was writing home more and more wonderful accounts of the Bundelcund Bank, in which he had engaged, and who was always pressing his son to draw for more money, treated himself to comfortable rooms at Paris, in the very same hotel where the young Marquis of Farintosh occupied lodgings much more splendid, and where he lived, no doubt, so as to be near the professor, who was still teaching his lordship the polka. Indeed, it must be said that Lord Farintosh made great progress under this artist, and that he danced very much better in his third season than in the first and second years after he had come upon the town. From the same instructor the Marquis learned the latest novelties in French conversation, the choicest oaths and phrases (for which he was famous), so that although his French grammar was naturally defective, he was enabled to order a dinner at Philippe's, and to bully a waiter, or curse a hackney-coachman with extreme volubility. A young nobleman of his rank was received with the distinction which was his due, by the French sovereign of that period; and at the Tuileries, and the houses of the French nobility, which he visited, Monsieur le Marquis de Farintosh excited considerable remark, by the use of some of the phrases which his young professor had taught to him. People even went so far as to say that the Marquis was an awkward and dull young man, of the very worst manners.

Whereas the young Clive Newcome — and it comforted the poor fellow's heart somewhat, and he sure pleased Ethel, who was looking on at his triumphs — was voted the most charming young Englishman who had been seen for a long time in our salons. Madame de Florac, who loved him as a son of her own, actually went once or twice into the world in order to see his debut. Madame de Moncontour inhabited a part of the Hotel de Florac, and received society there. The French

people did not understand what bad English she talked, though they comprehended Lord Farintosh's French blunders. "Monsieur Newcome is an artist! What a noble career!" cries a great French lady, the wife of a Marshal to the astonished Miss Newcome. "This young man is the cousin, of the charming mees? You must be proud to possess such a nephew, madame!" says another French lady to the Countess of Kew (who, you may be sure, is delighted to have such a relative). And the French lady invites Clive to her receptions expressly in order to make herself agreeable to the old Comtesse. Before the cousins have been three minutes together in Madame de Florac's salon, she sees that Clive is in love with Ethel Newcome. She takes the boy's hand and says, "J'ai votre secret, mon ami;" and her eyes regard him for a moment as fondly, as tenderly, as ever they looked at his father. Oh, what tears have they shed, gentle eyes! Oh, what faith has it kept, tender heart! If love lives through all life; and survives through all sorrow; and remains steadfast with us through all changes; and in all darkness of spirit burns brightly; and, if we die, deplores us for ever, and loves still equally; and exists with the very last gasp and throb of the faithful bosom — whence it passes with the pure soul, beyond death; surely it shall be immortal? Though we who remain are separated from it, is it not ours in Heaven? If we love still those we lose, can we altogether lose those we love? Forty years have passed away. Youth and dearest memories revisit her, and Hope almost wakes up again out of its grave, as the constant lady holds the young man's hand, and looks at the son of Thomas Newcome.



CHAPTER XLVI

THE HOTEL DE FLORAC

Since the death of the Duc d'Ivry, the husband of Mary Queen of Scots, the Comte de Florac, who is now the legitimate owner of the ducal title, does not choose to bear it, but continues to be known in the world by his old name. The old Count's world is very small. His doctor, and his director, who comes daily to play his game of piquet; his daughter's children, who amuse him by their laughter, and play round his chair in the garden of his hotel; his faithful wife, and one or two friends as old as himself, form his society. His son the Abbe is with them but seldom. The austerity of his manners frightens his old father, who can little comprehend the religionism of the new school. After going to hear his son preach through Lent at Notre-Dame, where the Abbe de Florac gathered a great congregation, the old Count came away quite puzzled at his son's declamations. "I do not understand your new priests," he says; "I knew my son had become a Cordelier; I went to hear him, and found he was a Jacobin. Let me make my salut in quiet, my good Leonore. My director answers for me, and plays a game at trictrac into the bargain with me." Our history has but little to do with this venerable nobleman. He has his chamber looking out into the garden of his hotel; his faithful old domestic to wait upon him; his House of Peers to attend when he is well enough, his few acquaintances to help him to pass the evening. The rest of the hotel he gives up to his son, the Vicomte de Florac, and Madame la Princesse de Moncontour, his daughter-in-law.

When Florac has told his friends of the Club why it is he has assumed a new title — as a means of reconciliation (a reconciliation all philosophical, my friends) with his wife nee Higg of Manchester, who adores titles like all Anglaises, and has recently made a great succession, everybody allows that the measure was dictated by prudence, and there is no more laughter at his change of name. The Princess takes the first floor of the hotel at the price paid for it by the American General, who has returned to his original pigs at Cincinnati. Had not Cincinnatus himself pigs on his farm, and was he not a general and member of Congress too? The honest Princess has a bedchamber, which, to her terror, she is obliged to open of reception-evenings, when gentlemen and ladies play cards there. It is fitted up in the style of Louis XVI. In her bed is an immense looking-glass, surmounted by stucco cupids: it is an alcove which some powdered Venus, before the Revolution, might have reposed in. Opposite that looking-glass, between the tall windows, at some forty feet distance, is another huge mirror, so that when the poor Princess is in bed, in her prim old curl-papers, she sees a vista of elderly princesses twinkling away into the dark perspective; and is so frightened that she and Betsy, her Lancashire maid, pin up the jonquil silk curtains over the bed-mirror after the first night; though the Princess never can get it out of her head that her image is still there, behind the jonquil hangings, turning as she turns, waking as she wakes, etc. The chamber is so vast and lonely that she has a bed made for Betsy in the room. It is, of course, whisked away into a closet on reception-evenings. A boudoir, rose-tendre, with more cupids and nymphs by Boucher, sporting over door-panels — nymphs who may well shock old Betsy and her old mistress — is the Princess's morning-room. "Ah, mum, what would Mr. Humper at Manchester, Mr. Jowls of Newcome" (the minister whom, in early days, Miss Higg used to sit under) "say if they was browt into this room?" But there is no question of Jowls and Mr. Humper, excellent dissenting divines, who preached to Miss Higg, being brought into the Princesse de Moncontour's boudoir.

That paragraph, respecting a conversion in high life, which F. B. in his enthusiasm inserted in the Pall Mall Gazette, caused no small excitement in the Florac family. The Florac family read the Pall Mall Gazette, knowing that Clive's friends were engaged in that periodical. When Madame de Florac, who did not often read newspapers, happened to cast her eye upon that poetic paragraph of F. B.'s, you may fancy, with what a panic it filled the good and pious lady. Her son become a Protestant! After all the grief and trouble his wildness had occasioned to her, Paul forsake his religion! But that her husband was so ill and aged as not to be able to bear her absence, she would have hastened to London to rescue her son out of that perdition. She sent for her younger son, who undertook the embassy; and the Prince and Princesse de Moncontour, in their hotel at London, were one day surprised by the visit of the Abbe de Florac.

As Paul was quite innocent of any intention of abandoning his religion, the mother's kind heart was very speedily set at rest by her envoy. Far from Paul's conversion to Protestantism, the Abbe wrote home the most encouraging accounts of his sister-in-law's precious dispositions. He had communications with Madame de Moncontour's Anglican director, a man of not powerful mind, wrote M. l'Abbe, though of considerable repute for eloquence in his Sect. The good dispositions of his

sister-in-law were improved by the French clergyman, who could be most captivating and agreeable when a work of conversion was in hand. The visit reconciled the family to their English relative, in whom good-nature and many other good qualities were to be seen now that there were hopes of reclaiming her. It was agreed that Madame de Moncontour should come and inhabit the Hotel de Florac at Paris: perhaps the Abbe tempted the worthy lady by pictures of the many pleasures and advantages she would enjoy in that capital. She was presented at her own court by the French ambassadress of that day: and was received at the Tuileries with a cordiality which flattered and pleased her.

Having been presented herself, Madame la Princesse in turn presented to her august sovereign Mrs. T. Higg and Miss Higg, of Manchester, Mrs. Samuel Higg, of Newcome; the husbands of those ladies (the Princess's brothers) also sporting a court-dress for the first time. Sam Higg's neighbour, the member for Newcome; Sir Brian Newcome, Bart., was too ill to act as Higg's sponsor before majesty; but Barnes Newcome was uncommonly civil to the two Lancashire gentlemen; though their politics were different to his, and Sam had voted against Sir Brian at his last election. Barnes took them to dine at a club — recommended his tailor — and sent Lady Clara Pulleyn to call on Mrs. Higg — who pronounced her to be a pretty young woman and most haffable. The Countess of Dorking would have been delighted to present these ladies had the Princess not luckily been in London to do that office. The Hobson Newcomes were very civil to the Lancashire party, and entertained them splendidly at dinner. I believe Mrs. and Mr. Hobson themselves went to court this year, the latter in a deputy-lieutenant's uniform.

If Barnes Newcome was so very civil to the Higg family we may suppose he had good reason. The Higgs were very strong in Newcome, and it was advisable to conciliate them. They were very rich, and their account would not be disagreeable at the bank. Madame de Moncontour's — a large easy private account — would be more pleasant still. And, Hobson Brothers having entered largely into the Anglo-Continental Railway, whereof mention has been made, it was a bright thought of Barnes to place the Prince of Moncontour, etc. etc., on the French Direction of the Railway; and to take the princely prodigal down to Newcome with his new title, and reconcile him to his wife and the Higg family. Barnes we may say invented the principality: rescued the Vicomte de Florac out of his dirty lodgings in Leicester Square, and sent the Prince of Moncontour back to his worthy middle-aged wife again. The disagreeable dissenting days were over. A brilliant young curate of Doctor Bulders, who also wore long hair, straight waistcoats, and no shirt-collars, had already reconciled the Vicomtesse de Florac to the persuasion, whereof the ministers are clad in that queer uniform. The landlord of their hotel at St. James's got his wine from Sherrick, and sent his families to Lady Whittlesea's Chapel. The Rev. Charles Honeyman's eloquence and amiability were appreciated by his new disciple — thus the historian has traced here step by step how all these people became acquainted.

Sam Higg, whose name was very good on 'Change in Manchester and London, joined the direction of the Anglo-Continental. A brother had died lately, leaving his money amongst them, and his wealth had added considerably to Madame de Florac's means; his sister invested a portion of her capital in the railway in her husband's name. The shares were at a premium, and gave a good dividend. The Prince de Moncontour took his place with great gravity at the Paris board, whither Barnes made frequent flying visits. The sense of capitalism sobered and dignified Paul de Florac: at the age of five-and-forty he was actually giving up being a young man, and was not ill pleased at having to enlarge his waistcoats, and to show a little grey in his moustache. His errors were forgotten: he was bien vu by the Government. He might have had the Embassy Extraordinary to Queen Pomare; but the health of Madame la Princesse was delicate. He paid his wife visits every morning: appeared at her parties and her opera box, and was seen constantly with her in public. He gave quiet little dinners still, at which Clive was present sometimes: and had a private door and key to his apartments, which were separated by all the dreary length of the reception-rooms from the mirrored chamber and jonquil couch where the Princess and Betsy reposed. When some of his London friends visited Paris he showed us these rooms and introduced us duly to Madame la Princesse. He was as simple and as much at home in the midst of these splendours, as in the dirty little lodgings in Leicester Square, where he painted his own boots, and cooked his herring over the tongs. As for Clive, he was the infant of the house: Madame la Princesse could not resist his kind face; and Paul was as fond of him in his way as Paul's mother in hers. Would he live at the Hotel de Florac? There was an excellent atelier in the pavilion, with a chamber for his servant. "No! you will be most at ease in apartments of your own. You will have here but the society of women. I do not rise till late: and my affairs, my board, call me away for the greater part of the day. Thou wilt but be ennuyd to play trictrac with my old father. My mother waits on him. My sister au second is given up entirely to her children, who always have the pituite. Madame la Princesse is not amusing for a young man. Come and go when thou wilt, Clive, my garcon, my son: thy

cover is laid. Wilt thou take the portraits of all the family? Hast thou want of money? I had at thy age and almost ever since, mon ami: but now we swim in gold, and when there is a louis in my purse, there are ten francs for thee." To show his mother that he did not think of the Reformed Religion, Paul did not miss going to mass with her on Sunday. Sometimes Madame Paul went too, between whom and her mother-in-law there could not be any liking, but there was now great civility. They saw each other once a day: Madame Paul always paid her visit to the Comte de Florac: and Betsy, her maid, made the old gentleman laugh by her briskness and talk. She brought back to her mistress the most wonderful stories which the old man told her about his doings during the emigration — before he married Madame la Comtesse — when he gave lessons in dancing, parbleu! There was his fiddle still, a trophy of those old times. He chirped, and coughed, and sang, in his cracked old voice, as he talked about them. "Lor! bless you, mum," says Betsy, "he must have been a terrible old man!" He remembered the times well enough, but the stories he sometimes told over twice or thrice in an hour. I am afraid he had not repented sufficiently of those wicked old times: else why did he laugh and giggle so when he recalled them? He would laugh and giggle till he was choked with his old cough: and old S. Jean, his man, came and beat M. le Comte on the back, and made M. le Comte take a spoonful of his syrup.

Between two such women as Madame de Florac and Lady Kew, of course there could be little liking or sympathy. Religion, love, duty, the family, were the French lady's constant occupation — duty and the family, perhaps, Lady Kew's aim too — only the notions of duty were different in either person. Lady Kew's idea of duty to her relatives being to push them on in the world: Madame de Florac's to soothe, to pray, to attend them with constant watchfulness, to strive to mend them with pious counsel. I don't know that one lady was happier than the other. Madame de Florac's eldest son was a kindly prodigal: her second had given his whole heart to the Church: her daughter had centred hers on her own children, and was jealous if their grandmother laid a finger on them. So Leonore de Florac was quite alone. It seemed as if Heaven had turned away all her children's hearts from her. Her daily business in life was to nurse a selfish old man, into whose service she had been forced in early youth, by a paternal decree which she never questioned; giving him obedience, striving to give him respect — everything but her heart, which had gone out of her keeping. Many a good woman's life is no more cheerful; a spring of beauty, a little warmth and sunshine of love, a bitter disappointment, followed by pangs and frantic tears, then a long monotonous story of submission. "Not here, my daughter, is to be your happiness," says the priest; "whom Heaven loves it afflicts." And he points out to her the agonies of suffering saints of her sex; assures her of their present beatitudes and glories; exhorts her to bear her pains with a faith like theirs; and is empowered to promise her a like reward.

The other matron is not less alone. Her husband and son are dead, without a tear for either — to weep was not in Lady Kew's nature. Her grandson, whom she had loved perhaps more than any human being, is rebellious and estranged from her; her children, separated from her, save one whose sickness and bodily infirmity the mother resents as disgraces to herself. Her darling schemes fail somehow. She moves from town to town, and ball to ball, and hall to castle, for ever uneasy and always alone. She sees people scared at her coming; is received by sufferance and fear rather than by welcome; likes perhaps the terror which she inspires, and to enter over the breach rather than through the hospitable gate. She will try and command wherever she goes; and trample over dependants and society, with a grim consciousness that it dislikes her, a rage at its cowardice, and an unbending will to domineer. To be old, proud, lonely, and not have a friend in the world — that is her lot in it. As the French lady may be said to resemble the bird which the fables say feeds her young with her blood; this one, if she has a little natural liking for her brood, goes hunting hither and thither and robs meat for them; And so, I suppose, to make the simile good, we must compare the Marquis of Farintosh to a lamb for the nonce, and Miss Ethel Newcome to a young eaglet. Is it not a rare provision of nature (or fiction of poets, who have their own natural history) that the strong-winged bird can soar to the sun and gaze at it, and then come down from heaven and pounce on a piece of carrion?

After she became acquainted with certain circumstances, Madame de Florac was very interested about Ethel Newcome, and strove in her modest way to become intimate with her. Miss Newcome and Lady Kew attended Madame de Moncontour's Wednesday evenings. "It is as well, my dear, for the interests of the family that we should be particularly civil to these people," Lady Kew said; and accordingly she came to the Hotel de Florac, and was perfectly insolent to Madame la Princesse every Thursday evening. Towards Madame de Florac, even Lady Kew could not be rude. She was so gentle as to give no excuse for assault: Lady Kew vouchsafed you to pronounce that Madame de Florac was "tres grande dame;"—"of the sort which is almost impossible to find nowadays," Lady Kew said, who thought she possessed this dignity

in her own person. When Madame de Florac, blushing, asked Ethel to come and see her, Ethel's grandmother consented with the utmost willingness. "She is very devote, I have heard, and will try and convert you. Of course you will hold your own about that sort of thing; and have the good sense to keep off theology. There is no Roman Catholic parti in England or Scotland that is to be thought for a moment. You will see they will marry young Lord Derwenwater to an Italian princess; but he is only seventeen, and his directors never lose sight of him. Sir Bartholomew Bawkes will have a fine property when Lord Campion dies, unless Lord Campion leaves the money to the convent where his daughter is — and, of the other families, who is there? I made every inquiry purposely — that is, of course, one is anxious to know about the Catholics as about one's own people: and little Mr. Rood, who was one of my poor brother Steyne's lawyers, told me there is not one young man of that party at this moment who can be called a desirable person. Be very civil to Madame de Florac; she sees some of the old legitimists, and you know I am brouillee with that party of late years."

"There is the Marquis de Montluc, who has a large fortune for France," said Ethel, gravely; "he has a humpback, but he is very spiritual. Monsieur de Cadillan paid me some compliments the other night, and even asked George Barnes what my dot was. He is a widower, and has a wig and two daughters. Which do you think would be the greatest encumbrance, grandmamma — a humpback, or a wig and two daughters? I like Madame de Florac; for the sake of the borough, I must try and like poor Madame de Moncontour, and I will go and see them whenever you please."

So Ethel went to see Madame de Florac. She was very kind to Madame de Preville's children, Madame de Florac's grandchildren; she was gay and gracious with Madame de Moncontour. She went again and again to the Hotel de Florac, not caring for Lady Kew's own circle of statesmen and diplomatists, Russian, and Spanish, and French, whose talk about the courts of Europe — who was in favour at St. Petersburg, and who was in disgrace at Schoenbrunn — naturally did not amuse the lively young person. The goodness of Madame de Florac's life, the tranquil grace and melancholy kindness with which the French lady received her, soothed and pleased Miss Ethel. She came and reposed in Madame de Florac's quiet chamber, or sate in the shade in the sober old garden of her hotel; away from all the trouble and chatter of the salons, the gossip of the embassies, the fluttering ceremonial of the Parisian ladies' visits in their fine toilettes, the fadaises of the dancing dandies, and the pompous mysteries of the old statesmen who frequented her grandmother's apartment. The world began for her at night; when she went in the train of the old Countess from hotel to hotel, and danced waltz after waltz with Prussian and Neapolitan secretaries, with princes' officers of ordonnance — with personages even more lofty very likely — for the court of the Citizen King was then in its splendour; and there must surely have been a number of nimble young royal highnesses who would like to dance with such a beauty as Miss Newcome. The Marquis of Farintosh had a share in these polite amusements. His English conversation was not brilliant as yet, although his French was eccentric; but at the court balls, whether he appeared in his uniform of the Scotch Archers, or in his native Glenlivet tartan there certainly was not in his own or the public estimation a handsomer young nobleman in Paris that season. It has been said that he was greatly improved in dancing; and, for a young man of his age, his whiskers were really extraordinarily large and curly.

Miss Newcome, out of consideration for her grandmother's strange antipathy to him, did not inform Lady Kew that a young gentleman by the name of Clive occasionally came to visit the Hotel de Florac. At first, with her French education, Madame de Florac never would have thought of allowing the cousins to meet in her house; but with the English it was different. Paul assured her that in the English chateaux, les meess walked for entire hours with the young men, made parties of the fish, mounted to horse with them, the whole with the permission of the mothers. "When I was at Newcome, Miss Ethel rode with me several times," Paul said; "a preuve that we went to visit an old relation of the family, who adores Clive and his father." When Madame de Florac questioned her son about the young Marquis to whom it was said Ethel was engaged, Florac flouted the idea. "Engaged! This young Marquis is engaged to the Theatre des Varietes, my mother. He laughs at the notion of an engagement." When one charged him with it of late at the club; and asked how Mademoiselle Louqsor — she is so tall, that they call her the Louqsor — she is an Odalisque Obelisque, ma mere; when one asked how the Louqsor would pardon his pursuit of Miss Newcome, my Ecossois permitted himself to say in full club, that it was Miss Newcome pursued him — that nymph, that Diane, that charming and peerless young creature! On which, as the others laughed, and his friend Monsieur Walleye applauded, I dared to say in my turn, "Monsieur le Marquis, as a young man, not familiar with our language, you have said what is not true, milor, and therefore luckily not mischievous. I have the honour to count of my friends the parents of the young lady of whom you have spoken. You never could have intended to say that a young miss who lives under the guardianship of her parents, and is obedient to them, whom you meet in society all the

nights, and at whose door your carriage is to be seen every day, is capable of that with which you charge her so gaily. These things say themselves, monsieur, in the coulisses of the theatre, of women from whom you learn our language; not of young persons pure and chaste, Monsieur de Farintosh! Learn to respect your compatriots; to honour youth and innocence everywhere, monsieur! and when you forget yourself, permit one who might be your father to point where you are wrong."

"And what did he answer?" asked the Countess.

"I attended myself to a soufflet," replied Florac; "but his reply was much more agreeable. The young insulinary, with many blushes and a gros juron, as his polite way is, said he had not wished to say a word against that person. 'Of whom the name,' cried I, 'ought never to be spoken in these places.' Herewith our little dispute ended."

So, occasionally, Mr. Clive had the good luck to meet with his cousin at the Hotel de Florac, where, I dare say, all the inhabitants wished he should have his desire regarding this young lady. The Colonel had talked early to Madame de Florac about this wish of his life, impossible then to gratify, because Ethel was engaged to Lord Kew. Clive, in the fulness of his heart, imparted his passion to Florac, and in answer to Paul's offer to himself, had shown the Frenchman that kind letter in which his father bade him carry aid to "Leonore de Florac's son," in case he should need it. The case was all clear to the lively Paul. "Between my mother and your good Colonel there must have been an affair of the heart in the early days during the emigration." Clive owned his father had told him as much, at least that he himself had been attached to Mademoiselle de Blois. "It is for that that her heart yearns towards thee, that I have felt myself entrained toward thee since I saw thee"—Clive momentarily expected to be kissed again. "Tell thy father that I feel — am touched by his goodness with an eternal gratitude, and love every one that loves my mother." As far as wishes went, these two were eager promoters of Clive's little love-affair; and Madame la Princesse became equally not less willing. Clive's good looks and good-nature had had their effects upon that good-natured woman, and he was as great a favourite with her as with her husband. And thus it happened that when Miss Ethel came to pay her visit, and sate with Madame de Florac and her grandchildren in the garden, Mr. Newcome would sometimes walk up the avenue there, and salute the ladies.

If Ethel had not wanted to see him, would she have come? Yes; she used to say she was going to Madame de Preville's, not Madame de Florac's, and would insist, I have no doubt, that it was Madame de Preville whom she went to see (whose husband was a member of the Chamber of Deputies, a Conseiller d'etat; or other French bigwig), and that she had no idea of going to meet Clive, or that he was more than a casual acquaintance at the Hotel de Florac. There was no part of her conduct in all her life, which this lady, when it was impugned, would defend more strongly than this intimacy at the Hotel de Florac. It is not with this I quarrel especially. My fair young readers, who have seen a half-dozen of seasons, can you call to mind the time when you had such a friendship for Emma Tomkins, that you were always at the Tomkins's, and notes were constantly passing between your house and hers? When her brother, Paget Tomkins, returned to India, did not your intimacy with Emma fall off? If your younger sister is not in the room, I know you will own as much to me. I think you are always deceiving yourselves and other people. I think the motive you put forward is very often not the real one; though you will confess, neither to yourself, nor to any human being, what the real motive is. I think that what you desire you pursue, and are as selfish in your way as your bearded fellow-creatures are. And as for the truth being in you, of all the women in a great acquaintance, I protest there are but — never mind. A perfectly honest woman, a woman who never flatters, who never manages, who never cajoles, who never conceals, who never uses her eyes, who never speculates on the effect which she produces, who never is conscious of unspoken admiration, what a monster, I say, would such a female be! Miss Hopkins, you have been a coquette since you were a year old; you worked on your papa's friends in the nurse's arms by the fascination of your lace frock and pretty new sash and shoes; when you could just toddle, you practised your arts upon other children in the square, poor little lambkins sporting among the daisies; and nunc in ovilia, mox in reluctantes dracones, proceeding from the lambs to reluctant dragoons, you tried your arts upon Captain Paget Tomkins, who behaved so ill, and went to India without — without making those proposals which of course you never expected. Your intimacy was with Emma. It has cooled. Your sets are different. The Tomkins's are not quite etc. etc. You believe Captain Tomkins married a Miss O'Grady, etc. etc. Ah, my pretty, my sprightly Miss Hopkins, be gentle in your judgment of your neighbours!



CHAPTER XLVII

CONTAINS TWO OR THREE ACTS OF A LITTLE COMEDY

All this story is told by one, who, if he was not actually present at the circumstances here narrated, yet had information concerning them, and could supply such a narrative of facts and conversations as is, indeed, not less authentic than the details we have of other histories. How can I tell the feelings in a young lady's mind; the thoughts in a young gentleman's bosom? — As Professor Owen or Professor Agassiz takes a fragment of a bone, and builds an enormous forgotten monster out of it, wallowing in primeval quagmires, tearing down leaves and branches of plants that flourished thousands of years ago, and perhaps may be coal by this time — so the novelist puts this and that together: from the footprint finds the foot; from the foot, the brute who trod on it; from the brute, the plant he browsed on, the marsh in which he swam — and thus in his humble way a physiologist too, depicts the habits, size, appearance of the beings whereof he has to treat; — traces this slimy reptile through the mud, and describes his habits filthy and rapacious; prods down this butterfly with a pin, and depicts his beautiful coat and embroidered waistcoat; points out the singular structure of yonder more important animal, the megatherium of his history.

Suppose then, in the quaint old garden of the Hotel de Florac, two young people are walking up and down in an avenue of lime-trees, which are still permitted to grow in that ancient place. In the centre of that avenue is a fountain, surmounted by a Triton so grey and moss-eaten, that though he holds his conch to his swelling lips, curling his tail in the arid basin, his instrument has had a sinecure for at least fifty years; and did not think fit even to play when the Bourbons, in whose time he was erected, came back from their exile. At the end of the lime-tree avenue is a broken-nosed damp Faun, with a marble panpipe, who pipes to the spirit ditties which I believe never had any tune. The perron of the hotel is at the other end of the avenue; a couple of Caesars on either side of the door-window, from which the inhabitants of the hotel issue into the garden — Caracalla frowning over his mouldy shoulder at Nerva, on to whose clipped hair the roofs of the grey chateau have been dribbling for ever so many long years. There are more statues gracing this noble place. There is Cupid, who has been at the point of kissing Psyche this half-century at least, though the delicious event has never come off, through all those blazing summers and dreary winters: there is Venus and her Boy under the damp little dome of a cracked old temple. Through the alley of this old garden, in which their ancestors have disported in hoops and powder, Monsieur de Florac's chair is wheeled by St. Jean, his attendant; Madame de Preville's children trot about, and skip, and play at cache-cache. The R. P. de Florac (when at home) paces up and down and meditates his sermons; Madame de Florac sadly walks sometimes to look at her roses; and Clive and Ethel Newcome are marching up and down; the children, and their *bonne* of course being there, jumping to and fro; and Madame de Florac, having just been called away to Monsieur le Comte, whose physician has come to see him.

Ethel says, "How charming and odd this solitude is: and how pleasant to hear the voices of the children playing in the neighbouring Convent garden," of which they can see the new chapel rising over the trees.

Clive remarks that "the neighbouring hotel has curiously changed its destination. One of the members of the Directory had it; and, no doubt, in the groves of its garden, Madame Tallien, and Madame Recamier, and Madame Beauharnais have danced under the lamps. Then a Marshal of the Empire inhabited it. Then it was restored to its legitimate owner, Monsieur le Marquis de Bricquabracque, whose descendants, having a lawsuit about the Bricquabracque succession, sold the hotel to the Convent."

After some talk about nuns, Ethel says, "There were convents in England. She often thinks she would like to retire to one;" and she sighs as if her heart were in that scheme.

Clive, with a laugh, says, "Yes. If you could retire after the season, when you were very weary of the balls, a convent would be very nice. At Rome he had seen San Pietro in Montorio and Sant Onofrio, that delightful old place where Tasso died: people go and make a retreat there. In the ladies' convents, the ladies do the same thing — and he doubts whether they are much more or less wicked after their retreat, than gentlemen and ladies in England or France."

Ethel. Why do you sneer at all faith? Why should not a retreat do people good? Do you suppose the world is so satisfactory, that those who are in it never wish for a while to leave it'd (She heaves a sigh and looks down towards a

beautiful new dress of many flounces, which Madame de Flouncival, the great milliner, has sent her home that very day.)

Clive. I do not know what the world is, except from afar off. I am like the Peri who looks into Paradise and sees angels within it. I live in Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square: which is not within the gates of Paradise. I take the gate to be somewhere in Davies Street, leading out of Oxford Street into Grosvenor Square. There's another gate in Hay Hill: and another in Bruton Street, Bond —

Ethel. Don't be a goose.

Clive. Why not? It is as good to be a goose, as to be a lady — no, a gentleman of fashion. Suppose I were a Viscount, an Earl, a Marquis, a Duke, would you say Goose? No, you would say Swan.

Ethel. Unkind and unjust! — ungenerous to make taunts which common people make: and to repeat to me those silly sarcasms which your low Radical literary friends are always putting in their books! Have I ever made any difference to you? Would I not sooner see you than the fine people? Would I talk with you, or with the young dandies most willingly? Are we not of the same blood, Clive; and of all the grantees I see about, can there be a grander gentleman than your dear old father? You need not squeeze my hand so. — Those little imps are look — that has nothing to do with the question. Viens, Leonore! Tu connois bien, monsieur, n'est-ce pas? qui te fait de si jolis dessins?

Leonore. Ah, oui! Vous m'en ferez toujours, n'est-ce pas Monsieur Clive? des chevaux, et puis des petites filles avec leurs gouvernantes, et puis des maisons — et puis — et puis des maisons encore — ou est bonne maman?

[Exit little LEONORE down an alley.

Ethel. Do you remember when we were children, and you used to make drawings for us? I have some now that you did — in my geography book, which I used to read and read with Miss Quigley.

Clive. I remember all about our youth, Ethel.

Ethel. Tell me what you remember?

Clive. I remember one of the days, when I first saw you, I had been reading the Arabian Nights at school — and you came in in a bright dress of shot silk, amber, and blue — and I thought you were like that fairy-princess who came out of the crystal box — because —

Ethel. Because why?

Clive. Because I always thought that fairy somehow must be the most beautiful creature in all the world — that is “why and because.” Do not make me Mayfair curtsies. You know whether you are good-looking or not: and how long I have thought you so. I remember when I thought I would like to be Ethel's knight, and that if there was anything she would have me do, I would try and achieve it in order to please her. I remember when I was so ignorant I did not know there was any difference in rank between us.

Ethel. Ah, Clive!

Clive. Now it is altered. Now I know the difference between a poor painter and a young lady of the world. Why haven't I a title and a great fortune? Why did I ever see you, Ethel; or, knowing the distance which it seems fate has placed between us, why have I seen you again?

Ethel (innocently). Have I ever made any difference between us? Whenever I may see you, am I not too glad? Don't I see you sometimes when I should not — no — I do not say when I should not; but when others, whom I am bound to obey, forbid me? What harm is there in my remembering old days? Why should I be ashamed of our relationship? — no, not ashamed — shy should I forget it? Don't do that, sir; we have shaken hands twice already. Leonore! Xavier!

Clive. At one moment you like me: and at the next you seem to repent it. One day you seem happy when I come; and another day you are ashamed of me. Last Tuesday, when you came with those fine ladies to the Louvre, you seemed to blush when you saw me copying at my picture; and that stupid young lord looked quite alarmed because you spoke to me. My lot in life is not very brilliant; but I would not change it against that young man's — no, not with all his chances.

Ethel. What do you mean with all his chances?

Clive. You know very well. I mean I would not be as selfish or as dull, or as ill educated — I won't say worse of him — not to be as handsome, or as wealthy, or as noble as he is. I swear I would not now change my place against his, or give up being Clive Newcome to be my Lord Marquis of Farintosh, with all his acres and titles of nobility.

Ethel. Why are you for ever harping about Lord Farintosh and his titles? I thought it was only women who were

jealous — you gentlemen say so. — (Hurriedly.) I am going to-night with grandmamma to the Minister of the Interior, and then to the Russian ball; and tomorrow to the Tuileries. We dine at the Embassy first; and on Sunday, I suppose, we shall go to the Rue d'Aguesseau. I can hardly come here before Mon ——. Madam de Florac! Little Leonore is very like you — resembles you very much. My cousin says he longs to make a drawing of her.

Madame de Florac. My husband always likes that I should be present at his dinner. Pardon me, young people, that I have been away from you for a moment.

[Exeunt CLIVE, ETHEL, and Madame DE F. into the house.]

CONVERSATION II.-SCENE I

Miss Newcome arrives in Lady Kew's carriage, which enters the court of the Hotel de Florac.

Saint Jean. Mademoiselle — Madame la Comtesse is gone out but madame has charged me to say, that she will be at home to the dinner of M. le Comte, as to the ordinary.

Miss Newcome. Madame de Preville is at home?

Saint Jean. Pardon me, madame is gone out with M. le Baron, and M. Xavier, and Mademoiselle de Preville. They are gone, miss, I believe, to visit the parents of Monsieur le Baron; of whom it is probably today the fete: for Mademoiselle Leonore carried a bouquet — no doubt for her grandpapa. Will it please mademoiselle to enter? I think Monsieur the Count sounds me. (Bell rings.)

Miss Newcome. Madame la Prince — Madame la Vicomtesse is at home, Monsieur St. Jean?

Saint Jean. I go to call the people of Madame la Vicomtesse.

[Exit Old SAINT JEAN to the carriage: a Lackey comes presently in a gorgeous livery, with buttons like little cheese plates.]

The Lackey. The Princess is at home, miss, and will be most appy to see you, miss. (Miss trips up the great stair: a gentleman out of livery has come forth to the landing, and introduces her to the apartments of Madame la Princesse.)

The Lackey to the Servants on the box. Good morning, Thomas. How dy' do, old Backstopper?

Backstopper. How de do, Jim? I say, you couldn't give a feller a drink of beer, could yer, Muncontour? It was precious wet last night, I can tell you. 'Ad to stop for three hours at the Napolitum Embassy, when we was a dancing. Me and some chaps went into Bob Parsom's and had a drain. Old Cat came out and couldn't find her carriage, not by no means, could she, Tommy? Blest if I didn't nearly drive her into a vegetable-cart. I was so uncommon scruey! Who's this a-hentering at your pot-coshare? Billy, my fine feller!

Clive Newcome (by the most singular coincidence). Madame la Princesse?

Lackey. We, munseer. (He rings a bell: the gentleman in black appears as before on the landing-place up the stair.)

[Exit Clive.]

Backstopper. I say, Bill: is that young chap often a-coming about here? They'd run pretty in a curricl, wouldn't they? Miss N. and Master N. Quiet, old woman! Jest look to that mare's ead, will you, Billy? He's a fine young feller, that is. He gave me a covering the other night. Whenever I sor him in the Park, he was always riding an ansum hanimal. What is he? They said in our 'all he was a hartis. I can 'ardly think that. Why, there used to be a hartis come to our club, and painted two or three of my 'osses, and my old woman too.

Lackey. There's hartises and hartises, Backstopper. Why, there's some on 'em comes here with more stars on their coats than Dukes has got. Have you never 'eard of Mossyer Verny, or Mossyer Gudang?

Backstopper. They say this young gent is sweet on Miss N.; which, I guess, I wish he may git it.

Tommy. He! he! he!

Backstopper. Brayvo, Tommy. Tom ain't much of a man for conversation, but he's a precious one to drink. Do you think the young gent is sweet on her, Tommy? I sor him often prowling about our 'ouse in Queen Street, when we was in London.

Tommy. I guess he wasn't let in in Queen Street. I guess hour little Buttons was very near turned away for saying we was at home to him — I guess a footman's place is to keep his mouth hopen — no, his heyas hopen — and his mouth shut. (He lapses into silence.)

Lackey. I think Thomis is in love, Thomis is. Who was that young woman I saw you a-dancing of at the Showmier,

Thomis? How the young Marquis was a-cuttin' of it about there! The pleace was obliged to come up and stop him dancing. His man told old Buzfuz upstairs, that the Marquis's goings on is hawful. Up till four or five every morning; blind hookey, shampaign, the dooce's own delight. That party have had I don't know how much in diamonds — and they quarrel and swear at each other, and fling plates: it's tremendous.

Tommy. Why doesn't the Marquis man mind his own affairs? He's a supersellious beast: and will no more speak to a man, except he's out-a-livery, than he would to a chimbly-swip. He! Cuss him, I'd fight 'im for 'alf-a-crown.

Lackey. And we'd back you, Tommy. Buzfuz upstairs ain't supersellious; nor is the Prince's walet nether. That old Sangjang's a rum old guvnor. He was in England with the Count, fifty years ago — in the hemigration — in Queen Hann's time, you know. He used to support the old Count. He says he remembers a young Musseer Newcome then, that used to take lessons from the Shevallier, the Countess' father — there's my bell.

[Exit Lackey.

Backstopper. Not a bad chap that. Sports his money very free — sings an uncommon good song.

Thomas. Pretty voice, but no cultivation.

Lackey (who re-enters). Be here at two o'clock for Miss N. Take anything? Come round the corner. — There's a capital shop round the corner.

[Exeunt Servants.

SCENE II

Ethel. I can't think where Madame de Moncontour has gone. How very odd it was that you should come here — that we should both come here today! How surprised I was to see you at the Minister's! Grandmamma was so angry! "That boy pursues us wherever we go," she said. I am sure I don't know why we shouldn't meet, Clive. It seems to be wrong even my seeing you by chance here. Do you know, sir, what a scolding I had about — about going to Brighton with you? My grandmother did not hear of it till we were in Scotland, when that foolish maid of mine talked of it to her maid; and, there was oh, such a tempest! If there were a Bastile here, she would like to lock you into it. She says that you are always upon our way — I don't know how, I am sure. She says, but for you I should have been — you know what I should have been: but I am thankful that I wasn't, and Kew has got a much nicer wife in Henrietta Pulleyn, than I could ever have been to him. She will be happier than Clara, Clive. Kew is one of the kindest creatures in the world — not very wise; not very strong: but he is just such a kind, easy, generous little man, as will make a girl like Henrietta quite happy.

Clive. But not you, Ethel?

Ethel. No, nor I him. My temper is difficult, Clive, and I fear few men would bear with me. I feel, somehow, always very lonely. How old am I? Twenty — I feel sometimes as if I was a hundred; and in the midst of all these admirations and fetes and flatteries, so tired, oh, so tired! And yet if I don't have them, I miss them. How I wish I was religious like Madame de Florac: there is no day that she does not go to church. She is for ever busy with charities, clergymen, conversions; I think the Princess will be brought over ere long — that dear old Madame de Florac! and yet she is no happier than the rest of us. Hortense is an empty little thing, who thinks of her prosy fat Camille with spectacles, and of her two children, and of nothing else in the world besides. Who is happy? Clive!

Clive. You say Barnes's wife is not.

Ethel. We are like brother and sister, so I may talk to you. Barnes is very cruel to her. At Newcome, last winter, poor Clara used to come into my room with tears in her eyes morning after morning. He calls her a fool; and seems to take a pride in humiliating her before company. My poor father has luckily taken a great liking to her: and before him, for he has grown very very hot-tempered since his illness, Barnes leaves poor Clara alone. We were in hopes that the baby might make matters better, but as it is a little girl, Barnes chooses to be very much disappointed. He wants papa to give up his seat in Parliament, but he clings to that more than anything. Oh, dear me! who is happy in the world? What a pity Lord Highgate's father had not died sooner! He and Barnes have been reconciled. I wonder my brother's spirit did not revolt against it. The old lord used to keep a great sum of money at the bank, I believe: and the present one does so still: he has paid all his debts off: and Barnes is actually friends with him. He is always abusing the Dorkings, who want to borrow money from the bank, he says. This eagerness for money is horrible. If I had been Barnes I would never have been reconciled with Mr. Belsize, never, never! And yet they say he was quite right: and grandmamma is even pleased that Lord

Highgate should be asked to dine in Park Lane. Poor papa is there: come to attend his parliamentary duties as he thinks. He went to a division the other night; and was actually lifted out of his carriage and wheeled into the lobby in a chair. The ministers thanked him for coming. I believe he thinks he will have his peerage yet. Oh, what a life of vanity ours is!

Enter Madame de Moncontour. What are you young folks a-talkin' about — balls and operas? When first I was took to the opera I did not like it — and fell asleep. But now, oh, it's 'eavenly to hear Grisi sing!

The Clock. Ting, ting!

Ethel. Two o'clock already! I must run back to grandmamma. Good-bye, Madame de Moncontour; I am so sorry I have not been able to see dear Madame de Florac. I will try and come to her on Thursday — please tell her. Shall we meet you at the American minister's to-night, or at Madame de Brie's tomorrow? Friday is your own night — I hope grandmamma will bring me. How charming your last music was! Good-bye, mon cousin! You shall not come downstairs with me, I insist upon it, sir: and had much best remain here, and finish your drawing of Madame de Moncontour.

Princess. I've put on the velvet, you see, Clive — though it's very 'ot in May. Good-bye, my dear.

[Exit ETHEL.]

As far as we can judge from the above conversation, which we need not prolong — as the talk between Madame de Moncontour and Monsieur Clive, after a few complimentary remarks about Ethel, had nothing to do with the history of the Newcomes — as far as we can judge, the above little colloquy took place on Monday: and about Wednesday, Madame la Comtesse de Florac received a little note from Clive, in which he said, that one day when she came to the Louvre, where he was copying, she had admired a picture of a Virgin and Child, by Sasso Ferrato, since when he had been occupied in making a water-colour drawing after the picture, and hoped she would be pleased to accept the copy from her affectionate and grateful servant, Clive Newcome. The drawing would be done the next day, when he would call with it in his hand. Of course Madame de Florac received this announcement very kindly; and sent back by Clive's servant a note of thanks to that young gentleman.

Now on Thursday morning, about one o'clock, by one of those singular coincidences which, etc. etc., who should come to the Hotel de Florac but Miss Ethel Newcome? Madame la Comtesse was at home, waiting to receive Clive and his picture: but Miss Ethel's appearance frightened the good lady, so much so that she felt quite guilty at seeing the girl, whose parents might think — I don't know what they might not think — that Madame de Florac was trying to make a match between the young people. Hence arose the words uttered by the Countess, after a while, in-

CONVERSATION III

Madame de Florac (at work). And so you like to quit the world and to come to our triste old hotel. After today you will find it still more melancholy, my poor child.

Ethel. And why?

Madame de F. Some one who has been here to egager our little meetings will come no more.

Ethel. Is the Abbe de Florac going to quit Paris, madam?

Madame de F. It is not of him that I speak, thou knowest it very well, my daughter. Thou hast seen my poor Clive twice here. He will come once again, and then no more. My conscience reproaches me that I have admitted him at all. But he is like a son to me, and was so confided to me by his father. Five years ago, when we met, after an absence — of how many years! — Colonel Newcome told me what hopes he had cherished for his boy. You know well, my daughter, with whom those hopes were connected. Then he wrote me that family arrangements rendered his plans impossible — that the hand of Miss Newcome was promised elsewhere. When I heard from my son Paul how these negotiations were broken, my heart rejoiced, Ethel, for my friend's sake. I am an old woman now, who have seen the world, and all sorts of men. Men more brilliant no doubt I have known, but such a heart as his, such a faith as his, such a generosity and simplicity as Thomas Newcome's — never!

Ethel (smiling). Indeed, dear lady, I think with you.

Madame de F. I understand thy smile, my daughter. I can say to thee, that when we were children almost, I knew thy good uncle. My poor father took the pride of his family into exile with him. Our poverty only made his pride the greater. Even before the emigration a contract had been passed between our family and the Count de Florac. I could not be wanting to the word given by my father. For how many long years have I kept it? But when I see a young girl who may be made the

victim — the subject of a marriage of convenience, as I was — my heart pities her. And if I love her, as I love you, I tell her my thoughts. Better poverty, Ethel: better a cell in a convent: than a union without love. Is it written eternally that men are to make slaves of us? Here in France, above all, our fathers sell us every day. And what a society ours is! Thou wilt know this when thou art married. There are some laws so cruel that nature revolts against them, and breaks them — or we die in keeping them. You smile. I have been nearly fifty years dying — *n'est-ce pas?* — and am here an old woman, complaining to a young girl. It is because our recollections of youth are always young: and because I have suffered so, that I would spare those I love a like grief. Do you know that the children of those who do not love in marriage seem to bear an hereditary coldness, and do not love their parents as other children do? They witness our differences and our indifferences, hear our recriminations, take one side or the other in our disputes, and are partisans for father or mother. We force ourselves to be hypocrites, and hide our wrongs from them; we speak of a bad father with false praises; we wear feint smiles over our tears, and deceive our children — deceive them, do we? Even from the exercise of that pious deceit there is no woman but suffers in the estimation of her sons. They may shield her as champions against their father's selfishness or cruelty. In this case, what a war! What a home, where the son sees a tyrant in the father, and in the mother but a trembling victim! I speak not for myself — whatever may have been the course of our long wedded life, I have not to complain of these ignoble storms. But when the family chief neglects his wife, or prefers another to her, the children too, courtiers as we are, will desert her. You look incredulous about domestic love. Tenez, my child, if I may so surmise, I think you cannot have seen it.

Ethel (blushing, and thinking, perhaps, how she esteems her father, how her mother, and how much they esteem each other). My father and mother have been most kind to all their children, madame; and no one can say that their marriage has been otherwise than happy. My mother is the kindest and most affectionate mother, and — (Here a vision of Sir Brian alone in his room, and nobody really caring for him so much as his valet, who loves him to the extent of fifty pounds a year and perquisites; or, perhaps, Miss Cann, who reads to him, and plays a good deal of evenings, much to Sir Brian's liking — here this vision, we say, comes, and stops Miss Ethel's sentence.)

Madame de F. Your father, in his infirmity — and yet he is five years younger than Colonel Newcome — is happy to have such a wife and such children. They comfort his age; they cheer his sickness; they confide their griefs and pleasures to him — is it not so? His closing days are soothed by their affection.

Ethel. Oh, no, no! And yet it is not his fault or ours that he is a stranger to us. He used to be all day at the bank, or at night in the House of Commons, or he and mamma went to parties, and we young ones remained with the governess. Mamma is very kind. I have never, almost, known her angry; never with us; about us, sometimes, with the servants. As children, we used to see papa and mamma at breakfast; and then when she was dressing to go out. Since he has been ill, she has given up all parties. I wanted to do so too. I feel ashamed in the world, sometimes, when I think of my poor father at home, alone. I wanted to stay, but my mother and my grandmother forbade me. Grandmamma has a fortune, which she says I am to have: since then they have insisted on my being with her. She is very clever you know: she is kind too in her way; but she cannot live out of society. And I, who pretend to revolt, I like it too; and I, who rail and scorn flatterers — oh, I like admiration! I am pleased when the women hate me, and the young men leave them for me. Though I despise many of these, yet I can't help drawing them towards me. One or two of them I have seen unhappy about me, and I like it; and if they are indifferent I am angry, and never tire till they come back. I love beautiful dresses; I love jewels; I love a great name and a fine house — oh, I despise myself, when I think of these things! When I lie in bed and say I have been heartless and a coquette, I cry with humiliation; and then rebel and say, Why not? — and to-night — yes, to-night — after leaving you, I shall be wicked, I know I shall.

Madame de F. (sadly). One will pray for thee, my child.

Ethel (sadly). I thought I might be good once. I used to say my own prayers then. Now I speak them but by rote, and feel ashamed — yes, ashamed to speak them. Is it not horrid to say them, and next morning to be no better than you were last night? Often I revolt at these as at other things, and am dumb. The Vicar comes to see us at Newcome, and eats so much dinner, and pays us such court, and “Sir Brians” papa, and “Your Ladyship's” mamma. With grandmamma I go to hear a fashionable preacher — Clive's uncle, whose sister lets lodgings at Brighton; such a queer, bustling, pompous, honest old lady. Do you know that Clive's aunt lets lodgings at Brighton?

Madame de F. My father was an usher in a school. Monsieur de Florac gave lessons in the emigration. Do you know in what?

Ethel. Oh, the old nobility! that is different, you know. That Mr. Honeyman is so affected that I have no patience with

him!

Madame de F. (with a sigh). I wish you could attend the services of a better church. And when was it you thought you might be good, Ethel?

Ethel. When I was a girl. Before I came out. When I used to take long rides with my dear Uncle Newcome; and he used to talk to me in his sweet simple way; and he said I reminded him of some one he once knew.

Madame de F. Who — who was that, Ethel?

Ethel (looking up at Gerard's picture of the Countess de Florac). What odd dresses you wore in the time of the Empire, Madame de Florac! How could you ever have such high waists, and such wonderful fraises!

(MADAME DE FLORAC kisses ETHEL. Tableau.)

Enter SAINT JEAN, preceding a gentleman with a drawing-board under his arm.

Saint Jean. Monsieur Claive! [Exit SAINT JEAN.]

Clive. How do you do, Madame la Comtesse? Mademoiselle, j'ai l'honneur de vous souhaiter le bon jour.

Madame de F. Do you come from the Louvre? Have you finished that beautiful copy, mon ami?

Clive. I have brought it for you. It is not very good. There are always so many petites demoiselles copying that Sasso Ferrato; and they chatter about it so, and hop from one easel to another; and the young artists are always coming to give them advice — so that there is no getting a good look at the picture. But I have brought you the sketch; and am so pleased that you asked for it.

Madame de F. (surveying the sketch). It is charming — charming! What shall we give to our painter for his chef-d'oeuvre?

Clive (kisses her hand). There is my pay! And you will be glad to hear that two of my portraits have been received at the Exhibition. My uncle, the clergyman, and Mr. Butts, of the Life Guards.

Ethel. Mr. Butts — quel nom! Je ne connois aucun M. Butts!

Clive. He has a famous head to draw. They refused Crackthorpe and — and one or two other heads I sent in.

Ethel (tossing up hers). Miss Mackenzie's, I suppose!

Clive. Yes, Miss Mackenzie's. It is a sweet little face; too delicate for my hand, though.

Ethel. So is a wax-doll's a pretty face. Pink cheeks; china-blue eyes; and hair the colour of old Madame Hempenfeld's — not her last hair — her last but one. (She goes to a window that looks into the court.)

Clive (to the Countess). Miss Mackenzie speaks more respectfully of other people's eyes and hair. She thinks there is nobody in the world to compare to Miss Newcome.

Madame de F. (aside). And you, mon ami? This is the last time, entendez-vous? You must never come here again. If M. le Comte knew it he never would pardon me. Encore? (He kisses her ladyship's hand again.)

Clive. A good action gains to be repeated. Miss Newcome, does the view of the courtyard please you? The old trees and the garden are better. That dear old Faun without a nose! I must have a sketch of him: the creepers round the base are beautiful.

Miss N. I was looking to see if the carriage had come for me. It is time that I return home.

Clive. That is my brougham. May I carry you anywhere? I hire him by the hour: and I will carry you to the end of the world.

Miss N. Where are you going, Madame de Floras? — to show that sketch to M. le Comte? Dear me! I don't fancy that M. de Florac can care for such things! I am sure I have seen many as pretty on the quays for twenty-five sous. I wonder the carriage is not come for me.

Clive. You can take mine without my company, as that seems not to please you.

Miss N. Your company is sometimes very pleasant — when you please. Sometimes, as last night, for instance, when you particularly lively.

Clive. Last night, after moving heaven and earth to get an invitation to Madame de Brie — I say, heaven and earth, that is a French phrase — I arrive there; I find Miss Newcome engaged for almost every dance, waltzing with M. de Klingenspoehr, galloping with Count de Capri, galloping and waltzing with the most noble the Marquis of Farintosh. She

will scarce speak to me during the evening; and when I wait till midnight, her grandmamma whisks her home, and I am left alone for my pains. Lady Kew is in one of her high moods, and the only words she condescends to say to me are, "Oh, I thought you had returned to London," with which she turns her venerable back upon me.

Miss N. A fortnight ago you said you were going to London. You said the copies you were about here would not take you another week, and that was three weeks since.

Clive. It were best I had gone.

Miss N. If you think so, I cannot but think so.

Clive. Why do I stay and hover about you, and follow you know — I follow you? Can I live on a smile vouchsafed twice a week, and no brighter than you give to all the world? What I do I get, but to hear your beauty praised, and to see you, night after night, happy and smiling and triumphant, the partner of other men? Does it add zest to your triumph, to think that I behold it? I believe you would like a crowd of us to pursue you.

Miss N. To pursue me; and if they find me alone, by chance to compliment me with such speeches as you make? That would be pleasure indeed! Answer me here in return, Clive. Have I ever disguised from any of my friends the regard I have for you? Why should I? Have not I taken your part when you were maligned? In former days, when — when Lord Kew asked me, as he had a right to do then — I said it was as a brother I held you; and always would. If I have been wrong, it has been for two or three times in seeing you at all — or seeing you thus; in letting you speak to me as you do — injure me as you do. Do you think I have not hard enough words said to me about you, but that you must attack me too in turn? Last night only, because you were at the ball — it was very, very wrong of me to tell you I was going there — as we went home, Lady Kew — Go, sir. I never thought you would have seen in me this humiliation.

Clive. Is it possible that I should have made Ethel Newcome shed tears? Oh, dry them, dry them. Forgive me, Ethel, forgive me! I have no right to jealousy, or to reproach you — I know that. If others admire you, surely I ought to know that they — they do but as I do: I should be proud, not angry, that they admire my Ethel — my sister, if you can be no more.

Ethel. I will be that always, whatever harsh things you think or say of me. There, sir, I am not going to be so foolish as to cry again. Have you been studying very hard? Are your pictures good at the Exhibition? I like you with your mustachios best, and order you not to cut them off again. The young men here wear them. I hardly knew Charles Beardmore when he arrived from Berlin the other day, like a sapper and miner. His little sisters cried out, and were quite frightened by his apparition. Why are you not in diplomacy? That day, at Brighton, when Lord Farintosh asked whether you were in the army, I thought to myself, why is he not?

Clive. A man in the army may pretend to anything, n'est-ce pas? He wears a lovely uniform. He may be a General, a K.C.B., a Viscount, an Earl. He may be valiant in arms, and wanting a leg, like the lover in the song. It is peace-time, you say? so much the worse career for a soldier. My father would not have me, he said, for ever dangling in barracks, or smoking in country billiard-rooms. I have no taste for law: and as for diplomacy, I have no relations in the Cabinet, and no uncles in the House of Peers. Could my uncle, who is in Parliament, help me much, do you think? or would he, if he could? — or Barnes, his noble son and heir, after him?

Ethel (musing). Barnes would not, perhaps, but papa might even still, and you have friends who are fond of you.

Clive. No — no one can help me: and my art, Ethel, is not only my choice and my love, but my honour too. I shall never distinguish myself in it: I may take smart likenesses, but that is all. I am not fit to grind my friend Ridley's colours for him. Nor would my father, who loves his own profession so, make a good general probably. He always says so. I thought better of myself when I began as a boy; and was a conceited youngster, expecting to carry it all before me. But as I walked the Vatican, and looked at Raphael, and at the great Michael — I knew I was but a poor little creature; and in contemplating his genius, shrunk up till I felt myself as small as a man looks under the dome of St. Peter's. Why should I wish to have a great genius? — Yes, there is one reason why I should like to have it.

Ethel. And that is?

Clive. To give it you, if it pleased you, Ethel. But I might wish for the roc's egg: there is no way of robbing the bird. I must take a humble place, and you want a brilliant one. A brilliant one! Oh, Ethel, what a standard we folks measure fame by! To have your name in the Morning Post, and to go to three balls every night. To have your dress described at the Drawing-Room; and your arrival, from a round of visits in the country, at your town-house; and the entertainment of the Marchioness of Farin —

Ethel. Sir, if you please, no calling names.

Clive. I wonder at it. For you are in the world, and you love the world, whatever you may say. And I wonder that one of your strength of mind should so care for it. I think my simple old father is much finer than all your grandees: his single-mindedness more lofty than all their bowing, and haughtiness, and scheming. What are you thinking of, as you stand in that pretty attitude — like Mnemosyne — with your finger on your chin?

Ethel. Mnemosyne! who was she? I think I like you best when you are quiet and gentle, and not when you are flaming out and sarcastic, sir. And so you think you will never be a famous painter? They are quite in society here. I was so pleased, because two of them dined at the Tuileries when grandmamma was there; and she mistook one, who was covered all over with crosses, for an ambassador, I believe, till the Queen call him Monsieur Delaroche. She says there is no knowing people in this country. And do you think you will never be able to paint as well as M. Delaroche?

Clive. No — never.

Ethel. And — and — you will never give up painting?

Clive. No — never. That would be like leaving your friend who was poor; or deserting your mistress because you were disappointed about her money. They do those things in the great world, Ethel.

Ethel (with a sigh). Yes.

Clive. If it is so false, and base, and hollow, this great world — if its aims are so mean, its successes so paltry, the sacrifices it asks of you so degrading, the pleasures it gives you so wearisome, shameful even, why does Ethel Newcome cling to it? Will you be fairer, dear, with any other name than your own? Will you be happier, after a month, at bearing a great title, with a man whom you can't esteem, tied for ever to you, to be the father of Ethel's children, and the lord and master of her life and actions? The proudest woman in the world consents to bend herself to this ignominy, and own that a coronet is a bribe sufficient for her honour! What is the end of a Christian life, Ethel; a girl's pure nurture? — it can't be this! Last week, as we walked in the garden here, and heard the nuns singing in their chapel, you said how hard it was that poor women should be imprisoned so, and were thankful that in England we had abolished that slavery. Then you cast your eyes to the ground, and mused as you paced the walk; and thought, I know, that perhaps their lot was better than some others.

Ethel. Yes, I did. I was thinking that almost all women are made slaves one way or other, and that these poor nuns perhaps were better off than we are.

Clive. I never will quarrel with nun or matron for following her vocation. But for our women, who are free, why should they rebel against Nature, shut their hearts up, sell their lives for rank and money, and forgo the most precious right of their liberty? Look, Ethel, dear. I love you so, that if I thought another had your heart, an honest man, a loyal gentleman, like — like him of last year even, I think I could go back with a God bless you, and take to my pictures again, and work on in my own humble way. You seem like a queen to me, somehow; and I am but a poor, humble fellow, who might be happy, I think, if you were. In those balls, where I have seen you surrounded by those brilliant young men, noble and wealthy, admirers like me, I have often thought, "How could I aspire to such a creature, and ask her to forgo a palace to share the crust of a poor painter?"

Ethel. You spoke quite scornfully of palaces just now, Clive. I won't say a word about the — the regard which you express for me. I think you have it. Indeed, I do. But it were best not said, Clive; best for me, perhaps, not to own that I know it. In your speeches, my poor boy — and you will please not to make any more, or I never can see you or speak to you again, never — you forgot one part of a girl's duty: obedience to her parents. They would never agree to my marrying any one below — any one whose union would not be advantageous in a worldly point of view. I never would give such pain to the poor father, or to the kind soul who never said a harsh word to me since I was born. My grandmamma is kind, too, in her way. I came to her of my own free will. When she said she would leave me her fortune, do you think it was for myself alone that I was glad? My father's passion was to make an estate, and all my brothers and sisters will be but slenderly portioned. Lady Kew said she would help them if I came to her — and — it is the welfare of those little people that depends upon me, Clive. Now, do you see, brother, why you must speak to me so no more? There is the carriage. God bless you, dear Clive.

(Clive sees the carriage drive away after Miss Newcome has entered it without once looking up to the window where he stands. When it is gone he goes to the opposite windows of the salon, which are open, towards the garden. The chapel

music begins to play from the Convent, next door. As he hears it he sinks down, his head in his hands.)

Enter Madame de Florac (She goes to him with anxious looks.). What hast thou, my child? Hast thou spoken?

Clive (very steadily). Yes.

Madame de F. And she loves thee? I know she loves thee.

Clive. You hear the organ of the convent?

Madame de F. Qu'as tu?

Clive. I might as well hope to marry one of the sisters of yonder convent, dear lady. (He sinks down again, and she kisses him.)

Clive. I never had a mother; but you seem like one.

Madame de F. Mon fils! Oh, mon fils!



CHAPTER XLVIII

IN WHICH BENEDICK IS A MARRIED MAN

We have all heard of the dying French Duchess, who viewed her coming dissolution and subsequent fate so easily, because she said she was sure that Heaven must deal politely with a person of her quality; — I suppose Lady Kew had some such notions regarding people of rank: her long-suffering towards them was extreme; in fact, there were vices which the old lady thought pardonable, and even natural, in a young nobleman of high station, which she never would have excused in persons of vulgar condition.

Her ladyship's little knot of associates and scandal-bearers — elderly rouses and ladies of the world, whose business it was to know all sorts of noble intrigues and exalted tittle-tattle; what was happening among the devotees of the exiled court at Frobstdorf; what among the citizen princes of the Tuileries; who was the reigning favourite of the Queen Mother at Aranjuez; who was smitten with whom at Vienna or Naples; and the last particulars of the chroniques scandaleuses of Paris and London; — Lady Kew, I say, must have been perfectly aware of my Lord Farintosh's amusements, associates, and manner of life, and yet she never, for one moment, exhibited any anger or dislike towards that nobleman. Her amiable heart was so full of kindness and forgiveness towards the young prodigal that, even without any repentance on his part, she was ready to take him to her old arms, and give him her venerable benediction. Pathetic sweetness of nature! Charming tenderness of disposition! With all his faults and wickednesses, his follies and his selfishness, there was no moment when Lady Kew would not have received the young lord, and endowed him with the hand of her darling Ethel.

But the hopes which this fond forgiving creature had nurtured for one season, and carried on so resolutely to the next, were destined to be disappointed yet a second time, by a most provoking event, which occurred in the Newcome family. Ethel was called away suddenly from Paris by her father's third and last paralytic seizure. When she reached her home, Sir Brian could not recognise her. A few hours after her arrival, all the vanities of the world were over for him: and Sir Barnes Newcome, Baronet, reigned in his stead. The day after Sir Brian was laid in his vault at Newcome — a letter appeared in the local papers addressed to the Independent Electors of that Borough, in which his orphan son, feelingly alluding to the virtue, the services, and the political principles of the deceased, offered himself as a candidate for the seat in Parliament now vacant. Sir Barnes announced that he should speedily pay his respects in person to the friends and supporters of his lamented father. That he was a staunch friend of our admirable constitution need not be said. That he was a firm, but conscientious upholder of our Protestant religion, all who knew Barnes Newcome must be aware. That he would do his utmost to advance the interests of this great agricultural, this great manufacturing county and borough, we may be sure he avowed; as that he would be (if returned to represent Newcome in Parliament) the advocate of every rational reform, the unhesitating opponent of every reckless innovation. In fine, Barnes Newcome's manifesto to the Electors of Newcome was as authentic a document and gave him credit for as many public virtues, as that slab over poor Sir Brian's bones in the chancel of Newcome church, which commemorated the good qualities of the defunct, and the grief of his heir.

In spite of the virtues, personal and inherited, of Barnes, his seat for Newcome was not got without a contest. The dissenting interest and the respectable Liberals of the borough wished to set up Samuel Higg, Esq.; against Sir Barnes Newcome: and now it was that Barnes's civilities of the previous year, aided by Madame de Moncontour's influence over her brother, bore their fruit. Mr. Higg declined to stand against Sir Barnes Newcome, although Higg's political principles were by no means those of the honourable Baronet; and the candidate from London, whom the Newcome extreme Radicals set up against Barnes, was nowhere on the poll when the day of election came. So Barnes had the desire of his heart; and, within two months after his father's demise, he sat in Parliament as Member for Newcome.

The bulk of the late Baronet's property descended, of course, to his eldest son: who grumbled, nevertheless, at the provision made for his brothers and sisters, and that the town-house should have been left to Lady Anne, who was too poor to inhabit it. But Park Lane is the best situation in London, and Lady Anne's means were greatly improved by the annual produce of the house in Park Lane, which, as we all know, was occupied by a foreign minister for several subsequent seasons. Strange mutations of fortune: old places; new faces; what Londoner does not see and speculate upon them every day? Coelia's boudoir, who is dead with the daisies over her at Kensal Green, is now the chamber where Delia is consulting Dr. Locock, or Julia's children are romping; Florio's dining-tables have now Pollio's wine upon them: Calista, being a

widow, and (to the surprise of everybody who knew Trimalchio, and enjoyed his famous dinners) left but very poorly off, lets the house, and the rich, chaste, and appropriate planned furniture, by Dowbiggin, and the proceeds go to keep her little boys at Eton. The next year, as Mr. Clive Newcome rode by the once familiar mansion (whence the hatchment had been removed, announcing that there was in Coelo Quies for the late Sir Brian Newcome, Bart.), alien faces looked from over the flowers in the balconies. He got a card for an entertainment from the occupant of the mansion, H.E. the Bulgarian minister; and there was the same crowd in the reception-room and on the stairs, the same grave men from Gunter's distributing the refreshments in the dining-room, the same old Smee, R. A. (always in the room where the edibles were), cringing and flattering to the new occupants; and the same effigy of poor Sir Brian, in his deputy-lieutenant's uniform, looking blankly down from over the sideboard, at the feast which his successors were giving. A dreamy old ghost of a picture. Have you ever looked at those round George IV.'s banqueting-hall at Windsor? Their frames still hold them, but they smile ghostly smiles, and swagger in robes and velvets which are quite faint and faded: their crimson coats have a twilight tinge: the lustre of their stars has twinkled out: they look as if they were about to flicker off the wall and retire to join their originals in limbo.

* * * * *

Nearly three years had elapsed since the good Colonel's departure for India, and during this time certain changes had occurred in the lives of the principal actors and the writer of this history. As regards the latter, it must be stated that the dear old firm of Lamb Court had been dissolved, the junior member having contracted another partnership. The chronicler of these memoirs was a bachelor no longer. My wife and I had spent the winter at Rome (favourite resort of young married couples); and had heard from the artists there Clive's name affectionately repeated; and many accounts of his sayings and doings, his merry supper-parties, and the talents of young Ridley, his friend. When we came to London in the spring, almost our first visit was to Clive's apartments in Charlotte Street, whither my wife delightedly went to give her hand to the young painter.

But Clive no longer inhabited that quiet region. On driving to the house we found a bright brass plate, with the name of Mr. J. J. Ridley on the door, and it was J. J.'s hand which I shook (his other being engaged with a great palette, and a sheaf of painting-brushes) when we entered the well-known quarters. Clive's picture hung over the mantelpiece, where his father's head used to hang in our time — a careful and beautifully executed portrait of the lad in a velvet coat and a Roman hat, with that golden beard which was sacrificed to the exigencies of London fashion. I showed Laura the likeness until she could become acquainted with the original. On her expressing her delight at the picture, the painter was pleased to say, in his modest blushing way, that he would be glad to execute my wife's portrait too, nor, as I think, could any artist find a subject more pleasing.

After admiring others of Mr. Ridley's works, our talk naturally reverted to his predecessor. Clive had migrated to much more splendid quarters. Had we not heard? he had become a rich man, a man of fashion. "I fear he is very lazy about the arts," said J. J., with regret on his countenance; "though I begged and prayed him to be faithful to his profession. He would have done very well in it, in portrait-painting especially. Look here, and here, and here!" said Ridley, producing fine vigorous sketches of Clive's. "He had the art of seizing the likeness, and of making all his people look like gentlemen, too. He was improving every day, when this abominable bank came in the way, and stopped him."

What bank? I did not know the new Indian bank of which the Colonel was a director. Then, of course, I was aware that the mercantile affair in question was the Bundelcund Bank, about which the Colonel had written to me from India more than a year since, announcing that fortunes were to be made by it, and that he had reserved shares for me in the company. Laura admired all Clive's sketches, which his affectionate brother-artist showed to her with the exception of one representing the reader's humble servant; which, Mrs. Pendennis considered, by no means did justice to the original.

Bidding adieu to the kind J. J., and leaving him to pursue his art, in that silent serious way in which he daily laboured at it, we drove to Fitzroy Square hard by, where I was not displeased to show the good old hospitable James Binnie the young lady who bore my name. But here, too, we were disappointed. Placards wafered in the windows announced that the old house was to let. The woman who kept it brought a card in Mrs. Mackenzie's frank handwriting, announcing Mr. James Binnie's address was "Poste-restante, Pau, in the Pyrenees," and that his London agents were Messrs. So-and-so. The woman said she believed the gentleman had been unwell. The house, too, looked very pale, dismal, and disordered. We

drove away from the door, grieving to think that ill-health, or any other misfortunes, had befallen good old James.

Mrs. Pendennis drove back to our lodgings, Brixham's, in Jermyn Street, while I sped to the City, having business in that quarter. It has been said that I kept a small account with Hobson Brothers, to whose bank I went, and entered the parlour with that trepidation which most poor men feel on presenting themselves before City magnates and capitalists. Mr. Hobson Newcome shook hands most jovially and good-naturedly, congratulated me on my marriage, and so forth, and presently Sir Barnes Newcome made his appearance, still wearing his mourning for his deceased father.

Nothing could be more kind, pleasant, and cordial than Sir Barnes's manner. He seemed to know well about my affairs; complimented me on every kind of good fortune; had heard that I had canvassed the borough in which I lived; hoped sincerely to see me in Parliament and on the right side; was most anxious to become acquainted with Mrs. Pendennis, of whom Lady Rockminster said all sorts of kind things; and asked for our address, in order that Lady Clara Newcome might have the pleasure of calling on my wife. This ceremony was performed soon afterwards; and an invitation to dinner from Sir Barnes and Lady Clara Newcome speedily followed it.

Sir Barnes Newcome, Bart., M.P., I need not say, no longer inhabited the small house which he had occupied immediately after his marriage: but dwelt in a much more spacious mansion in Belgravia, where he entertained his friends. Now that he had come into his kingdom, I must say that Barnes was by no means so insufferable as in the days of his bachelorhood. He had sown his wild oats, and spoke with regret and reserve of that season of his moral culture. He was grave, sarcastic, statesmanlike; did not try to conceal his baldness (as he used before his father's death, by bringing lean wisps of hair over his forehead from the back of his head); talked a great deal about the House; was assiduous in his attendance there and in the City; and conciliating with all the world. It seemed as if we were all his constituents, and though his efforts to make himself agreeable were rather apparent, the effect succeeded pretty well. We met Mr. and Mrs. Hobson Newcome, and Clive, and Miss Ethel looking beautiful in her black robes. It was a family party, Sir Barnes said, giving us to understand, with a decorous solemnity in face and voice, that no large parties as yet could be received in that house of mourning.

To this party was added, rather to my surprise, my Lord Highgate, who under the sobriquet of Jack Belsize has been presented to the reader of this history. Lord Highgate gave Lady Clara his arm to dinner, but went and took a place next Miss Newcome, on the other side of her; that immediately by Lady Clara being reserved for a guest who had not as yet made his appearance.

Lord Highgate's attentions to his neighbour, his laughing and talking, were incessant; so much so that Clive, from his end of the table, scowled in wrath at Jack Belsize's assiduities: it was evident that the youth, though hopeless, was still jealous and in love with his charming cousin.

Barnes Newcome was most kind to all his guests: from Aunt Hobson to your humble servant, there was not one but the of master the house had an agreeable word for him. Even for his cousin Samuel Newcome, a gawky youth with an eruptive countenance, Barnes had appropriate words of conversation, and talked about King's College, of which the lad was an ornament, with the utmost affability. He complimented that institution and young Samuel, and by that shot knocked not only over Sam but his mamma too. He talked to Uncle Hobson about his crops; to Clive about his pictures; to me about the great effect which a certain article in the Pall Mall Gazette had produced in the House, where the Chancellor of the Exchequer was perfectly livid with fury, and Lord John bursting out laughing at the attack: in fact, nothing could be more amiable than our host on this day. Lady Clara was very pretty — grown a little stouter since her marriage; the change only became her. She was a little silent, but then she had Uncle Hobson on her left-hand side, between whom and her ladyship there could not be much in common, and the place at the right hand was still vacant. The person with whom she talked most freely was Clive, who had made a beautiful drawing of her and her little girl, for which the mother and the father too, as it appeared, were very grateful.

What had caused this change in Barnes's behaviour? Our particular merits or his own private reform? In the two years over which this narrative has had to run in the course of as many chapters, the writer had inherited a property so small that it could not occasion a banker's civility; and I put down Sir Barnes Newcome's politeness to a sheer desire to be well with me. But with Lord Highgate and Clive the case was different, as you must now hear.

Lord Highgate, having succeeded to his father's title and fortune, had paid every shilling of his debts, and had sowed his wild oats to the very last corn. His lordship's account at Hobson Brothers was very large. Painful events of three years'

date, let us hope, were forgotten — gentlemen cannot go on being in love and despairing, and quarrelling for ever. When he came into his funds, Highgate behaved with uncommon kindness to Rooster, who was always straitened for money: and when the late Lord Dorking died and Rooster succeeded to him, there was a meeting at Chanticleere between Highgate and Barnes Newcome and his wife, which went off very comfortably. At Chanticleere the Dowager Lady Kew and Miss Newcome were also staying, when Lord Highgate announced his prodigious admiration for the young lady; and, it was said, corrected Farintosh, as a low-minded, foul-tongued young cub, for daring to speak disrespectfully of her. Nevertheless, vous concevez, when a man of the Marquis's rank was supposed to look with the eyes of admiration upon a young lady, Lord Highgate would not think of spoiling sport, and he left Chanticleere declaring that he was always destined to be unlucky in love. When old Lady Kew was obliged to go to Vichy for her lumbago, Highgate said to Barnes, "Do ask your charming sister to come to you in London; she will bore herself to death with the old woman at Vichy, or with her mother at Rugby" (whither Lady Anne had gone to get her boys educated), and accordingly Miss Newcome came on a visit to her brother and sister, at whose house we have just had the honour of seeing her.

When Rooster took his seat in the House of Lords, he was introduced by Highgate and Kew, as Highgate had been introduced by Kew previously. Thus these three gentlemen all rode in gold coaches; had all got coronets on their heads; as you will, my respected young friend, if you are the eldest son of a peer who dies before you. And now they were rich, they were all going to be very good boys, let us hope. Kew, we know, married one of the Dorking family, that second Lady Henrietta Pulleyn, whom we described as frisking about at Baden, and not in the least afraid of him. How little the reader knew, to whom we introduced the girl in that chatty offhand way, that one day the young creature would be a countess! But we knew it all the while — and, when she was walking about with the governess, or romping with her sisters; and when she had dinner at one o'clock; and when she wore a pinafore very likely — we secretly respected her as the future Countess of Kew, and mother of the Viscount Walham.

Lord Kew was very happy with his bride, and very good to her. He took Lady Kew to Paris, for a marriage trip; but they lived almost altogether at Kewbury afterwards, where his lordship sowed tame oats now after his wild ones, and became one of the most active farmers of his county. He and the Newcomes were not very intimate friends; for Lord Kew was heard to say that he disliked Barnes more after his marriage than before. And the two sisters, Lady Clara and Lady Kew, had a quarrel on one occasion, when the latter visited London just before the dinner at which we have just assisted — nay, at which we are just assisting, took place — a quarrel about Highgate's attentions to Ethel, very likely. Kew was dragged into it, and hot words passed between him and Jack Belsize; and Jack did not go down to Kewbury afterwards, though Kew's little boy was christened after him. All these interesting details about people of the very highest rank, we are supposed to whisper in the reader's ear as we are sitting at a Belgravian dinner-table. My dear Barmecide friend, isn't it pleasant to be in such fine company?

And now we must tell how it is that Clive Newcome, Esq., whose eyes are flashing fire across the flowers of the table at Lord Highgate, who is making himself so agreeable to Miss Ethel — now we must tell how it is that Clive and his cousin Barnes have grown to be friends again.

The Bundelcund Bank, which had been established for four years, had now grown to be one of the most flourishing commercial institutions in Bengal. Founded, as the prospectus announced, at a time when all private credit was shaken by the failure of the great Agency Houses, of which the downfall had carried dismay and ruin throughout the Presidency, the B. B. had been established on the only sound principle of commercial prosperity — that is association. The native capitalists, headed by the great firm of Rummun Loll and Co., of Calcutta, had largely embarked in the B. B., and the officers of the two services and the European mercantile body of Calcutta had been invited to take shares in an institution which, to merchants, native and English, civilian and military men, was alike advantageous and indispensable. How many young men of the latter services had been crippled for life by the ruinous cost of agencies, of which the profits to the agents themselves were so enormous! The shareholders of the B. B. were their own agents; and the greatest capitalist in India as well as the youngest ensign in the service might invest at the largest and safest premium, and borrow at the smallest interest, by becoming according to his means, a shareholder in the B. B. Their correspondents were established in each presidency and in every chief city of India, as well as at Sydney, Singapore, Canton, and, of course, London. With China they did, an immense opium-trade, of which the profits were so great, that it was only in private sittings of the B. B. managing committee that the details and accounts of these operations could be brought forward. Otherwise the books of the bank were open to every shareholder; and the ensign or the young civil servant was at liberty at any time to inspect his

own private account as well as the common ledger. With New South Wales they carried on a vast trade in wool, supplying that great colony with goods, which their London agents enabled them to purchase in such a way as to give them the command of the market. As if to add to their prosperity, coppermines were discovered on lands in the occupation of the B. Banking Company, which gave the most astonishing returns. And throughout the vast territories of British India, through the great native firm of Rummun Loll and Co., the Bundelcund Banking Company had possession of the native markets. The order from Birmingham for idols alone (made with their copper and paid in their wool) was enough to make the Low Church party in England cry out; and a debate upon this subject actually took place in the House of Commons, of which the effect was to send up the shares of the Bundelcund Banking Company very considerably upon the London Exchange.

The fifth half-yearly dividend was announced at twelve and a quarter per cent of the paid-up capital: the accounts from the copper-mine sent the dividend up to a still greater height, and carried the shares to an extraordinary premium. In the third year of the concern, the house of Hobson Brothers, of London, became the agents of the Bundelcund Banking Company of India and amongst our friends, James Binnie, who had prudently held out for some time and Clive Newcome, Esq., became shareholders, Clive's good father having paid the first instalments of the lad's shares up in Calcutta, and invested every rupee he could himself command in this enterprise. When Hobson Brothers joined it, no wonder James Binnie was convinced; Clive's friend, the Frenchman, and through that connexion the house of Higg, of Newcome and Manchester, entered into the affair; and amongst the minor contributors in England we may mention Miss Cann, who took a little fifty-pound-note share and dear old Miss Honeyman; and J. J., and his father, Ridley, who brought a small bag of saving — all knowing that their Colonel, who was eager that his friends should participate in his good fortune, would never lead them wrong. To Clive's surprise Mrs. Mackenzie, between whom and himself there was a considerable coolness, came to his chambers, and with a solemn injunction that the matter between them should be quite private, requested him to purchase 1500 pounds worth of Bundelcund shares for her and her darling girls, which he did, astonished to find the thrifty widow in possession of so much money. Had Mr. Pendennis's mind not been bent at this moment on quite other subjects, he might have increased his own fortune by the Bundelcund Bank speculation; but in these two years I was engaged in matrimonial affairs (having Clive Newcome, Esq., as my groomsman on a certain interesting occasion). When we returned from our tour abroad the India Bank shares were so very high that I did not care to purchase, though I found an affectionate letter from our good Colonel (enjoining me to make my fortune) awaiting me at the agent's, and my wife received a pair of beautiful Cashmere shawls from the same kind friend.



CHAPTER XLIX

CONTAINS AT LEAST SIX MORE COURSES AND TWO DESSERTS

The banker's dinner-party over, we returned to our apartments, having dropped Major Pendennis at his lodgings, and there, as the custom is amongst most friendly married couples, talked over the company and the dinner. I thought my wife would naturally have liked Sir Barnes Newcome, who was very attentive to her, took her to dinner as the bride, and talked ceaselessly to her during the whole entertainment.

Laura said No — she did not know why — could there be any better reason? There was a tone about Sir Barnes Newcome she did not like — especially in his manner to women.

I remarked that he spoke sharply and in a sneering manner to his wife, and treated one or two remarks which she made as if she was an idiot.

Mrs. Pendennis flung up her head as much as to say, "and so she is."

Mr. Pendennis. What, the wife too, my dear Laura! I should have thought such a pretty, simple, innocent young woman, with just enough good looks to make her pass muster, who is very well bred and not brilliant at all, — I should have thought such a one might have secured a sister's approbation.

Mrs. Pendennis. You fancy we are all jealous of one another. No protests of ours can take that notion out of your heads. My dear Pen, I do not intend to try. We are not jealous of mediocrity: we are not patient of it. I dare say we are angry because we see men admire it so. You gentlemen, who pretend to be our betters, give yourselves such airs of protection, and profess such a lofty superiority over us, prove it by quitting the cleverest woman in the room for the first pair of bright eyes and dimpled cheeks that enter. It was those charms which attracted you in Lady Clara, sir.

Pendennis. I think she is very pretty, and very innocent, and artless.

Mrs. P. Not very pretty, and perhaps not so very artless.

Pendennis. How can you tell, you wicked woman? Are you such a profound deceiver yourself, that you can instantly detect artifice in others? O Laura!

Mrs. P. We can detect all sorts of things. The inferior animals have instincts, you know. (I must say my wife is always very satirical upon this point of the relative rank of the sexes.) One thing I am sure of is, that she is not happy; and oh, Pen! that she does not care much for her little girl.

Pendennis. How do you know that, my dear?

Mrs. P. We went upstairs to see the child after dinner. It was at my wish. The mother did not offer to go. The child was awake and crying. Lady Clara did not offer to take it. Ethel — Miss Newcome took it, rather to my surprise, for she seems very haughty; and the nurse, who I suppose was at supper, came running up at the noise, and then the poor little thing was quiet.

Pendennis. I remember we heard the music as the dining-room door was open; and Newcome said, "That is what you will have to expect, Pendennis."

Mrs. P. Hush, sir! If my baby cries, I think you must expect me to run out of the room. I liked Miss Newcome after seeing her with the poor little thing. She looked so handsome as she walked with it! I longed to have it myself.

Pendennis. Tout vient a fin, a qui sait —

Mrs. P. Don't be silly. What a dreadful dreadful place this great world of yours is, Arthur; where husbands do not seem to care for their wives; where mothers do not love their children; where children love their nurses best; where men talk what they call gallantry!

Pendennis. What?

Mrs. P. Yes, such as that dreary, languid, pale, bald, cadaverous, leering man whispered to me. Oh, how I dislike him! I am sure he is unkind to his wife. I am sure he has a bad temper; and if there is any excuse for —

Pendennis. For what?

Mrs. P. For nothing. But you heard yourself that he had a bad temper, and spoke sneeringly to his wife. What could

make her marry him?

Pendennis. Money, and the desire of papa and mamma. For the same reason Clive's flame, poor Miss Newcome, was brought out today; that vacant seat at her side was for Lord Farintosh. who did not come. And the Marquis not being present, the Baron took his innings. Did you not see how tender he was to her, and how fierce poor Clive looked?

Mrs. P. Lord Highgate was very attentive to Miss Newcome, was he?

Pendennis. And some years ago, Lord Highgate was breaking his heart about whom do you think? about Lady Clara Pulleyn, our hostess of last night. He was Jack Belsize then, a younger son, plunged over head and ears in debt; and of course there could be no marriage. Clive was present at Baden when a terrible scene took place, and carried off poor Jack to Switzerland and Italy, where he remained till his father died, and he came into the title in which he rejoices. And now he is off with the old love, Laura, and on with the new. Why do you look at me so? Are you thinking that other people have been in love two or three times too?

Mrs. P. I am thinking that I should not like to live in London, Arthur.

And this was all that Mrs. Laura could be brought to say. When this young woman chooses to be silent, there is no power that can extract a word from her. It is true that she is generally in the right; but that is only the more aggravating. Indeed, what can be more provoking, after a dispute with your wife, than to find it is you, and not she, who has been in the wrong?

Sir Barnes Newcome politely caused us to understand that the entertainment of which we had just partaken was given in honour of the bride. Clive must needs not be outdone in hospitality; and invited us and others to a fine feast at the Star and Garter at Richmond, where Mrs. Pendennis was placed at his right hand. I smile as I think how much dining has been already commemorated in these veracious pages; but the story is an everyday record; and does not dining form a certain part of the pleasure and business of every day? It is at that pleasant hour that our set has the privilege of meeting the other. The morning man and woman alike devote to business; or pass mainly in the company of their own kind. John has his office; Jane her household, her nursery, her milliner, her daughters and their masters. In the country he has his hunting, his fishing, his farming, his letters; she her schools, her poor, her garden, or what not. Parted through the shining hours, and improving them, let us trust, we come together towards sunset only, we make merry and amuse ourselves. We chat with our pretty neighbour, or survey the young ones sporting; we make love and are jealous; we dance, or obsequiously turn over the leaves of Cecilia's music-book; we play whist, or go to sleep in the arm-chair, according to our ages and conditions. Snooze gently in thy arm-chair, thou easy bald-head! play your whist, or read your novel, or talk scandal over your work, ye worthy dowagers and fogies! Meanwhile the young ones frisk about, or dance, or sing, or laugh; or whisper behind curtains in moonlit windows; or shirk away into the garden, and come back smelling of cigars; nature having made them so to do.

Nature at this time irresistibly impelled Clive Newcome towards love-making. It was pairing-season with him. Mr. Clive was now some three-and-twenty years old: enough has been said about his good looks, which were in truth sufficient to make him a match for the young lady on whom he had set his heart, and from whom, during this entertainment which he gave to my wife, he could never keep his eyes away for three minutes. Laura's did not need to be so keen as they were in order to see what poor Clive's condition was. She did not in the least grudge the young fellow's inattention to herself; or feel hurt that he did not seem to listen when she spoke; she conversed with J. J., her neighbour, who was very modest and agreeable; while her husband, not so well pleased, had Mrs. Hobson Newcome for his partner during the chief part of the entertainment. Mrs. Hobson and Lady Clara were the matrons who gave the sanction of their presence to this bachelor-party. Neither of their husbands could come to Clive's little fete; had they not the City and the House of Commons to attend? My uncle, Major Pendennis, was another of the guests; who for his part found the party was what you young fellows call very slow. Dreading Mrs. Hobson and her powers of conversation, the old gentleman nimbly skipped out of her neighbourhood, and fell by the side of Lord Highgate, to whom the Major was inclined to make himself very pleasant. But Lord Highgate's broad back was turned upon his neighbour, who was forced to tell stories to Captain Crackthorpe, which had amused dukes and marquises in former days, and were surely quite good enough for any baron in this realm. "Lord Highgate sweet upon la belle Newcome, is he?" said the testy Major afterwards. "He seemed to me to talk to Lady Clara the whole time. When I awoke in the garden after dinner, as Mrs. Hobson was telling one of her confounded long stories, I found her audience was diminished to one. Crackthorpe, Lord Highgate, and Lady Clara. we had all been sitting there when the bankeress cut in (in the mid of a very good story I was telling them, which entertained them very much), and

never ceased talking till I fell off into a doze. When I roused myself, begad, she was still going on. Crackthorpe was off, smoking a cigar on the terrace: my Lord and Lady Clara were nowhere; and you four, with the little painter, were chatting cosily in another arbour. Behaved himself very well, the little painter. Doosid good dinner Ellis gave us. But as for Highgate being aux soins with la belle Banquiere, trust me, my boy, he is — upon my word, my dear, it seemed to me his thoughts went quite another way. To be sure, Lady Clara is a belle Banquiere too now. He, he, he! How could he say he had no carriage to go home in? He came down in Crackthorpe's cab, who passed us just now, driving back young What-dye-call the painter."

Thus did the Major discourse, as we returned towards the City. I could see in the open carriage which followed us (Lady Clara Newcome's) Lord Highgate's white hat, by Clive's on the back seat.

Laura looked at her husband. The same thought may have crossed their minds, though neither uttered it; but although Sir Barnes and Lady Clara Newcome offered us other civilities during our stay in London, no inducements could induce Laura to accept the proffered friendship of that lady. When Lady Clara called, my wife was not at home; when she invited us, Laura pleaded engagements. At first she bestowed on Miss Newcome, too, a share of this haughty dislike, and rejected the advances which that young lady, who professed to like my wife very much, made towards an intimacy. When I appealed to her (for Newcome's house was after all a very pleasant one, and you met the best people there), my wife looked at me with an expression of something like scorn, and said: "Why don't I like Miss Newcome? Of course because I am jealous of her — all women, you know, Arthur, are jealous of such beauties." I could get for a long while no better explanation than these sneers, for my wife's antipathy towards this branch of the Newcome family; but an event presently came which silenced my remonstrances, and showed to me, that Laura had judged Barnes and his wife only too well.

Poor Mrs. Hobson Newcome had reason to be sulky at the neglect which all the Richmond party showed her, for nobody, not even Major Pendennis, as we have seen, would listen to her intellectual conversation; nobody, not even Lord Highgate, would drive back to town in her carriage, though the vehicle was large and empty, and Lady Clara's barouche, in which his lordship chose to take a place, had already three occupants within it:— but in spite of these rebuffs and disappointments the virtuous lady of Bryanstone Square was bent upon being good-natured and hospitable; and I have to record, in the present chapter, yet one more feast of which Mr. and Mrs. Pendennis partook at the expense of the most respectable Newcome family.

Although Mrs. Laura here also appeared, and had the place of honour in her character of bride, I am bound to own my opinion that Mrs. Hobson only made us the pretext of her party, and that in reality it was given to persons of a much more exalted rank. We were the first to arrive, our good old Major, the most punctual of men, bearing us company. Our hostess was arrayed in unusual state and splendour; her fat neck was ornamented with jewels, rich bracelets decorated her arms, and this Bryanstone Square Cornelia had likewise her family jewels distributed round her, priceless male and female Newcome gems, from the King's College youth, with whom we have made a brief acquaintance, and his elder sister, now entering into the world, down to the last little ornament of the nursery, in a prodigious new sash, with ringlets hot and crisp from the tongs of a Marylebone hairdresser. We had seen the cherub faces of some of these darlings pressed against the drawing-room windows as our carriage drove up to the door; when, after a few minutes' conversation, another vehicle arrived, away they dashed to the windows again, the innocent little dears crying out, "Here's the Marquis;" and in sadder tones, "No, it isn't the Marquis," by which artless expressions they showed how eager they were to behold an expected guest of a rank only inferior to Dukes in this great empire.

Putting two and two together, as the saying is, it was not difficult for me to guess who the expected Marquis was — and, indeed, the King's College youth set that question at once to rest, by wagging his head at me, and winking his eye, and saying, "We expect Farintosh."

"Why, my dearest children," Matronly Virtue exclaimed, "this anxiety to behold the young Marquis of Farintosh, whom we expect at our modest table, Mrs. Pendennis, today? Twice you have been at the window in your eagerness to look for him. Louisa, you silly child, do you imagine that his lordship will appear in his robes and coronet? Rodolf, you absurd boy, do you think that a Marquis is other than a man? I have never admired aught but intellect, Mrs. Pendennis; that, let us be thankful, is the only true title to distinction in our country nowadays."

"Begad, sir," whispers the old Major to me, "intellect may be a doosid fine thing, but in my opinion, a Marquisate and eighteen or twenty thousand a year — I should say the Farintosh property, with the Glenlivat estate and the Roy property in England, must be worth nineteen thousand a year at the very lowest figure and I remember when this young man's

father was only Tom Roy, of the 42nd, with no hope of succeeding to the title, and doosidly out at elbows too — I say what does the bankeress mean by chattering about intellect? Hang me, a Marquis is a Marquis; and Mrs. Newcome knows it as well as I do.” My good Major was growing old, and was not unnaturally a little testy at the manner in which his hostess received him. Truth to tell, she hardly took any notice of him and cut down a couple of the old gentleman’s stories before he had been five minutes in the room.

To our party presently comes the host in a flurried countenance, with a white waistcoat, holding in his hand an open letter, towards which his wife looks with some alarm. “How dy’ doo, Lady Clara, how dy’ doo, Ethel?” he says, saluting those ladies, whom the second carriage had brought to us. “Sir Barnes is not coming, that’s one place vacant; that, Lady Clara, you won’t mind, you see him at home: but here’s a disappointment for you, Miss Newcome, Lord Farintosh can’t come.”

At this, two of the children cry out “Oh! oh!” with such a melancholy accent that Miss Newcome and Lady Clara burst out laughing.

“Got a dreadful toothache,” said Mr. Hobson; “here’s his letter.”

“Hang it, what a bore!” cries artless young King’s College.

“Why a bore, Samuel? A bore, as you call it, for Lord Farintosh, I grant; but do you suppose that the high in station are exempt from the ills of mortality? I know nothing more painful than a toothache,” exclaims a virtuous matron, using the words of philosophy, but showing the countenance of anger.

“Hang it, why didn’t he have it out?” says Samuel.

Miss Ethel laughed. “Lord Farintosh would not have that tooth out for the world, Samuel,” she cried, gaily. “He keeps it in on purpose, and it always aches when he does not want to go out to dinner.”

“I know one humble family who will never ask him again,” Mrs. Hobson exclaims, rustling in all her silks, and tapping her fan and her foot. The eclipse, however, passes off her countenance and light is restored; when at this moment, a cab having driven up during the period of darkness, the door is flung open, and Lord Highgate is announced by a loud-voiced butler.

My wife, being still the bride on this occasion, had the honour of being led to the dinner-table by our banker and host. Lord Highgate was reserved for Mrs. Hobson, who, in an engaging manner, requested poor Clive to conduct his cousin Maria to dinner, handing over Miss Ethel to another guest. Our Major gave his arm to Lady Clara, and I perceived that my wife looked very grave as he passed the place where she sat, and seated Lady Clara in the next chair to that which Lord Highgate chanced to occupy. Feeling himself en vein, and the company being otherwise rather mum and silent, my uncle told a number of delightful anecdotes about the beau-monde of his time, about the Peninsular war, the Regent, Brummell, Lord Steyne, Pea Green Payne, and so forth. He said the evening was very pleasant, though some others of the party, as it appeared to me, scarcely seemed to think so. Clive had not a word for his cousin Maria, but looked across the table at Ethel all dinner-time. What could Ethel have to say to her partner, old Colonel Sir Donald M’Craw, who gobbled and drank, as his wont is, and if he had a remark to make, imparted it to Mrs. Hobson, at whose right hand he was sitting, and to whom, during the whole course, or courses, of the dinner, my Lord Highgate scarcely uttered one single word?

His lordship was whispering all the while into the ringlets of Lady Clara; they were talking a jargon which their hostess scarcely understood, of people only known to her by her study of the Peerage. When we joined the ladies after dinner, Lord Highgate again made way towards Lady Clara, and at an order from her, as I thought, left her ladyship, and strove hard to engage in a conversation with Mrs. Newcome. I hope he succeeded in smoothing the frowns in that round little face. Mrs. Laura, I own, was as grave as a judge all the evening; very grave even and reserved with my uncle, when the hour for parting came, and we took him home.

“He, he!” said the old man, coughing, and nodding his old head and laughing in his senile manner, when I saw him on the next day; “that was a pleasant evening we had yesterday; doosid pleasant, and I think my two neighbours seemed to be uncommonly pleased with each other; not an amusing fellow, that young painter of yours, though he is good-looking enough, but there’s no conversation in him. Do you think of giving a little dinner, Arthur, in return for these hospitalities? Greenwich, hey, or something of that sort? I’ll go you halves, sir, and we’ll ask the young banker and bankeress — not yesterday’s Amphytrion nor his wife; no, no, hang it! but Barnes Newcome is a devilish clever, rising man, and moves in about as good society as any in London. We’ll ask him and Lady Clara and Highgate, and one or two more, and have a

pleasant party.”

But to this proposal, when the old man communicated it to her, in a very quiet, simple, artful way, Laura, with a flushing face said No quite abruptly, and quitted the room, rustling in her silks, and showing at once dignity and indignation.

Not many more feasts was Arthur Pendennis, senior, to have in this world. Not many more great men was he to flatter, nor schemes to wink at, nor earthly pleasures to enjoy. His long days were well-nigh ended: on his last couch, which Laura tended so affectionately, with his last breath almost, he faltered out to me. “I had other views for you, my boy, and once hoped to see you in a higher position in life; but I begin to think now, Arthur, that I was wrong; and as for that girl, sir, I am sure she is an angel.”

May I not inscribe the words with a grateful heart? Blessed he — blessed though maybe undeserving — who has the love of a good woman.



CHAPTER L

CLIVE IN NEW QUARTERS

My wife was much better pleased with Clive than with some of his relatives to whom I had presented her. His face carried a recommendation with it that few honest people could resist. He was always a welcome friend in our lodgings, and even our uncle the Major signified his approval of the lad as a young fellow of very good manners and feelings, who, if he chose to throw himself away and be a painter, *ma foi*, was rich enough no doubt to follow his own caprices. Clive executed a capital head of Major Pendennis, which now hangs in our drawing-room at Fair Oaks, and reminds me of that friend of my youth. Clive occupied ancient lofty chambers in Hanover Square now. He had furnished them in an antique manner, with hangings, cabinets, carved work, Venice glasses, fine prints, and water-colour sketches of good pictures by his own and other hands. He had horses to ride, and a liberal purse full of paternal money. Many fine equipages drew up opposite to his chambers: few artists had such luck as young Mr. Clive. And above his own chambers were other three which the young gentleman had hired, and where, says he, "I hope ere very long my dear old father will be lodging with me. In another year he says he thinks he will be able to come home; when the affairs of the Bank are quite settled. You shake your head! why? The shares are worth four times what we gave for them. We are men of fortune, Pen, I give you my word. You should see how much they make of me at Baynes and Jolly's, and how civil they are to me at Hobson Brothers! I go into the City now and then, and see our manager, Mr. Blackmore. He tells me such stories about indigo, and wool, and copper, and sicca rupees, and Company's rupees. I don't know anything about the business, but my father likes me to go and see Mr. Blackmore. Dear cousin Barnes is for ever asking me to dinner; I might call Lady Clara Clara if I liked, as Sam Newcome does in Bryanstone Square. You can't think how kind they are to me there. My aunt reproaches me tenderly for not going there oftener — it's not very good fun dining in Bryanstone Square, is it? And she praises my cousin Maria to me — you should hear my aunt praise her! I have to take Maria down to dinner; to sit by the piano and listen to her songs in all languages. Do you know Maria can sing Hungarian and Polish, besides your common German, Spanish, and Italian? Those I have at our other agents', Baynes and Jolly's — Baynes's that is in the Regent's Park, where the girls are prettier and just as civil to me as at Aunt Hobson's." And here Clive would amuse us by the accounts which he gave us of the snares which the Misses Baynes, those young sirens of Regent's Park, set for him; of the songs which they sang to enchant him, the albums in which they besought him to draw — the thousand winning ways which they employed to bring him into their cave in York Terrace. But neither Circe's smiles nor Calypso's blandishments had any effect on him; his ears were stopped to their music, and his eyes rendered dull to their charms by those of the flighty young enchantress with whom my wife had of late made acquaintance.

Capitalist though he was, our young fellow was still very affable. He forgot no old friends in his prosperity; and the lofty antique chambers would not unfrequently be lighted up at nights to receive F. B. and some of the old cronies of the Haunt, and some of the Gandishites, who, if Clive had been of a nature that was to be spoiled by flattery, had certainly done mischief to the young man. Gandish himself, when Clive paid a visit to that illustrious artist's Academy, received his former pupil as if the young fellow had been a sovereign prince almost, accompanied him to his horse; and would have held his stirrup as he mounted; whilst the beautiful daughters of the house waved adieus to him from the parlour-window. To the young men assembled in his Gandish studio, was never tired of talking about Clive. The Professor would take occasion to inform them that he had been to visit his distinguished young friend, Mr. Newcome, son of Colonel Newcome; that last evening he had been present at an elegant entertainment at Mr. Newcome's news apartments. Clive's drawings were hung up in Gandish's gallery, and pointed out to visitors by the worthy Professor. On one or two occasions, I was allowed to become a bachelor again, and participate in these jovial meetings. How guilty my coat was on my return home; how haughty the looks of the mistress of my house, as she bade Martha carry away the obnoxious garment! How grand F. B. used to be as president of Clive's smoking-party, where he laid down the law, talked the most talk, sang the jolliest song, and consumed the most drink of all the jolly talkers and drinkers! Clive's popularity rose prodigiously; not only youngsters, but old practitioners of the fine arts, lauded his talents. What a shame that his pictures were all refused this year at the Academy! Alfred Smee, Esq., R.A., was indignant at their rejection, but J. J. confessed with a sigh, and Clive owned good-naturedly, that he had been neglecting his business, and that his pictures were not so good as those of two years before. I

am afraid Mr. Clive went to too many balls and parties, to clubs and jovial entertainments, besides losing yet more time in that other pursuit we wot of. Meanwhile J. J. went steadily on with his work, no day passed without a line: and Fame was not very far off, though this he heeded but little; and Art, his sole mistress, rewarded him for his steady and fond pursuit of her.

“Look at him,” Clive would say with a sigh. “Isn’t he the mortal of all others the most to be envied! He is so fond of his art that in all the world there is no attraction like it for him. He runs to his easel at sunrise, and sits before it caressing his picture all day till nightfall. He takes leave of it sadly when dark comes, spends the night in a Life Academy, and begins next morning da capo. Of all the pieces of good fortune which can befall a man, is not this the greatest: to have your desire, and then never tire of it? I have been in such a rage with my own shortcomings that I have dashed my foot through the canvases, and vowed I would smash my palette and easel. Sometimes I succeed a little better in my work, and then it will happen for half an hour that I am pleased, but pleased at what? pleased at drawing Mr. Muggins’s head rather like Mr. Muggins. Why, a thousand fellows can do better, and when one day I reach my very best, yet thousands will be able to do better still. Ours is a trade for which nowadays there is no excuse unless one can be great in it: and I feel I have not the stuff for that. No. 666. ‘Portrait of Joseph Muggins, Esq., Newcome, Great George Street.’ No. 979. ‘Portrait of Mrs. Muggins, on her grey pony, Newcome.’ No. 579. ‘Portrait of Joseph Muggins Esq.’s dog Toby, Newcome’— this is — what I’m fit for. These are the victories I have set myself on achieving. Oh, Mrs. Pendennis, isn’t it humiliating? Why isn’t there a war? Why can’t I go and distinguish myself somewhere and be a general? Why haven’t I a genius? I say, Pen, sir, why haven’t I a genius? There is a painter who lives hard by, and who sends sometimes, to beg me to come and look at his work. He is in the Muggins line too. He gets his canvases with a good light upon them: excludes the contemplation of all other objects, stands beside his pictures in an attitude himself, and thinks that he and they are masterpieces. Masterpieces! Oh me, what drivelling wretches we are! Fame! — except that of just the one or two — what’s the use of it? I say, Pen, would you feel particularly proud now if you had written Hayley’s poems? And as for a second place in painting, who would care to be Caravaggio or Caracci? I wouldn’t give a straw to be Caracci or Caravaggio. I would just as soon be yonder artist who is painting up Foker’s Entire over the public-house at the corner. He will have his payment afterwards, five shillings a day, and a pot of beer. Your head a little more to the light, Mrs. Pendennis, if you please. I am tiring you, I dare say, but then, oh, I am doing it so badly!”

I, for my part, thought Clive was making a very pretty drawing of my wife, and having affairs of my own to attend to, would often leave her at his chambers as a sitter, or find him at our lodgings visiting her. They became the very greatest friends. I knew the young fellow could have no better friend than Laura; and not being ignorant of the malady under which he was labouring, concluded naturally and justly that Clive grew so fond of my wife, not for her sake entirely, but for his own, because he could pour his heart out to her, and her sweet kindness and compassion would soothe him in his unhappy condition.

Miss Ethel, I have said, also professed a great fondness for Mrs. Pendennis; and there was that charm in the young lady’s manner which speedily could overcome even female jealousy. Perhaps Laura determined magnanimously to conquer it; perhaps she hid it so as to vex me and prove the injustice of my suspicions: perhaps, honestly, she was conquered by the young beauty, and gave her a regard and admiration which the other knew she could inspire whenever she had the will. My wife was fairly captivated by her at length. The untameable young creature was docile and gentle in Laura’s presence; modest, natural, amiable, full of laughter and spirits, delightful to see and to hear; her presence cheered our quiet little household; her charm fascinated my wife as it had subjugated poor Clive. Even the reluctant Farintosh was compelled to own her power, and confidentially told his male friends, that, hang it, she was so handsome, and so clever, and so confoundedly pleasant and fascinating, and that — that he had been on the point of popping the fatal question ever so many times, by Jove. “And hang it, you know,” his lordship would say, “I don’t want to marry until I have had my fling, you know.” As for Clive, Ethel treated him like a boy, like a big brother. She was jocular, kind, pert, pleasant with him, ordered him on her errands, accepted his bouquets and compliments, admired his drawings, liked to hear him praised, and took his part in all companies; laughed at his sighs, and frankly owned to Laura her liking for him and her pleasure in seeing him. “Why,” said she, “should not I be happy as long as the sunshine lasts? To-morrow, I know, will be glum and dreary enough. When grandmamma comes back I shall scarcely be able to come and see you. When I am settled in life — eh! I shall be settled in life! Do not grudge me my holiday, Laura. Oh, if you knew how stupid it is to be in the world, and how much pleasanter to come and talk, and laugh, and sing, and be happy with you, than to sit in that dreary Eaton Place with poor

Clara!"

"Why do you stay in Eaton Place?" asks Laura.

"Why? because I must go out with somebody. What an unsophisticated little country creature you are! Grandmamma is away, and I cannot go about to parties by myself."

"But why should you go to parties, and why not go back to your mother?" says Mrs. Pendennis, gently.

"To the nursery, and my little sisters, and Miss Cann? I like being in London best, thank you. You look grave? You think a girl should like to be with her mother and sisters best? My dear mamma wishes me to be here, and I stay with Barnes and Clara by grandmamma's orders. Don't you know that I have been made over to Lady Kew, who has adopted me? Do you think a young lady of my pretensions can stop at home in a damp house in Warwickshire and cut bread-and-butter for little schoolboys? Don't look so very grave and shake your head so, Mrs. Pendennis! If you had been bred as I have, you would be as I am. I know what you are thinking, madam."

"I am thinking," said Laura, blushing and bowing her head — "I am thinking, if it pleases God to give me children, I should like to live at home at Fair Oaks." My wife's thoughts, though she did not utter them, and a certain modesty and habitual awe kept her silent upon subjects so very sacred, went deeper yet. She had been bred to measure her actions by a standard which the world may nominally admit, but which it leaves for the most part unheeded. Worship, love, duty, as taught her by the devout study of the Sacred Law which interprets and defines it — if these formed the outward practice of her life, they were also its constant and secret endeavours and occupation. She spoke but very seldom of her religion, though it filled her heart and influenced all her behaviour. Whenever she came to that sacred subject, her demeanour appeared to her husband so awful that he scarcely dared to approach it in her company, and stood without as this pure creature entered into the Holy of Holies. What must the world appear to such a person? Its ambitious rewards, disappointments, pleasures, worth how much? Compared to the possession of that priceless treasure and happiness unspeakable, a perfect faith, what has Life to offer? I see before me now her sweet grave face, as she looks out from the balcony of the little Richmond villa we occupied during the first happy year after our marriage, following Ethel Newcome, who rides away, with a staid groom behind her, to her brother's summer residence, not far distant. Clive had been with us in the morning, and had brought us stirring news. The good Colonel was by this time on his way home. "If Clive could tear himself away from London," the good man wrote (and we thus saw he was acquainted with the state of the young man's mind), "why should not Clive go and meet his father at Malta?" He was feverish and eager to go; and his two friends strongly counselled him to take the journey. In the midst of our talk Miss Ethel came among us. She arrived flushed and in high spirits; she rallied Clive upon his gloomy looks; she turned rather pale, as it seemed to us, when she heard the news. Then she coldly told him she thought the voyage must be a pleasant one, and would do him good: it was pleasanter than that journey she was going to take herself with her dreary grandmother, to those German springs which the old Countess frequented year after year. Mr. Pendennis having business, retired to his study, whither presently Mrs. Laura followed, having to look for her scissors, or a book she wanted, or upon some pretext or other. She sat down in the conjugal study; not one word did either of us say for a while about the young people left alone in the drawing-room yonder. Laura talked about our own home at Fair Oaks, which our tenants were about to vacate. She vowed and declared that we must live at Fair Oaks; that Clavering, with all its tittle-tattle and stupid inhabitants, was better than this wicked London. Besides, there were some new and very pleasant families settled in the neighbourhood. Clavering Park was taken by some delightful people — "and you know, Pen, you were always very fond of fly-fishing, and may fish the Brawl, as you used in old days, when —" The lips of the pretty satirist who alluded to these unpleasant by-gones were silenced as they deserved to be by Mr. Pendennis. "Do you think, sir, I did not know," says the sweetest voice in the world, "when you went out on your fishing excursions with Miss Amory?" Again the flow of words is checked by the styptic previously applied.

"I wonder," says Mr. Pendennis, archly, bending over his wife's fair hand — "I wonder whether this kind of thing is taking place in the drawing-room?"

"Nonsense, Arthur. It is time to go back to them. Why, I declare, I have been three-quarters of an hour away!"

"I don't think they will much miss you, my dear," says the gentleman.

"She is certainly very fond of him. She is always coming here. I am sure it is not to hear you read Shakspeare, Arthur; or your new novel, though it is very pretty. I wish Lady Kew and her sixty thousand pounds were at the bottom of the sea."

"But she says she is going to portion her younger brothers with a part of it; she told Clive so," remarks Mr. Pendennis.

“For shame! Why does not Barnes Newcome portion his younger brothers? I have no patience with that — Why! Goodness! There is Clive going away, actually! Clive! Mr. Newcome!” But though my wife ran to the study-window and beckoned our friend, he only shook his head, jumped on his horse, and rode away gloomily.

“Ethel had been crying when I went into the room,” Laura afterwards told me. “I knew she had; but she looked up from some flowers over which she was bending, began to laugh and rattle, would talk about nothing but Lady Hautboi’s great breakfast the day before, and the most insufferable Mayfair jargon; and then declared it was time to go home and dress for Mrs. Booth’s dejeuner, which was to take place that afternoon.”

And so Miss Newcome rode away — back amongst the roses and the rouges — back amongst the fiddling, flirting, flattery, falseness — and Laura’s sweet serene face looked after her departing. Mrs. Booth’s was a very grand dejeuner. We read in the newspapers a list of the greatest names there. A Royal Duke and Duchess; a German Highness, a Hindoo Nabob, etc.; and, amongst the Marquises, Farintosh; and, amongst the Lords, Highgate; and Lady Clara Newcome, and Miss Newcome, who looked killing, our acquaintance Captain Crackthorpe informs us, and who was in perfectly stunning spirits. “His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke of Farintosh is wild about her,” the Captain said, “and our poor young friend Clive may just go and hang himself. Dine with us at the Gar and Starter? Jolly party. Oh! I forgot! married man now!” So saying, the Captain entered the hostelry near which I met him, leaving this present chronicler to return to his own home.



CHAPTER LI

AN OLD FRIEND

I might open the present chapter as a contemporary writer of Romance is occasionally in the habit of commencing his tales of Chivalry, by a description of a November afternoon falling leaves, tawny forests, gathering storms, and other autumnal phenomena; and two horsemen winding up the romantic road which leads from — from Richmond Bridge to the Star and Garter. The one rider is youthful, and has a blonde moustache. The cheek of the other has been browned by foreign suns; it is easy to see by the manner in which he bestrides his powerful charger that he has followed the profession of arms. He looks as if he had faced his country's enemies on many a field of Eastern battle. The cavaliers alight before the gate of a cottage on Richmond Hill, where a gentleman receives them with eager welcome. Their steeds are accommodated at a neighbouring hostelry — I pause in the midst of the description, for the reader has made the acquaintance of our two horsemen long since. It is Clive returned from Malta, from Gibraltar, from Seville, from Cadiz, and with him our dear old friend the Colonel. His campaigns are over, his sword is hung up, he leaves Eastern suns and battles to warm younger blood. Welcome back to England, dear Colonel and kind friend! How quickly the years have passed since he has been gone! There is a streak or two more silver in his hair. The wrinkles about his honest eyes are somewhat deeper, but their look is as steadfast and kind as in the early, almost boyish days when first we knew them.

We talk a while about the Colonel's voyage home, the pleasures of the Spanish journey, the handsome new quarters in which Clive has installed his father and himself, my own altered condition in life, and what not. During the conversation a little querulous voice makes itself audible above-stairs, at which noise Mr. Clive begins to laugh, and the Colonel to smile. It is for the first time in his life Mr. Clive listens to the little voice; indeed, it is only since about six weeks that that small organ has been heard in the world at all. Laura Pendennis believes its tunes to be the sweetest, the most interesting, the most mirth-inspiring, the most pitiful and pathetic, that ever baby uttered; which opinions, of course, are backed by Mrs. Hokey, the confidential nurse. Laura's husband is not so rapturous; but, let us trust, behaves in a way becoming a man and a father. We forgo the description of his feelings as not pertaining to the history at present under consideration. A little while before the dinner is served, the lady of the cottage comes down to greet her husband's old friends.

And here I am sorely tempted to a third description, which has nothing to do with the story, to be sure, but which, if properly his off might fill half a page very prettily. For is not a young mother one of the sweetest sights which life shows us? If she has been beautiful before, does not her present pure joy give a character of refinement and sacredness almost to her beauty, touch her sweet cheeks with fairer blushes, and impart I know not what serene brightness to her eyes? I give warning to the artist who designs the pictures for this veracious story, to make no attempt at this subject. I never would be satisfied with it were his drawing ever so good.

When Sir Charles Grandison stepped up and made his very beautifullest bow to Miss Byron, I am sure his gracious dignity never exceeded that of Colonel Newcome's first greeting to Mrs. Pendennis. Of course from the very moment they beheld one another they became friends. Are not most of our likings thus instantaneous? Before she came down to see him, Laura had put on one of the Colonel's shawls — the crimson one, with the red palm-leaves and the border of many colours. As for the white one, the priceless, the gossamer, the fairy web, which might pass through a ring, that, every lady must be aware, was already appropriated to cover the cradle, or what I believe is called the bassinet, of Master Pendennis.

So we all became the very best of friends; and during the winter months whilst we still resided at Richmond, the Colonel was my wife's constant visitor. He often came without Clive. He did not care for the world which the young gentleman frequented, and was more pleased and at home by my wife's fireside than at more noisy and splendid entertainments. And, Laura being a sentimental person interested in pathetic novels and all unhappy attachments, of course she and the Colonel talked a great deal about Mr. Clive's little affair, over which they would have such deep confabulations that even when the master of the house appeared, Pater Familias, the man whom, in the presence of the Rev. Dr. Portman, Mrs. Laura had sworn to love and honour these two guilty ones would be silent, or change the subject of conversation, not caring to admit such an unsympathising person as myself into their conspiracy.

From many a talk which they have had together since the Colonel and his son embraced at Malta, Clive's father had been led to see how strongly the passion which our friend had once fought and mastered, had now taken possession of the

young man. The unsatisfied longing left him indifferent to all other objects of previous desire or ambition. The misfortune darkened the sunshine of his spirit, and clouded the world before his eyes. He passed hours in his painting-room, though he tore up what he did there. He forsook his usual haunts, or appeared amongst his old comrades moody and silent. From cigar-smoking, which I own to be a reprehensible practice, he plunged into still deeper and darker dissipation; for I am sorry to say, he took to pipes and the strongest tobacco, for which there is no excuse. Our young man was changed. During the last fifteen or twenty months, the malady had been increasing on him, of which we have not chosen to describe at length the stages; knowing very well that the reader (the male reader at least) does not care a fig about other people's sentimental perplexities, and is not wrapped up heart and soul in Clive's affairs like his father, whose rest was disturbed if the boy had a headache, or who would have stripped the coat off his back to keep his darling's feet warm.

The object of this hopeless passion had, meantime, returned to the custody of the dark old duenna, from which she had been liberated for a while. Lady Kew had got her health again, by means of the prescriptions of some doctors, or by the efficacy of some baths; and was again on foot and in the world, tramping about in her grim pursuit of pleasure. Lady Julia, we are led to believe, had retired upon half-pay, and into an inglorious exile at Brussels, with her sister, the outlaw's wife, by whose bankrupt fireside she was perfectly happy. Miss Newcome was now her grandmother's companion, and they had been on a tour of visits in Scotland, and were journeying from country-house to country-house about the time when our good Colonel returned to his native shores.

The Colonel loved his nephew Barnes no better than before, perhaps, though we must say that since his return from India the young Baronet's conduct had been particularly friendly. "No doubt marriage had improved him; Lady Clara seemed a good-natured young woman enough; besides," says the Colonel, wagging his good old head knowingly, "Tom Newcome, of the Bundelcund Bank, is a personage to be conciliated; whereas Tom Newcome, of the Bengal Cavalry, was not worth Master Barnes's attention. He has been very good and kind on the whole; so have his friends been uncommonly civil. There was Clive's acquaintance, Mr. Belsize that was, Lord Highgate who is now, entertained our whole family sumptuously last week — wants us and Barnes and his wife to go to his country-house at Christmas — is as hospitable, my dear Mrs. Pendennis, as man can be. He met you at Barnes's, and as soon as we are alone," says the Colonel, turning round to Laura's husband, "I will tell you in what terms Lady Clara speaks of your wife. Yes. She is a good-natured, kind little woman, that Lady Clara." Here Laura's face assumed that gravity and severeness, which it always wore when Lady Clara's name was mentioned, and the conversation took another turn.

Returning home from London one afternoon, I met the Colonel, who hailed me on the omnibus, and rode on his way towards the City, I knew, of course, that he had been colloquying with my wife; and taxed that young woman with these continued flirtations. "Two or three times a week, Mrs. Laura, you dare to receive a Colonel of Dragoons. You sit for hours closeted with the young fellow of sixty; you change the conversation when your own injured husband enters the room, and pretend to talk about the weather, or the baby. You little arch hypocrite, you know you do. Don't try to humbug me, miss; what will Richmond, what will society, what will Mrs. Grundy in general say to such atrocious behaviour?"

"Oh! Pen," says my wife, closing my mouth in a way which I do not choose further to particularise; "that man is the best, the dearest, the kindest creature. I never knew such a good man; you ought to put him into a book. Do you know, sir, that I felt the very greatest desire to give him a kiss when he went away; and that one which you had just now, was intended for him.

"Take back thy gift, false girl!" says Mr Pendennis; and then, finally, we come to the particular circumstance which had occasioned so much enthusiasm on Mrs. Laura's part.

Colonel Newcome had summoned heart of grace, and in Clive's behalf had regularly proposed him to Barnes, as a suitor to Ethel, taking an artful advantage of his nephew Barnes Newcome, and inviting that Barnes to a private meeting, where they were to talk about the affairs of the Bundelcund Banking Company.

Now this Bundelcund Banking Company, in the Colonel's eyes, was in reality his son Clive. But for Clive there might have been a hundred banking companies established, yielding a hundred per cent, in as many districts of India, and Thomas Newcome, who had plenty of money for his own wants, would never have thought of speculation. His desire was to see his boy endowed with all the possible gifts of fortune. Had he built a palace for Clive, and been informed that a roc's egg was required to complete the decoration of the edifice, Tom Newcome would have travelled to the world's end in search of the wanting article. To see Prince Clive ride in a gold coach with a princess beside him, was the kind old Colonel's ambition; that done, he would be content to retire to a garret in the prince's castle, and smoke his cheroot there in peace.

So the world is made. The strong and eager covet honour and enjoyment for themselves; the gentle and disappointed (once, they may have been strong and eager, too) desire these gifts for their children. I think Clive's father never liked or understood the lad's choice of a profession. He acquiesced in it as he would in any of his son's wishes. But, not being a poet himself, he could not see the nobility of that calling; and felt secretly that his son was demeaning himself by pursuing the art of painting. "Had he been a soldier, now," thought Thomas Newcome, "(though I prevented that) had he been richer than he is, he might have married Ethel, instead of being unhappy as he now is, God help him! I remember my own time of grief well enough: and what years it took before my wound wound was scarred over."

So with these things occupying his brain Thomas Newcome artfully invited Barnes, his nephew, to dinner under pretence of talking of the affairs of the great B. B. C. With the first glass of wine at dessert, and according to the Colonel's good old-fashioned custom of proposing toasts, they drank the health of the B. B. C. Barnes drank the toast with all his generous heart. The B. B. C. sent to Hobson Brothers and Newcome a great deal of business, was in a most prosperous condition, kept a great balance at the bank, a balance that would not be overdrawn, as Sir Barnes Newcome very well knew. Barnes was for having more of these bills, provided there were remittances to meet the same. Barnes was ready to do any amount of business with the Indian bank, or with any bank, or with any individual, Christian or heathen, white or black, who could do good to the firm of Hobson Brothers and Newcome. He spoke upon this subject with great archness and candour: of course as a City man he would be glad to do a profitable business anywhere, and the B. B. C.'s business was profitable. But the interested motive which he admitted frankly as a man of the world, did not prevent other sentiments more agreeable. "My dear Colonel," says Barnes, "I am happy, most happy, to think that our house and our name should have been useful, as I know they have been, in the establishment of a concern in which one of our family is interested; one whom we all so sincerely respect and regard." And he touched his glass with his lips and blushed a little, as he bowed towards his uncle. He found himself making a little speech, indeed; and to do so before one single person seems rather odd. Had there been a large company present Barnes would not have blushed at all, but have tossed off his glass, struck his waistcoat possibly, and looked straight in the face of his uncle as the chairman; well, he did very likely believe that he respected and regarded the Colonel.

The Colonel said — "Thank you, Barnes, with all my heart. It is always good for men to be friends, much more for blood relations, as we are."

"A relationship which honours me, I'm sure!" says Barnes, with a tone of infinite affability. You see, he believed that Heaven had made him the Colonel's superior.

"And I am very glad," the elder went on, "that you and my boy are good friends."

"Friends! of course. It would be unnatural if such near relatives were otherwise than good friends."

"You have been hospitable to him, and Lady Clara very kind, and he wrote to me telling me of your kindness. Ahem! this is tolerable claret. I wonder where Clive gets it?"

"You were speaking about that indigo, Colonel!" here Barnes interposes. "Our house has done very little in that way, to be sure but I suppose that our credit is about as good as Battie's and Jolly's, and if ——" but the Colonel is in a brown study.

"Clive will have a good bit of money when I die," resumes Clive's father.

"Why, you are a hale man — upon my word, quite a young man, and may marry again, Colonel," replies the nephew fascinatingly.

"I shall never do that," replies the other. "Ere many years are gone, I shall be seventy years old, Barnes."

"Nothing in this country, my dear sir! positively nothing. Why, there was Titus, my neighbour in the country — when will you come down to Newcome? — who married a devilish pretty girl, of very good family, too, Miss Burgeon, one of the Devonshire Burgeons. He looks, I am sure, twenty years older than you do. Why should not you do likewise?"

"Because I like to remain single, and want to leave Clive a rich man. Look here, Barnes, you know the value of our bank shares, now?"

"Indeed I do; rather speculative; but of course I know what some sold for last week," says Barnes.

"Suppose I realise now. I think I am worth six lakhs. I had nearly two from my poor father. I saved some before and since I invested in this affair; and could sell out tomorrow with sixty thousand pounds."

"A very pretty sum of money, Colonel," says Barnes.

"I have a pension of a thousand a year."

"My dear Colonel, you are a capitalist! we know it very well," remarks Sir Barnes.

"And two hundred a year is as much as I want for myself," continues the capitalist, looking into the fire, and jingling his money in his pockets. "A hundred a year for a horse; a hundred a year for pocket-money, for I calculate, you know, that Clive will give me a bedroom and my dinner."

"He! he! If your son won't, your nephew will, my dear Colonel!" says the affable Barnes, smiling sweetly.

"I can give the boy a handsome allowance, you see," resumes Thomas Newcome.

"You can make him a handsome allowance now, and leave him a good fortune when you die!" says the nephew, in a noble and courageous manner — and as if he said Twelve times twelve are a hundred and forty-four and you have Sir Barnes Newcome's authority — Sir Barnes Newcome's, mind you — to say so.

"Not when I die, Barnes," the uncle goes on. "I will give him every shilling I am worth tomorrow morning, if he marries as I wish him."

"Tant mieux pour lui!" cries the nephew; and thought to himself, "Lady Clara must ask Clive to dinner instantly. Confound the fellow. I hate him — always have; but what luck he has!"

"A man with that property may pretend to a good wife, as the French say; hey Barnes?" asks the Colonel, rather eagerly looking up in his nephew's face.

That countenance was lighted up with a generous enthusiasm. "To any woman, in any rank — to a nobleman's daughter, my dear sir!" exclaims Sir Barnes.

"I want your sister; I want dear Ethel for him, Barnes," cries Thomas Newcome, with a trembling voice, and a twinkle in his eyes. "That was the hope I always had till my talk with your poor father stopped it. Your sister was engaged to my Lord Kew then; and my wishes of course were impossible. The poor boy is very much cut up, and his whole heart is bent upon possessing her. She is not, she can't be, indifferent to him. I am sure she would not be, if her family in the least encouraged him. Can either of these young folks have a better chance of happiness again offered to them in life? There's youth, there's mutual liking, there's wealth for them almost — only saddled with the encumbrance of an old dragoon, who won't be much in their way. Give us your good word, Barnes, and let them come together; and upon my word the rest of my days will be made happy if I can eat my meal at their table."

Whilst the poor Colonel was making his appeal, Barnes had time to collect his answer; which, since in our character of historians we take leave to explain gentlemen's motives as well as record their speeches and actions, we may thus interpret. "Confound the young beggar!" thinks Barnes, then. "He will have three or four thousand a year, will he? Hang him, but it's a good sum of money. What a fool his father is to give it away! Is he joking? No, he was always half crazy — the Colonel. Highgate seemed uncommonly sweet on her, and was always hanging about our house. Farintosh has not been brought to book yet; and perhaps neither of them will propose for her. My grandmother, I should think, won't hear of her making a low marriage, as this certainly is: but it's a pity to throw away four thousand a year, ain't it?" All these natural calculations passed briskly through Barnes Newcome's mind, as his uncle, from the opposite side of the fireplace, implored him in the above little speech.

"My dear Colonel," said Barnes, "my dear, kind Colonel! I needn't tell you that your proposal flatters us, as much as your extraordinary generosity surprises me. I never heard anything like it — never. Could I consult my own wishes I would at once — I would, permit me to say, from sheer admiration of your noble character, say yes, with all my heart, to your proposal. But, alas, I haven't that power."

"Is — is she engaged?" asks the Colonel, looking as blank and sad as Clive himself when Ethel had conversed with him.

"No — I cannot say engaged — though a person of the very highest rank has paid her the most marked attention. But my sister has, in a way, gone from our family, and from my influence as the head of it — an influence which I, I am sure, had most gladly exercised in your favour. My grandmother, Lady Kew, has adopted her; purposes, I believe, to leave Ethel the greater part of her fortune, upon certain conditions; and, of course, expects the — the obedience, and so forth, which is customary in such cases. By the way, Colonel, is our young soupirant aware that papa is pleading his cause for him?"

The Colonel said no; and Barnes lauded the caution which his uncle had displayed. It was quite as well for the young man's interests (which Sir Barnes had most tenderly at heart) that Clive Newcome should not himself move in the affair, or present himself to Lady Kew. Barnes would take the matter in hand at the proper season; the Colonel might be sure it

would be most eagerly, most ardently pressed. Clive came home at this juncture, whom Barnes saluted affectionately. He and the Colonel had talked over their money business; their conversation had been most satisfactory, thank you. "Has it not, Colonel?" The three parted the very best of friends.

As Barnes Newcome professed that extreme interest for his cousin and uncle, it is odd he did not tell them that Lady Kew and Miss Ethel Newcome were at that moment within a mile of them, at her ladyship's house in Queen Street, Mayfair. In the hearing of Clive's servant, Barnes did not order his brougham to drive to Queen Street, but waited until he was in Bond Street before he gave the order.

And, of course, when he entered Lady Kew's house, he straightway asked for his sister, and communicated to her the generous offer which the good Colonel had made.

You see, Lady Kew was in town, and not in town. Her ladyship was but passing through, on her way from a tour of visits in the North, to another tour of visits somewhere else. The newspapers were not even off the blinds. The proprietor of the house cowered over a bed-candle and a furtive teapot in the back drawing-room. Lady Kew's gens were not here. The tall canary ones with white polls, only showed their plumage and sang in spring. The solitary wretch who takes charge of London houses, and the two servants specially affected to Lady Kew's person, were the only people in attendance. In fact, her ladyship was not in town. And that is why, no doubt, Barnes Newcome said nothing about her being there.



CHAPTER LII

FAMILY SECRETS

The figure cowering over the furtive teapot glowered grimly at Barnes as he entered; and an old voice said —“Ho, it’s you!”

“I have brought you the notes, ma’am,” says Barnes, taking a packet of those documents from his pocket-book. “I could not come sooner, I have been engaged upon bank business until now.”

“I dare say! You smell of smoke like a courier.”

“A foreign capitalist: he would smoke. They will, ma’am. I didn’t smoke, upon my word.”

“I don’t see why you shouldn’t, if you like it. You will never get anything out of me whether you do or don’t. How is Clara? Is she gone to the country with the children? Newcome is the best place for her.”

“Doctor Bambury thinks she can move in a fortnight. The boy has had a little —”

“A little fiddlestick! I tell you it is she who likes to stay, and makes that fool, Bambury, advise her not going away. I tell you to send her to Newcome. The air is good for her.”

“By that confounded smoky town, my dear Lady Kew?”

“And invite your mother and little brothers and sisters to stay Christmas there. The way in which you neglect them is shameful, it is, Barnes.”

“Upon my word, ma’am, I propose to manage my own affairs without your ladyship’s assistance,” cries Barnes, starting up, “and did not come at this time of night to hear this kind of —”

“Of good advice. I sent for you to give it you. When I wrote to you to bring me the money I wanted it was but a pretext; Barkins might have fetched it from the City in the morning. I want you to send Clara and the children to Newcome. They ought to go, sir. That is why I sent for you; to tell you that. Have you been quarrelling as much as usual?”

“Pretty much as usual,” says Barnes, drumming on his hat.

“Don’t beat that devil’s tattoo; you agacez my poor old nerves. When Clara was given to you she was as well broke a girl as any in London.”

Sir Barnes responded by a groan.

“She was as gentle and amenable to reason, as good-natured a girl as could be; a little vacant and silly, but you men like dolls for your wives; and now in three years you have utterly spoiled her. She is restive, she is artful, she flies into rages, she fights you and beats you. He! he! and that comes of your beating her!”

“I didn’t come to hear this, ma’am,” says Barnes, livid with rage

“You struck her, you know you did, Sir Barnes Newcome. She rushed over to me last year on the night you did it, you know she did.”

“Great God, ma’am! You know the provocation,” screams Barnes.

“Provocation or not, I don’t say. But from that moment she has beat you. You fool, to write her a letter and ask her pardon. If I had been a man I would rather have strangled my wife, than have humiliated myself so before her. She will never forgive that blow.”

“I was mad when I did it; and she drove me mad,” says Barnes. “She has the temper of a fiend, and the ingenuity of the devil. In two years an entire change has come over her. If I had used a knife to her I should not have been surprised. But it is not with you to reproach me about Clara. Your ladyship found her for me.”

“And you spoilt her after she was found, sir. She told me part of her story that night she came to me. I know it is true, Barnes. You have treated her dreadfully, sir.”

“I know that she makes my life miserable, and there is no help for it,” says Barnes, grinding a curse between his teeth. “Well, well, no more about this. How is Ethel? Gone to sleep after her journey? What do you think, ma’am, I have brought for her? A proposal.”

“Bon Dieu! You don’t mean to say Charles Belsize was in earnest!” cries the dowager. “I always thought it was a —”

“It is not from Lord Highgate, ma’am,” Sir Barnes said, gloomily. “It is some time since I have known that he was not in earnest; and he knows that I am now.”

“Gracious goodness! come to blows with him, too? You have not? That would be the very thing to make the world talk,” says the dowager, with some anxiety.

“No,” answers Barnes. “He knows well enough that there can be no open rupture. We had some words the other day at a dinner he gave at his own house; Colonel Newcome and that young beggar, Clive, and that fool, Mr. Hobson, were there. Lord Highgate was confoundedly insolent. He told me that I did not dare to quarrel with him because of the account he kept at our house. I should like to have massacred him! She has told him that I struck her — the insolent brute — he says he will tell it at my clubs; and threatens personal violence to me, there, if I do it again. Lady Kew, I’m not safe from that man and that woman,” cries poor Barnes, in an agony of terror.

“Fighting is Jack Belsize’s business, Barnes Newcome; banking is yours, luckily,” said the dowager. “As old Lord Highgate was to die and his eldest son, too, it is a pity certainly they had not died a year or two earlier, and left poor Clara and Charles to come together. You should have married some woman in the serious way; my daughter Walham could have found you one. Frank, I am told, and his wife go on very sweetly together; her mother-in-law governs the whole family. They have turned the theatre back into a chapel again: they have six little ploughboys dressed in surplices to sing the service; and Frank and the Vicar of Kewbury play at cricket with them on holidays. Stay, why should not Clara go to Kewbury?”

“She and her sister have quarrelled about this very affair with Lord Highgate. Some time ago it appears they had words about it and when I told Kew that by-gones had best be by-gones, that Highgate was very sweet upon Ethel now, and that I did not choose to lose such a good account as his, Kew was very insolent to me; his conduct was blackguardly, ma’am, quite blackguardly, and you may be sure but for our relationship I would have called him to —”

Here the talk between Barnes and his ancestress was interrupted by the appearance of Miss Ethel Newcome, taper in hand, who descended from the upper regions enveloped in a shawl.

“How do you do, Barnes? How is Clara? I long to see my little nephew. Is he like his pretty papa?” cries the young lady, giving her fair cheek to her brother.

“Scotland has agreed with our Newcome rose,” says Barnes, gallantly. “My dear Ethel, I never saw you in greater beauty.”

“By the light of one bedroom candle! what should I be if the whole room were lighted? You would see my face then was covered all over with wrinkles, and quite pale and woebegone, with the dreariness of the Scotch journey. Oh, what a time we have spent! haven’t we, grandmamma? I never wish to go to a great castle again; above all, I never wish to go to a little shooting-box. Scotland may be very well for men; but for women — allow me to go to Paris when next there is talk of a Scotch expedition. I had rather be in a boarding-school in the Champs Elysees than in the finest castle in the Highlands. If it had not been for a blessed quarrel with Fanny Follington, I think I should have died at Glen Shorthorn. Have you seen my dear, dear uncle, the Colonel? When did he arrive?”

“Is he come? Why is he come?” asks Lady Kew.

“Is he come? Look here, grandmamma! did you ever see such a darling shawl! I found it in a packet in my room.”

“Well, it is beautiful,” cries the Dowager, bending her ancient nose over the web. “Your Colonel is a galant homme. That must be said of him; and in this does not quite take after the rest of the family. Hum! hum! is he going away again soon?”

“He has made a fortune, a very considerable fortune for a man in that rank in life,” says Sir Barnes. “He cannot have less than sixty thousand pounds.”

“Is that much?” asks Ethel.

“Not in England, at our rate of interest; but his money is in India, where he gets a great percentage. His income must be five or six thousand pounds, ma’am,” says Barnes, turning to Lady Kew.

“A few of the Indians were in society in my time, my dear,” says Lady Kew, musingly. “My father has often talked to me about Barbell of Stanstead, and his house in St. James’s Square; the man who ordered more curricles when there were not

carriages enough for his guests. I was taken to Mr. Hastings's trial. It was very stupid and long. The young man, the painter, I suppose will leave his paint-pots now, and set up as a gentleman. I suppose they were very poor, or his father would not have put him to such a profession. Barnes, why did you not make him a clerk in the bank, and save him from the humiliation?"

"Humiliation! why, he is proud of it. My uncle is as proud as a Plantagenet; though he is as humble as — as what! Give me a simile Barnes. Do you know what my quarrel with Fanny Follington was about? She said we were not descended from the barber-surgeon, and laughed at the Battle of Bosworth. She says our great-grandfather was a weaver. Was he a weaver?"

"How should I know? and what on earth does it matter, my child? Except the Gaunts, the Howards, and one or two more, there is scarcely any good blood in England. You are lucky in sharing some of mine. My poor Lord Kew's grandfather was an apothecary at Hampton Court, and founded the family by giving a dose of rhubarb to Queen Caroline. As a rule, nobody is of a good family. Didn't that young man, that son of the Colonel's, go about last year? How did he get in society? Where did we meet him? Oh! at Baden, yes; when Barnes was courting, and my grandson — yes, my grandson, acted so wickedly." Here she began to cough, and to tremble so, that her old stick shook under her hand. "Ring the bell for Ross. Ross, I will go to bed. Go you too, Ethel. You have been travelling enough today."

"Her memory seems to fail her a little," Ethel whispered to her brother; "or she will only remember what she wishes. Don't you see that she has grown very much older?"

"I will be with her in the morning. I have business with her," said Barnes.

"Good night. Give my love to Clara, and kiss the little ones for me. Have you done what you promised me, Barnes?"

"What?"

"To be — to be kind to Clara. Don't say cruel things to her. She has a high spirit, and she feels them, though she says nothing."

"Doesn't she?" said Barnes, grimly.

"Ah, Barnes, be gentle with her. Seldom as I saw you together, when I lived with you in the spring, I could see that you were harsh, though she affected to laugh when she spoke of your conduct to her. Be kind. I am sure it is the best, Barnes; better than all the wit in the world. Look at grandmamma, how witty she was and is; what a reputation she had, how people were afraid of her; and see her now — quite alone."

"I'll see her in the morning quite alone, my dear," says Barnes, waving a little gloved hand. "Bye-bye!" and his brougham drove away. While Ethel Newcome had been under her brother's roof, where I and friend Clive, and scores of others, had been smartly entertained, there had been quarrels and recriminations, misery and heart-burning, cruel words and shameful struggles, the wretched combatants in which appeared before the world with smiling faces, resuming their battle when the feast was concluded and the company gone.

On the next morning, when Barnes came to visit his grandmother, Miss Newcome was gone away to see her sister-in-law, Lady Kew said, with whom she was going to pass the morning; so Barnes and Lady Kew had an uninterrupted tete-a-tete, in which the former acquainted the old lady with the proposal which Colonel Newcome had made to him on the previous night.

Lady Kew wondered what the impudence of the world's would come to. An artist propose for Ethel! One of her footmen might propose next, and she supposed Barnes would bring the message. "The father came and proposed for this young painter, and you didn't order him out of the room!"

Barnes laughed. "The Colonel is one of my constituents. I can't afford to order the Bundelcund Banking Company out of its own room."

"You did not tell Ethel this pretty news, I suppose?"

"Of course I didn't tell Ethel. Nor did I tell the Colonel that Ethel was in London. He fancies her in Scotland with your ladyship at this moment."

"I wish the Colonel were at Calcutta, and his son with him. I wish he was in the Ganges, I wish he was under Juggernaut's car," cried the old lady. "How much money has the wretch really got? If he is of importance to the bank, of course you must keep well with him. Five thousand a year, and he says he will settle it all on his son? He must be crazy."

There is nothing some of these people will not do, no sacrifice they will not make, to ally themselves with good families. Certainly you must remain on good terms with him and his bank. And we must say nothing of the business to Ethel, and trot out of town as quickly as we can. Let me see? We go to Drummington on Saturday. This is Tuesday. Barkins, you will keep the front drawing-room shutters shut, and remember we are not in town, unless Lady Glenlivat or Lord Farintosh should call."

"Do you think Farintosh will — will call, ma'am?" asked Sir Barnes demurely.

"He will be going through to Newmarket. He has been where we have been at two or three places in Scotland," replies the lady, with equal gravity. "His poor mother wishes him to give up his bachelor's life — as well she may — for you young men are terribly dissipated. Rossmont is quite a regal place. His Norfolk house is not inferior. A young man of that station ought to marry, and live at his places, and be an example to his people, instead of frittering away his time at Paris and Vienna amongst the most odious company."

"Is he going to Drummington?" asks the grandson.

"I believe he has been invited. We shall go to Paris for November: he probably will be there," answered the Dowager casually; "and tired of the dissipated life he has been leading, let us hope he will mend his ways, and find a virtuous, well-bred young woman to keep him right." With this her ladyship's apothecary is announced, and her banker and grandson takes his leave.

Sir Barnes walked into the City with his umbrella, read his letters, conferred with his partners and confidential clerks; was for a while not the exasperated husband, or the affectionate brother, or the amiable grandson, but the shrewd, brisk banker, engaged entirely with his business. Presently he had occasion to go on 'Change, or elsewhere, to confer with brother-capitalists, and in Cornhill behold he meets his uncle, Colonel Newcome, riding towards the India House, a groom behind him.

The Colonel springs off his horse, and Barnes greets him in the blandest manner. "Have you any news for me, Barnes?" cries the officer.

"The accounts from Calcutta are remarkably good. That cotton is of admirable quality really. Mr. Briggs, of our house, who knows cotton as well as any man in England, says —"

"It's not the cotton, my dear Sir Barnes," cries the other.

"The bills are perfectly good; there is no sort of difficulty about them. Our house will take half a million of 'em, if —"

"You are talking of bills, and I am thinking of poor Clive," the Colonel interposes. "I wish you could give me good news for him, Barnes."

"I wish I could. I heartily trust that I may some day. My good wishes you know are enlisted in your son's behalf," cries Barnes, gallantly. "Droll place to talk sentiment in-Cornhill, isn't it? But Ethel, as I told you, is in the hands of higher powers, and we must conciliate Lady Kew if we can. She has always spoken very highly of Clive; very."

"Had I not best go to her?" asks the Colonel.

"Into the North, my good sir? She is — ah — she is travelling about. I think you had best depend upon me, Good morning. In the City we have no hearts, you know, Colonel. Be sure you shall hear from me as soon as Lady Kew and Ethel come to town."

And the banker hurried away, shaking his finger-tips to his uncle, and leaving the good Colonel utterly surprised at his statements. For the fact is, the Colonel knew that Lady Kew was in London, having been apprised of the circumstance in the simplest manner in the world, namely, by a note from Miss Ethel, which billet he had in his pocket, whilst he was talking with the head of the house of Hobson Brothers:—

"My dear uncle" (the note said), "how glad I shall be to see you! How shall I thank you for the beautiful shawl, and the kind, kind remembrance of me? I found your present yesterday evening, on our arrival from the North. We are only here en passant, and see nobody in Queen Street but Barnes, who has just been about business, and he does not count, you know. I shall go and see Clara tomorrow, and make her take me to see your pretty friend, Mrs. Pendennis. How glad I should be if you happened to pay Mrs. P. a visit about two! Good-night. I thank you a thousand times, and am always your affectionate E."

"Queen Street. Tuesday night. Twelve o'clock."

This note came to Colonel Newcome's breakfast-table, and he smothered the exclamation of wonder which was rising to his lips, not choosing to provoke the questions of Clive, who sat opposite to him. Clive's father was in a woeful perplexity all that forenoon. "Tuesday night, twelve o'clock," thought he. "Why, Barnes must have gone to his grandmother from my dinner-table; and he told me she was out of town, and said so again just now when we met in the City." (The Colonel was riding towards Richmond at this time.) "What cause had the young man to tell me these lies? Lady Kew may not wish to be at home for me, but need Barnes Newcome say what is untrue to mislead me? The fellow actually went away simpering, and kissing his hand to me, with a falsehood on his lips! What a pretty villain! A fellow would deserve, and has got, a horse-whipping for less. And to think of a Newcome doing this to his own flesh and blood; a young Judas!" Very sad and bewildered, the Colonel rode towards Richmond, where he was to happen to call on Mrs. Pendennis.

It was not much of a fib that Barnes had told. Lady Kew announcing that she was out of town, her grandson, no doubt, thought himself justified in saying so, as any other of her servants would have done. But if he had recollected how Ethel came down with the Colonel's shawl on her shoulders, how it was possible she might have written to thank her uncle, surely Barnes Newcome would not have pulled that unlucky long-bow. The banker had other things to think of than Ethel and her shawl.

When Thomas Newcome dismounted at the door of Honeymoon Cottage, Richmond, the temporary residence of A. Pendennis, Esq., one of the handsomest young women in England ran into the passage with outstretched arms, called him her dear old uncle, and gave him two kisses, that I dare say brought blushes on his lean sunburnt cheeks. Ethel clung always to his affection. She wanted that man, rather than any other in the whole world, to think well of her. When she was with him, she was the amiable and simple, the loving impetuous creature of old times. She chose to think of no other. Worldliness, heartlessness, eager scheming, cold flirtations, marquis-hunting and the like, disappeared for a while — and were not, as she sat at that honest man's side. O me! that we should have to record such charges against Ethel Newcome!

"He was come home for good now? He would never leave that boy he spoiled so, who was a good boy, too: she wished she could see him oftener. At Paris, at Madame de Florac's — I found out all about Madame de Florac, sir," says Miss Ethel, with a laugh — "we used often to meet there; and here, sometimes, in London. But in London it was different. You know what peculiar notions some people have; and as I live with grandmamma, who is most kind to me and my brothers, of course I must obey her, see her," etc. etc. That the young lady went on talking, defending herself, whom nobody attacked, protesting her dislike to gaiety and dissipation — you would have fancied her an artless young country lass, only longing to trip back to her village, milk her cows at sunrise, and sit spinning of winter evenings by the fire.

"Why do you come and spoil my *tete-a-tete* with my uncle, Mr. Pendennis?" cries the young lady to the master of the house, who happens to enter "Of all the men in the world the one I like best to talk to! Does he not look younger than when he went to India? When Clive marries that pretty little Miss Mackenzie, you will marry again, uncle, and I will be jealous of your wife."

"Did Barnes tell you that we had met last night, my dear?" asks the Colonel.

"Not one word. Your shawl and your dear kind note told me you were come. Why did not Barnes tell us? Why do you look so grave?"

"He has not told her that I was here, and would have me believe her absent," thought Newcome, as his countenance fell. "Shall I give her my own message, and plead my poor boy's cause with her?" I know not whether he was about to lay his suit before her; he said himself subsequently that his mind was not made up; but at this juncture, a procession of nurses and babies made their appearance, followed by the two mothers, who had been comparing their mutual prodigies (each lady having her own private opinion)— Lady Clara and my wife — the latter for once gracious to Lady Clara Newcome, in consideration of the infantine company with which she came to visit Mrs. Pendennis.

Luncheon was served presently. The carriage of the Newcomes drove away, my wife smilingly pardoning Ethel for the assignation which the young person had made at our house. And when those ladies were gone, our good Colonel held a council of war with us his two friends, and told us what had happened between him and Barnes on that morning and the previous night. His offer to sacrifice every shilling of his fortune to young Clive seemed to him to be perfectly simple (though the recital of the circumstance brought tears into my wife's eyes)— he mentioned it by the way, and as a matter that was scarcely to call for comment, much less praise.

Barnes's extraordinary statements respecting Lady Kew's absence puzzled the elder Newcome; and he spoke of his

nephew's conduct with much indignation. In vain I urged that her ladyship desiring to be considered absent from London, her grandson was bound to keep her secret. "Keep her secret, yes! Tell me lies, no!" cries out the Colonel. Sir Barnes's conduct was in fact indefensible, though not altogether unusual — the worst deduction to be drawn from it, in my opinion, was, that Clive's chance with the young lady was but a poor one, and that Sir Barnes Newcome, inclined to keep his uncle in good-humour, would therefore give him no disagreeable refusal.

Now this gentleman could no more pardon a lie than he could utter one. He would believe all and everything a man told him until deceived once, after which he never forgave. And wrath being once roused in his simple mind and distrust firmly fixed there, his anger and prejudices gathered daily. He could see no single good quality in his opponent; and hated him with a daily increasing bitterness.

As ill luck would have it, that very same evening, at his return to town, Thomas Newcome entered Bays's club, of which, at our request, he had become a member during his last visit to England, and there was Sir Barnes, as usual, on his way homewards from the City. Barnes was writing at a table, and sealing and closing a letter, as he saw the Colonel enter; he thought he had been a little inattentive and curt with his uncle in the morning; had remarked, perhaps, the expression of disapproval on the Colonel's countenance. He simpered up to his uncle as the latter entered the clubroom, and apologised for his haste when they met in the City in the morning — all City men were so busy! "And I have been writing about that little affair, just as you came in," he said; "quite a moving letter to Lady Kew, I assure you, and I do hope and trust we shall have a favourable answer in a day or two."

"You said her ladyship was in the North, I think?" said the Colonel, drily.

"Oh, yes — in the North, at — at Lord Wallsend's — great coal-proprietor, you know."

"And your sister is with her?"

"Ethel is always with her."

"I hope you will send her my very best remembrances," said the Colonel.

"I'll open the letter, and add 'em in a postscript," said Barnes.

"Confounded liar?" cried the Colonel, mentioning the circumstance to me afterwards, "why does not somebody pitch him out of the bow-window?"

If we were in the secret of Sir Barnes Newcome's correspondence, and could but peep into that particular letter to his grandmother, I dare say we should read that he had seen the Colonel, who was very anxious about his darling youth's suit, but, pursuant to Lady Kew's desire, Barnes had stoutly maintained that her ladyship was still in the North, enjoying the genial hospitality of Lord Wallsend. That of course he should say nothing to Ethel, except with Lady Kew's full permission: that he wished her a pleasant trip to — — and was, etc. etc.

Then if we could follow him, we might see him reach his Belgravian mansion, and fling an angry word to his wife as she sits alone in the darkling drawing-room, poring over the embers. He will ask her, probably with an oath, why the ——— she is not dressed? and if she always intends to keep her company waiting? An hour hence, each with a smirk, and the lady in smart raiment, with flowers in her hair, will be greeting their guests as they arrive. Then will come dinner and such conversation as it brings. Then at night Sir Barnes will issue forth, cigar in mouth; to return to his own chamber at his own hour; to breakfast by himself; to go Citywards, money-getting. He will see his children once a fortnight, and exchange a dozen sharp words with his wife twice in that time.

More and more sad does the Lady Clara become from day to day; liking more to sit lonely over the fire; careless about the sarcasms of her husband; the prattle of her children. She cries sometimes over the cradle of the young heir. She is weary, weary. You understand, the man to whom her parents sold her does not make her happy, though she has been bought with diamonds, two carriages, several large footmen, a fine country-house with delightful gardens, and conservatories, and with all this she is miserable — is it possible?



CHAPTER LIII

IN WHICH KINSMEN FALL OUT

Not the least difficult part of Thomas Newcome's present business was to keep from his son all knowledge of the negotiation in which he was engaged on Clive's behalf. If my gentle reader has had sentimental disappointments, he or she is aware that the friends who have given him most sympathy under these calamities have been persons who have had dismal histories of their own at some time of their lives, and I conclude Colonel Newcome in his early days must have suffered very cruelly in that affair of which we have a slight cognisance, or he would not have felt so very much anxiety about Clive's condition.

A few chapters back and we described the first attack, and Clive's manful cure: then we had to indicate the young gentleman's relapse, and the noisy exclamations of the youth under this second outbreak of fever. Calling him back after she had dismissed him, and finding pretext after pretext to see him — why did the girl encourage him, as she certainly did? I allow, with Mrs. Grundy and most moralists, that Miss Newcome's conduct in this matter was highly reprehensible; that if she did not intend to marry Clive she should have broken with him — altogether; that a virtuous young woman of high principle, etc. etc., having once determined to reject a suitor, should separate from him utterly then and there — never give him again the least chance of a hope, or reillumine the extinguished fire in the wretch's bosom.

But coquetry, but kindness, but family affection, and a strong, very strong partiality for the rejected lover — are these not to be taken in account, and to plead as excuses for her behaviour to her cousin? The least unworthy part of her conduct, some critics will say, was that desire to see Clive and be well with him: as she felt the greatest regard for him, the showing it was not blameable; and every flutter which she made to escape out of the meshes which the world had cast about her was but the natural effort at liberty. It was her prudence which was wrong; and her submission wherein she was most culpable. In the early church story, do we not read how young martyrs constantly had to disobey worldly papas and mammas, who would have had them silent, and not utter their dangerous opinions? how their parents locked them up, kept them on bread-and-water, whipped and tortured them in order to enforce obedience? — nevertheless they would declare the truth: they would defy the gods by law established, and deliver themselves up to the lions or the tormentors. Are not there Heathen Idols enshrined among us still? Does not the world worship them, and persecute those who refuse to kneel? Do not many timid souls sacrifice to them; and other bolder spirits rebel and, with rage at their hearts, bend down their stubborn knees at their altars? See! I began by siding with Mrs. Grundy and the world, and at the next turn of the see-saw have lighted down on Ethel's side, and am disposed to think that the very best part of her conduct has been those escapades which — which right-minded persons most justly condemn. At least, that a young beauty should torture a man with alternate liking and indifference; allure, dismiss, and call him back out of banishment; practise arts to please upon him, and ignore them when rebuked for her coquetry — these are surely occurrences so common in young women's history as to call for no special censure; and if on these charges Miss Newcome is guilty, is she, of all her sex, alone in her criminality?

So Ethel and her duenna went away upon their tour of visits to mansions so splendid, and among hosts and guests so polite, that the present modest historian does not dare to follow them. Suffice it to say that Duke This and Earl That were, according to their hospitable custom, entertaining a brilliant circle of friends at their respective castles, all whose names the Morning Post gave; and among them those of the Dowager Countess of Kew and Miss Newcome.

During her absence, Thomas Newcome grimly awaited the result of his application to Barnes. That Baronet showed his uncle a letter, or rather a postscript, from Lady Kew, which probably had been dictated by Barnes himself, in which the Dowager said she was greatly touched by Colonel Newcome's noble offer; that though she owned she had very different views for her granddaughter, Miss Newcome's choice of course lay with herself. Meanwhile, Lady K. and Ethel were engaged in a round of visits to the country, and there would be plenty of time to resume this subject when they came to London for the season. And, lest dear Ethel's feelings should be needlessly agitated by a discussion of the subject, and the Colonel should take a fancy to write to her privately, Lady Kew gave orders that all letters from London should be despatched under cover to her ladyship, and carefully examined the contents of the packet before Ethel received her share of the correspondence.

To write to her personally on the subject of the marriage, Thomas Newcome had determined was not a proper course for him to pursue. "They consider themselves," says he, "above us, forsooth, in their rank of life (oh, mercy! what pigmies we are! and don't angels weep at the brief authority in which we dress ourselves up!) and of course the approaches on our side must be made in regular form, and the parents of the young people must act for them. Clive is too honourable a man to wish to conduct the affair in any other way. He might try the influence of his beaux yeux, and run off to Gretna with a girl who had nothing; but the young lady being wealthy, and his relation, sir, we must be on the point of honour; and all the Kews in Christendom shan't have more pride than we in this matter."

All this time we are keeping Mr. Clive purposely in the background. His face is so woebegone that we do not care to bring it forward in the family picture. His case is so common that surely its lugubrious symptoms need not be described at length. He works away fiercely at his pictures, and in spite of himself improves in his art. He sent a "Combat of Cavalry," and a picture of "Sir Brian the Templar carrying off Rebecca," to the British Institution this year; both of which pieces were praised in other journals besides the Pall Mall Gazette. He did not care for the newspaper praises. He was rather surprised when a dealer purchased his "Sir Brian the Templar." He came and went from our house a melancholy swain. He was thankful for Laura's kindness and pity. J. J.'s studio was his principal resort; and I dare say, as he set up his own easel there, and worked by his friend's side, he bemoaned his lot to his sympathising friend.

Sir Barnes Newcome's family was absent from London during the winter. His mother, and his brothers and sisters, his wife and his two children, were gone to Newcome for Christmas. Some six weeks after seeing him, Ethel wrote her uncle a kind, merry letter. They had been performing private theatricals at the country-house where she and Lady Kew were staying. "Captain Crackthorpe made an admirable Jeremy Diddler in 'Raising the Wind.' Lord Farintosh broke down lamentably as Fusbos in 'Bombastes Furioso.'" Miss Ethel had distinguished herself in both of these facetious little comedies. "I should like Clive to paint me as Miss Plainways," she wrote. "I wore a powdered front, painted my face all over wrinkles, imitated old Lady Griffin as well as I could, and looked sixty at least."

Thomas Newcome wrote an answer to his fair niece's pleasant letter; "Clive," he said, "would be happy to bargain to paint her, and nobody else but her, all the days of his life; and," the Colonel was sure, "would admire her at sixty as much as he did now, when she was forty years younger." But, determined on maintaining his appointed line of conduct respecting Miss Newcome, he carried his letter to Sir Barnes, and desired him to forward it to his sister. Sir Barnes took the note, and promised to despatch it. The communications between him and his uncle had been very brief and cold, since the telling of these little fibs concerning old Lady Kew's visits to London, which the Baronet dismissed from his mind as soon as they were spoken, and which the good Colonel never could forgive. Barnes asked his uncle to dinner once or twice, but the Colonel was engaged. How was Barnes to know the reason of the elder's refusal? A London man, a banker, and a Member of Parliament, has a thousand things to think of; and no time to wonder that friends refuse his invitations to dinner. Barnes continued to grin and smile most affectionately when he met the Colonel; to press his hand, to congratulate him on the last accounts from India, unconscious of the scorn and distrust with which his senior mentally regarded him. "Old boy is doubtful about the young cub's love-affair," the Baronet may have thought. "We'll ease his old mind on that point some time hence." No doubt Barnes thought he was conducting the business very smartly and diplomatically.

I heard myself news at this period from the gallant Crackthorpe, which, being interested in my young friend's happiness, filled me with some dismay. "Our friend the painter and glazier has been hankering about our barracks at Knightsbridge" (the noble Life Guards Green had now pitched their tents in that suburb), "and pumping me about la belle cousin. I don't like to break it to him — I don't really, now. But it's all up with his chance, I think. Those private theatricals at Fallowfield have done Farintosh's business. He used to rave about the Newcomes to me, as we were riding home from hunting. He gave Bob Henchman the lie, who told a story which Bob got from his man, who had it from Miss Newcome's lady's-maid, about — about some journey to Brighton, which the cousins took." Here Mr. Crackthorpe grinned most facetiously. "Farintosh swore he'd knock Henchman down; and vows he will be the death of — will murder our friend Clive when he comes to town. As for Henchman, he was in a desperate way. He lives on the Marquis, you know, and Farintosh's anger or his marriage will be the loss of free quarters, and ever so many good dinners a year to him." I did not deem it necessary to impart Crackthorpe's story to Clive, or explain to him the reason why Lord Farintosh scowled most fiercely upon the young painter, and passed him without any other sign of recognition one day as Clive and I were walking together in Pall Mall. If my lord wanted a quarrel, young Clive was not a man to balk him; and would have been a very fierce customer to deal with, in his actual state of mind.

A pauper child in London at seven years old knows how to go to market, to fetch the beer, to pawn father's coat, to choose the largest fried fish or the nicest ham-bone, to nurse Mary Jane of three — to conduct a hundred operations of trade or housekeeping, which a little Belgravian does not perhaps acquire in all the days of her life. Poverty and necessity force this precociousness on the poor little brat. There are children who are accomplished shoplifters and liars almost as soon as they can toddle and speak. I dare say little Princes know the laws of etiquette as regards themselves, and the respect due to their rank, at a very early period of their royal existence. Every one of us, according to his degree, can point to the Princekins of private life who are flattered and worshipped, and whose little shoes grown men kiss as soon almost as they walk upon ground.

It is a wonder what human nature will support: and that, considering the amount of flattery some people are crammed with from their cradles, they do not grow worse and more selfish than they are. Our poor little pauper just mentioned is dosed with Daffy's Elixir, and somehow survives the drug. Princekin or lordkin from his earliest days has nurses, dependants, governesses, little friends, schoolfellows, schoolmasters, fellow-collegians, college tutors, stewards and valets, led captains of his suite, and women innumerable flattering him and doing him honour. The tradesman's manner, which to you and me is decently respectful, becomes straightway frantically servile before Princekin. Honest folks at railway stations whisper to their families, "That's the Marquis of Farintosh," and look hard at him as he passes. Landlords cry, "This way, my lord; this room for your lordship." They say at public schools Princekin is taught the beauties of equality, and thrashed into some kind of subordination. Psha! Toad-eaters in pinafores surround Princekin. Do not respectable people send their children so as to be at the same school with him; don't they follow him to college, and eat his toads through life?

And as for women — oh, my dear friends and brethren in this vale of tears — did you ever see anything so curious, monstrous, and amazing as the way in which women court Princekin when he is marriageable, and pursue him with their daughters? Who was the British nobleman in old old days who brought his three daughters to the King of Mercia, that His Majesty might choose one after inspection? Mercia was but a petty province, and its king in fact a Princekin. Ever since those extremely ancient and venerable times the custom exists not only in Mercia, but in all the rest of the provinces inhabited by the Angles, and before Princekins the daughters of our nobles are trotted out.

There was no day of his life which our young acquaintance, the Marquis of Farintosh, could remember on which he had not been flattered; and no society which did not pay him court. At a private school he could recollect the master's wife stroking his pretty curls and treating him furtively to goodies; at college he had the tutor simpering and bowing as he swaggered over the grass-plat; old men at clubs would make way for him and fawn on him — not your mere pique-assiettes and penniless parasites, but most respectable toad-eaters, fathers of honest families, gentlemen themselves of good station, who respected this young gentleman as one of the institutions of their country, and the admired wisdom of the nation that set him to legislate over us. When Lord Farintosh walked the streets at night, he felt himself like Haroun Alraschid —(that is, he would have felt so had he ever heard of the Arabian potentate)— a monarch in disguise affably observing and promenading the city. And let us be sure there was a Mesrour in his train to knock at the doors for him and run the errands of this young caliph. Of course he met with scores of men in life who neither flattered him nor would suffer his airs; but he did not like the company of such, or for the sake of truth undergo the ordeal of being laughed at; he preferred toadies, generally speaking. "I like," says he, "you know, those fellows who are always saying pleasant things, you know, and who would run from here to Hammersmith if I asked 'em — much better than those fellows who are always making fun of me, you know." A man of his station who likes flatterers need not shut himself up; he can get plenty of society.

As for women, it was his lordship's opinion that every daughter of Eve was bent on marrying him. A Scotch marquis, an English earl, of the best blood in the empire, with a handsome person, and a fortune of fifteen thousand a year, how could the poor creatures do otherwise than long for him? He blandly received their caresses; took their coaxing and cajolery as matters of course; and surveyed the beauties of his time as the Caliph the moonfaces of his harem. My lord intended to marry certainly. He did not care for money, nor for rank; he expected consummate beauty and talent, and some day would fling his handkerchief to the possessor of these, and place her by his side upon the Farintosh throne.

At this time there were but two or three young ladies in society endowed with the necessary qualifications, or who found favour in his eyes. His lordship hesitated in his selection from these beauties. He was not in a hurry, he was not angry at the notion that Lady Kew (and Miss Newcome with her) hunted him. What else should they do but pursue an object so charming? Everybody hunted him. The other young ladies, whom we need not mention, languished after him still

more longingly. He had little notes from these; presents of purses worked by them, and cigar-cases embroidered with his coronet. They sang to him in cosy boudoirs — mamma went out of the room, and sister Ann forgot something in the drawing-room. They ogled him as they sang. Trembling they gave him a little foot to mount them, that they might ride on horseback with him. They tripped along by his side from the Hall to the pretty country church on Sundays. They warbled hymns: sweetly looking at him the while mamma whispered confidentially to him, “What an angel Cecilia is!” And so forth, and so forth — with which chaff our noble bird was by no means to be caught. When he had made up his great mind, that the time was come and the woman, he was ready to give a Marchioness of Farintosh to the English nation.

Miss Newcome has been compared ere this to the statue of “Huntress Diana” at the Louvre, whose haughty figure and beauty the young lady indeed somewhat resembled. I was not present when Diana and Diana’s grandmother hunted the noble Scottish stag of whom we have just been writing; nor care to know how many times Lord Farintosh escaped, and how at last he was brought to bay and taken by his resolute pursuers. Paris, it appears, was the scene of his fall and capture. The news was no doubt well known amongst Lord Farintosh’s brother-dandies, among exasperated matrons and virgins in Mayfair, and in polite society generally, before it came to simple Tom Newcome and his son. Not a word on the subject had Sir Barnes mentioned to the Colonel: perhaps not choosing to speak till the intelligence was authenticated; perhaps not wishing to be the bearer of tidings so painful.

Though the Colonel may have read in his Pall Mall Gazette a paragraph which announced an approaching MARRIAGE IN HIGH LIFE, “between a noble young marquis and an accomplished and beautiful young lady, daughter and sister of a Northern baronet,” he did not know who were the fashionable persons about to be made happy, nor, until he received a letter from an old friend who lived at Paris, was the fact conveyed to him. Here is the letter preserved by him along with all that he ever received from the same hand:—

“Rue St. Dominique, St. Germain,

“Paris, 10 Fev.

“So behold you of return, my friend! you quit for ever the sword and those arid plains where you have passed so many years of your life, separated from those to whom, at the commencement, you held very nearly. Did it not seem once as if two hands never could unlock, so closely were they enlaced together? Ah, mine are old and feeble now; forty years have passed since the time when you used to say they were young and fair. How well I remember me of every one of those days, though there is a death between me and them, and it is as across a grave I review them! Yet another parting, and tears and regrets are finished. Tenez, I do not believe them when they say there is no meeting for us afterwards, there above. To what good to have seen you, friend, if we are to part here, and in Heaven too? I have not altogether forgotten your language, is it not so? I remember it because it was yours, and that of my happy days. I radote like an old woman as I am. M. de Florac has known my history from the commencement. May I not say that after so many of years I have been faithful to him and to all my promises? When the end comes with its great absolution, I shall not be sorry. One supports the combats of life, but they are long, and one comes from them very wounded; ah, when shall they be over?

“You return and I salute you with wishes for parting. How much egotism! I have another project which I please myself to arrange. You know how I am arrived to love Clive as own my child. I very quick surprised his secret, the poor boy, when he was here it is twenty months. He looked so like you as I repeal me of you in the old time! He told me he had no hope of his beautiful cousin. I have heard of the fine marriage that one makes her. Paul, my son, has been at the English Ambassade last night and has made his congratulations to M. de Farintosh. Paul says him handsome, young, not too spiritual, rich, and haughty, like all, all noble Montagnards.

“But it is not of M. de Farintosh I write, whose marriage, without doubt, has been announced to you. I have a little project; very foolish, perhaps. You know Mr. the Duke of Ivry has left me guardian of his little daughter Antoinette, whose affreuse mother no one sees more. Antoinette is pretty and good, and soft, and with an affectionate heart. I love her already as my infant. I wish to bring her up, and that Clive should marry her. They say you are returned very rich. What follies are these I write! In the long evenings of winter, the children escaped it is a long time from the maternal nest, a silent old man my only company — I live but of the past; and play with its souvenirs as the detained caress little birds, little flowers, in their prisons. I was born for the happiness; my God! I have learned it in knowing you. In losing you I have lost it. It is not against the will of Heaven I oppose myself. It is man, who makes himself so much of this evil and misery, this slavery, these tears, these crimes, perhaps.

"This marriage of the young Scotch Marquis and the fair Ethel (I love her in spite of all, and shall see her soon and congratulate her, for, do you see, I might have stopped this fine marriage, and did my best and more than my duty for our poor Clive) shall make itself in London next spring, I hear. You shall assist scarcely at the ceremony; he, poor boy, shall not care to be there. Bring him to Paris to make the court to my little Antoinette: bring him to Paris to his good friend, Comtesse de Florac."

"I read marvels of his works in an English journal, which one sends me."

Clive was not by when this letter reached his father. Clive was in his painting-room, and lest he should meet his son, and in order to devise the best means of breaking the news to the lad, Thomas Newcome retreated out of doors; and from the Oriental he crossed Oxford Street, and from Oxford Street he stalked over the roomy pavements of Gloucester Place, and there he bethought him how he had neglected Mrs. Hobson Newcome of late, and the interesting family of Bryanstone Square. So he went to leave his card at Maria's door: her daughters, as we have said, are quite grown girls. If they have been lectured, and learning, and back-boarded, and practising, and using the globes, and laying in a store of 'ologies, ever since, what a deal they must know! Colonel Newcome was admitted to see his nieces, and Consummate Virtue, their parent. Maria was charmed to see her brother-inlaw; she greeted him with reproachful tenderness: "Why, why," her fine eyes seemed to say, "have you so long neglected us? Do you think because I am wise, and gifted, and good, and you are, it must be confessed, a poor creature with no education, I am not also affable? Come, let the prodigal be welcomed by his virtuous relatives: come and lunch with us, Colonel!" He sate down accordingly to the family tiffin.

When the meal was over, the mother, who had matter of importance to impart to him, besought him to go to the drawing-room, and there poured out such a eulogy upon her children's qualities as fond mothers know how to utter. They knew this and they knew that. They were instructed by the most eminent professors; "that wretched Frenchwoman, whom you may remember here, Mademoiselle Lenoir," Maria remarked parenthetically, "turned out, oh, frightfully! She taught the girls the worst accent, it appears. Her father was not a colonel; he was — oh! never mind! It is a mercy I got rid of that fiendish woman, and before my precious ones knew what she was!" And then followed details of the perfections of the two girls, with occasional side-shots at Lady Anne's family, just as in the old time. "Why don't you bring your boy, whom I have always loved as a son, and who avoids me? Why does not Clive know his cousins? They are very different from others of his kinswomen, who think best of the heartless world."

"I fear, Maria, there is too much truth in what you say," sighs the Colonel, drumming on a book on the drawing-room table, and looking down sees it is a great, large, square, gilt Peerage, open at FARINTOSH, MARQUIS OF. — Fergus Angus Malcolm Mungo Roy, Marquis of Farintosh, Earl of Glenlivat, in the peerage of Scotland; also Earl of Rossmont, in that of the United Kingdom. Son of Angus Fergus Malcolm, Earl of Glenlivat, and grandson and heir of Malcolm Mungo Angus, first Marquis of Farintosh, and twenty-fifth Earl, etc. etc.

"You have heard the news regarding Ethel?" remarks Hobson.

"I have just heard," says the poor Colonel.

"I have a letter from Anne this morning," Maria continues. "They are of course delighted with the match. Lord Farintosh is wealthy, handsome; has been a little wild, I hear; is not such a husband as I would choose for my darlings, but poor Brian's family have been educated to love the world; and Ethel no doubt is flattered by the prospects before her. I have heard that some one else was a little epris in that quarter. How does Clive bear the news, my dear Colonel?"

"He has long expected it," says the Colonel, rising: "and I left him very cheerful at breakfast this morning."

"Send him to see us, the naughty boy!" cries Maria. "We don't change; we remember old times, to us he will ever be welcome!" And with this confirmation of Madame de Florac's news, Thomas Newcome walked sadly homewards.

And now Thomas Newcome had to break the news to his son; who received the shot in such a way as caused his friends and confidants to admire his high spirit. He said he had long been expecting some such announcement: it was many months since Ethel had prepared him for it. Under her peculiar circumstances he did not see how she could act otherwise than she had done. And he narrated to the Colonel the substance of the conversation which the two young people had had together several months before, in Madame de Florac's garden.

Clive's father did not tell his son of his own bootless negotiation with Barnes Newcome. There was no need to recall that now; but the Colonel's wrath against his nephew exploded in conversation with me, who was the confidant of father and son in this business. Ever since that luckless day when Barnes thought proper to — to give a wrong address for Lady

Kew, Thomas Newcome's anger had been growing. He smothered it yet for a while, sent a letter to Lady Anne Newcome, briefly congratulating her on the choice which he had heard Miss Newcome had made; and in acknowledgment of Madame de Florac's more sentimental epistle he wrote a reply which has not been preserved, but in which he bade her rebuke Miss Newcome for not having answered him when he wrote to her, and not having acquainted her old uncle with her projected union.

To this message, Ethel wrote back a brief, hurried reply; it said:—

"I saw Madame de Florac last night at her daughter's reception, and she gave me my dear uncle's messages. Yes, the news is true which you have heard from Madame de Florac, and in Bryanstone Square. I did not like to write it to you, because I know one whom I regard as a brother (and a great, great deal better), and to whom I know it will give pain. He knows that I have done my duty, and why I have acted as I have done. God bless him and his dear father!

"What is this about a letter which I never answered? Grandmamma knows nothing about a letter. Mamma has enclosed to me that which you wrote to her, but there has been no letter from T. N. to his sincere and affectionate E. N.

"Rue de Rivoli. Friday."

This was too much, and the cup of Thomas Newcome's wrath overflowed. Barnes had lied about Ethel's visit to London: Barnes had lied in saying that he delivered the message with which his uncle charged him: Barnes had lied about the letter which he had received, and never sent. With these accusations firmly proven in his mind against his nephew, the Colonel went down to confront that sinner.

Wherever he should find Barnes, Thomas Newcome was determined to tell him his mind. Should they meet on the steps of a church, on the flags of 'Change, or in the newspaper-room at Bays's, at evening-paper time, when men most do congregate, Thomas the Colonel was determined upon exposing and chastising his father's grandson. With Ethel's letter in his pocket, he took his way into the City, penetrated into the unsuspecting back-parlour of Hobson's bank, and was disappointed at first at only finding his half-brother Hobson there engaged over his newspaper. The Colonel signified his wish to see Sir Barnes Newcome. "Sir Barnes was not come in yet. You've heard about the marriage," says Hobson. "Great news for the Barnes's, ain't it? The head of the house is as proud as a peacock about it. Said he was going out to Samuels, the diamond merchants; going to make his sister some uncommon fine present. Jolly to be uncle to a marquis, ain't it, Colonel? I'll have nothing under a duke for my girls. I say, I know whose nose is out of joint. But young fellows get over these things, and Clive won't die this time, I dare say."

While Hobson Newcome made these satiric and facetious remarks, his half-brother paced up and down the glass parlour, scowling over the panes into the bank where the busy young clerks sate before their ledgers. At last he gave an "Ah!" as of satisfaction. Indeed, he had seen Sir Barnes Newcome enter into the bank.

The Baronet stopped and spoke with a clerk, and presently entered, followed by that young gentleman into his private parlour. Barnes tried to grin when he saw his uncle, and held out his hand to greet the Colonel; but the Colonel put both his behind his back — that which carried his faithful bamboo cane shook nervously. Barnes was aware that the Colonel had the news. "I was going to — to write to you this morning, with — with some intelligence that I am — very — very sorry to give."

"This young gentleman is one of your clerks?" asked Thomas Newcome, blandly.

"Yes; Mr. Boltby, who has your private account. This is Colonel Newcome, Mr. Boltby," says Sir Barnes, in some wonder.

"Mr. Boltby, brother Hobson, you heard what Sir Barnes Newcome said just now respecting certain intelligence which he grieved to give me?"

At this the three other gentlemen respectively wore looks of amazement.

"Allow me to say in your presence, that I don't believe one single word Sir Barnes Newcome says, when he tells me that he is very sorry for some intelligence he has to communicate. He lies, Mr. Boltby; he is very glad. I made up my mind that in whatsoever company I met him, and on the very first day I found him — hold your tongue, sir; you shall speak afterwards and tell more lies when I have done — I made up my mind, I say, that on the very first occasion I would tell Sir Barnes Newcome that he was a liar and a cheat. He takes charge of letters and keeps them back. Did you break the seal, sir? There was nothing to steal in my letter to Miss Newcome. He tells me people are out of town, when he goes to see in the next street, after leaving my table, and whom I see myself half an hour before he lies to me about their absence."

“D— n you, go out, and don’t stand staring there, you booby!” screams out Sir Barnes to the clerk. “Stop, Boltby. Colonel Newcome, unless you leave this room I shall — I shall —”

“You shall call a policeman. Send for the gentleman, and I will tell the Lord Mayor what I think of Sir Barnes Newcome, Baronet. Mr. Boltby, shall we have the constable in?”

“Sir, you are an old man, and my father’s brother, or you know very well I would —”

“You would what, Sir? Upon my word, Barnes Newcome” (here the Colonel’s two hands and the bamboo cane came from the rear and formed in front), “but that you are my father’s grandson, after a menace like that, I would take you out and cane you in the presence of your clerks. I repeat, sir, that I consider you guilty of treachery, falsehood, and knavery. And if I ever see you at Bays’s Club, I will make the same statement to your acquaintance at the west end of the town. A man of your baseness ought to be known, sir; and it shall be my business to make men of honour aware of your character. Mr. Boltby, will you have the kindness to make out my account? Sir Barnes Newcome, for fear of consequences that I should deplore, I recommend you to keep a wide berth of me, sir.” And the Colonel twirled his mustachios, and waved his cane in an ominous manner, and Barnes started back spontaneously out of its dangerous circle.

What Mr. Boltby’s sentiments may have been regarding this extraordinary scene in which his principal cut so sorry a figure; — whether he narrated the conversation to other gentlemen connected with the establishment of Hobson Brothers, or prudently kept it to himself, I cannot say, having no means of pursuing Mr. B.’s subsequent career. He speedily quitted his desk at Hobson Brothers; and let us presume that Barnes thought Mr. B. had told all the other clerks of the avuncular quarrel. That conviction will make us imagine Barnes still more comfortable. Hobson Newcome no doubt was rejoiced at Barnes’s discomfiture; he had been insolent and domineering beyond measure of late to his vulgar good-natured uncle, whereas after the above interview with the Colonel he became very humble and quiet in his demeanour, and for a long, long time never said a rude word. Nay, I fear Hobson must have carried an account of the transaction to Mrs. Hobson and the circle in Bryanstone Square; for Sam Newcome, now entered at Cambridge, called the Baronet “Barnes” quite familiarly; asked after Clara and Ethel; and requested a small loan of Barnes.

Of course the story did not get wind at Bays’s; of course Tom Eaves did not know all about it, and say that Sir Barnes had been beaten black-and-blue. Having been treated very ill by the committee in a complaint which he made about the Club cookery, Sir Barnes Newcome never came to Bays’s, and at the end of the year took off his name from the lists of the Club.

Sir Barnes, though a little taken aback in the morning, and not ready with an impromptu reply to the Colonel and his cane, could not allow the occurrence to pass without a protest; and indited a letter which Thomas Newcome kept along with some others previously quoted by the compiler of the present memoirs.

It is as follows:—

Belgrave St., Feb. 15, 18 —.

“Colonel Newcome, C.B., private.

“SIR— The incredible insolence and violence of your behaviour today (inspired by whatever causes or mistakes of your own), cannot be passed without some comment, on my part. I laid before a friend of your own profession, a statement of the words which you applied to me in the presence of my partner and one of my clerks this morning; and my adviser is of opinion, that considering the relationship unhappily subsisting between us, I can take no notice of insults for which you knew when you uttered them, I could not call you to account.”

“There is some truth in that,” said the Colonel. “He couldn’t fight, you know; but then he was such a liar I could not help speaking my mind.”

“I gathered from the brutal language which you thought fit to employ towards a disarmed man, the ground of one of your monstrous accusations against me, that I deceived you in stating that my relative, Lady Kew, was in the country, when in fact she was at her house in London.

“To this absurd charge I at once plead guilty. The venerable lady in question was passing through London, where she desired to be free from intrusion. At her ladyship’s wish I stated that she was out of town; and would, under the same circumstances, unhesitatingly make the same statement. Your slight acquaintance with the person in question did not warrant that you should force yourself on her privacy, as you would doubtless know were you more familiar with the customs of the society in which she moves.

"I declare upon my honour as a gentleman, that I gave her the message which I promised to deliver from you, and also that I transmitted a letter with which you entrusted me; and repel with scorn and indignation the charges which you were pleased to bring against me, as I treat with contempt the language and the threats which you thought fit to employ.

"Our books show the amount of xl. xs. xd. to your credit, which you will be good enough to withdraw at your earliest convenience; as of course all intercourse must cease henceforth between you and — Yours, etc.

B. Newcome Newcome."

"I think, sir, he doesn't make out a bad case," Mr. Pendennis remarked to the Colonel, who showed him this majestic letter.

"It would be a good case if I believed a single word of it, Arthur," replied my friend, placidly twirling the old grey moustache. "If you were to say so-and-so, and say that I had brought false charges against you, I should cry mea culpa and apologise with all my heart. But as I have a perfect conviction that every word this fellow says is a lie, what is the use of arguing any more about the matter? I would not believe him if he brought twenty as witnesses, and if he lied till he was black in the other liars' face. Give me the walnuts. I wonder who Sir Barnes's military friend was."

Barnes's military friend was our gallant acquaintance General Sir George Tufto, K.C.B., who a short while afterwards talked over the quarrel with the Colonel, and manfully told him that (in Sir George's opinion) he was wrong. "The little beggar behaved very well, I thought, in the first business. You bullied him so, and in the front of his regiment, too, that it was almost past bearing; and when he deplored, with tears in his eyes, almost, the little humbug! that his relationship prevented him calling you out, ecod, I believed him! It was in the second affair that poor little Barnes showed he was a cocktail."

"What second affair?" asked Thomas Newcome.

"Don't you know? He! he! this is famous!" cries Sir George. "Why, sir, two days after your business, he comes to me with another letter and a face as long as my mare's, by Jove. And that letter, Newcome, was from your young 'un. Stop, here it is!" and from his padded bosom General Sir George Tufto drew a pocket-book, and from the pocket-book a copy of a letter, inscribed, "Clive Newcome, Esq., to Sir B. N. Newcome." "There's no mistake about your fellow, Colonel. No — — him!" and the man of war fired a volley of oaths as a salute to Clive.

And the Colonel, on horseback, riding by the other cavalry officer's side read as follows:—

"George Street, Hanover Square, February 16.

"SIR— Colonel Newcome this morning showed me a letter bearing your signature, in which you state — 1. That Colonel Newcome has uttered calumnious and insolent charges against you. 2. That Colonel Newcome so spoke, knowing that you could take no notice of his charges of falsehood and treachery, on account of the relationship subsisting between you.

"Your statements would evidently imply that Colonel Newcome has been guilty of ungentlemanlike conduct, and of cowardice towards you.

"As there can be no reason why we should not meet in any manner that you desire, I here beg leave to state, on my own part, that I fully coincide with Colonel Newcome in his opinion that you have been guilty of falsehood and treachery, and that the charge of cowardice which you dare to make against a gentleman of his tried honour and courage, is another wilful and cowardly falsehood on your part.

"And I hope you will refer the bearer of this note, my friend, Mr. George Warrington, of the Upper Temple, to the military gentleman whom you consulted in respect to the just charges of Colonel Newcome. Waiting a prompt reply, believe me, sir — Your obedient servant, Clive Newcome.

"Sir Barnes Newcome Newcome, Bart., M. P., etc."

"What a blunderhead I am!" cries the Colonel, with delight on his countenance, spite of his professed repentance. "It never once entered my head that the youngster would take any part in the affair. I showed him his cousin's letter casually, just to amuse him, I think, for he has been deuced low lately, about — about a young man's scrape that he has got into. And he must have gone off and despatched his challenge straightway. I recollect he appeared uncommonly brisk at breakfast the next morning. And so you say, General, the Baronet did not like the poulet?"

"By no means; never saw a fellow show such a confounded white feather. At first I congratulated him, thinking your boy's offer must please him, as it would have pleased any fellow in our time to have a shot. Dammy! but I was mistaken in my man. He entered into some confounded long-winded story about a marriage you wanted to make with that infernal

pretty sister of his, who is going to marry young Farintosh, and how you were in a rage because the scheme fell to the ground, and how a family duel might occasion unpleasantness to Miss Newcome; though I showed him how this could be most easily avoided, and that the lady's name need never appear in the transaction. 'Confound it, Sir Barnes,' says I, 'I recollect this boy, when he was a youngster throwing a glass of wine in your face! We'll put it upon that, and say it's an old feud between you.' He turned quite pale, and he said your fellow had apologised for the glass of wine."

"Yes," said the Colonel, sadly, "my boy apologised for the glass of wine. It is curious how we have disliked that Barnes ever since we set eyes on him."

"Well, Newcome," Sir George resumed, as his mettled charger suddenly jumped and curvetted, displaying the padded warrior's cavalry-seat to perfection. "Quiet, old lady! — easy, my dear! Well, when I found the little beggar turning tail in this way I said to him, 'Dash me, sir, if you don't want me, why the dash do you send for me, dash me? Yesterday you talked as if you would bite the Colonel's head off, and today, when his son offers you every accommodation, by dash, sir, you're afraid to meet him. It's my belief you had better send for a policeman. A 22 is your man, Sir Barnes Newcome.' And with that I turned on my heel and left him. And the fellow went off to Newcome that very night."

"A poor devil can't command courage, General," said the Colonel, quite peaceably, "any more than he can make himself six feet high."

"Then why the dash did the beggar send for me?" called out General Sir George Tufto, in a loud and resolute voice; and presently the two officers parted company.

When the Colonel reached home, Mr. Warrington and Mr. Pendennis happened to be on a visit to Clive, and all three were in the young fellow's painting-room. We knew our lad was unhappy, and did our little best to amuse and console him. The Colonel came in. It was in the dark February days: we lighted the gas in the studio. Clive had made a sketch from some favourite verses of mine and George's: those charming lines of Scott's:—

"He turned his charger as he spake,
Beside the river shore;
He gave his bridle-rein a shake,
With adieu for evermore,
My dear!
Adieu for evermore!"

Thomas Newcome held up a finger at Warrington, and he came up to the picture and looked at it; and George and I trolled out:

"Adieu for evermore,
My dear!
Adieu for evermore!"

From the picture the brave old Colonel turned to the painter, regarding his son with a look of beautiful inexpressible affection. And he laid his hand on his son's shoulder, and smiled, and stroked Clive's yellow moustache.

"And — and did Barnes send no answer to that letter you wrote him?" he said, slowly.

Clive broke out into a laugh that was almost a sob. He took both his father's hands. "My dear, dear old father!" says he, "what a — what an — old — trump you are!" My eyes were so dim I could hardly see the two men as they embraced.



CHAPTER LIV

HAS A TRAGICAL ENDING

Clive presently answered the question which his father put to him in the last chapter, by producing from the ledge of his easel a crumpled paper, full of Cavendish now, but on which was written Sir Barnes Newcome's reply to his cousin's polite invitation. Sir Barnes Newcome wrote, "that he thought a reference to a friend was quite unnecessary, in the most disagreeable and painful dispute in which Mr. Clive desired to interfere as a principal; that the reasons which prevented Sir Barnes from taking notice of Colonel Newcome's shameful and ungentlemanlike conduct applied equally, as Mr. Clive Newcome very well knew, to himself; that if further insult was offered, or outrage attempted, Sir Barnes should resort to the police for protection; that he was about to quit London, and certainly should not delay his departure on account of Mr. Clive Newcome's monstrous proceedings; and that he desired to take leave of an odious subject, as of an individual whom he had striven to treat with kindness, but from whom, from youth upwards, Sir Barnes Newcome had received nothing but insolence, enmity, and ill-will."

"He is an ill man to offend," remarked Mr. Pendennis. "I don't think he has ever forgiven that claret, Clive."

"Pooh! the feud dates from long before that," said Clive; "Barnes wanted to lick me when I was a boy, and I declined: in fact, I think he had rather the worst of it; but then I operated freely on his shins, and that wasn't fair in war, you know."

"Heaven forgive me," cries the Colonel; "I have always felt the fellow was my enemy: and my mind is relieved now war is declared. It has been a kind of hypocrisy with me to shake his hand and eat his dinner. When I trusted him it was against my better instinct; and I have been struggling against it these ten years, thinking it was a wicked prejudice, and ought to be overcome."

"Why should we overcome such instincts?" asks Mr. Warrington. "Why shouldn't we hate what is hateful in people and scorn what is mean? From what friend Pen has described to me, and from some other accounts which have come to my ears, your respectable nephew is about as loathsome a little villain as crawls on the earth. Good seems to be out of his sphere, and away from his contemplation. He ill-treats every one he comes near; or, if, gentle to them, it is that they may serve some base purpose. Since my attention has been drawn to the creature, I have been contemplating his ways with wonder and curiosity. How much superior Nature's rogues are, Pen, to the villains you novelists put into your books! This man goes about his life business with a natural propensity to darkness and evil — as a bug crawls, and stings, and stinks. I don't suppose the fellow feels any more remorse than a cat that runs away with a mutton-chop. I recognise the Evil Spirit, sir, and do honour to Ahrimanes, in taking off my hat to this young man. He seduced a poor girl in his father's country town — is it not natural? Deserted her and her children — don't you recognise the beast? married for rank — could you expect otherwise from him? invites my Lord Highgate to his house in consideration of his balance at the bank; — sir, unless somebody's heel shall crunch him on the way, there is no height to which this aspiring vermin mayn't crawl. I look to see Sir Barnes Newcome prosper more and more. I make no doubt he will die an immense capitalist, and an exalted Peer of this realm. He will have a marble monument, and a pathetic funeral sermon. There is a divine in your family, Clive, that shall preach it. I will weep respectful tears over the grave of Baron Newcome, Viscount Newcome, Earl Newcome; and the children whom he has deserted, and who, in the course of time, will be sent by a grateful nation to New South Wales, will proudly say to their brother convicts — 'Yes, the Earl was our honoured father.'"

"I fear he is no better than he should be, Mr. Warrington," says the Colonel, shaking his head. "I never heard the story about the deserted children."

"How should you, O you guileless man!" cries Warrington.

"I am not in the ways of scandal-hearing myself much: but this tale I had from Sir Barnes Newcome's own country. Mr. Batters of the Newcome Independent is my esteemed client. I write leading articles for his newspaper, and when he was in town last spring he favoured me with the anecdote; and proposed to amuse the Member for Newcome by publishing it in his journal. This kind of writing is not much in my line: and, out of respect to you and your young one, I believe — I strove with Mr. Batters, and — entreated him and prevailed with him, not to publish the story. That is how I came to know it."

I sate with the Colonel in the evening, when he commented on Warrington's story and Sir Barnes's adventures in his simple way. He said his brother Hobson had been with him the morning after the dispute, reiterating Barnes's defence of his conduct: and professing on his own part nothing but goodwill towards his brother. "Between ourselves the young Baronet carries matters with rather a high hand sometimes, and I am not sorry that you gave him a little dressing. But you were too hard upon him, Colonel — really you were." "Had I known that child-deserting story I would have given it harder still, sir," says Thomas Newcome, twirling his mustachios: "but my brother had nothing to do with the quarrel, and very rightly did not wish to engage in it. He has an eye to business, has Master Hobson too," my friend continued: "for he brought me a cheque for my private account, which of course, he said, could not remain after my quarrel with Barnes. But the Indian bank account, which is pretty large, he supposed need not be taken away? and indeed why should it? So that, which is little business of mine, remains where it was; and brother Hobson and I remain perfectly good friends.

"I think Clive is much better since he has been quite put out of his suspense. He speaks with a great deal more kindness and good-nature about the marriage than I am disposed to feel regarding it: and depend on it has too high a spirit to show that he is beaten. But I know he is a good deal cut up, though he says nothing; and he agreed willingly enough to take a little journey, Arthur, and be out of the way when this business takes place. We shall go to Paris: I don't know where else besides. These misfortunes do good in one way, hard as they are to bear: they unite people who love each other. It seems to me my boy has been nearer to me, and likes his old father better than he has done of late." And very soon after this talk our friends departed.

The Crimean minister having been recalled, and Lady Anne Newcome's house in park Lane being vacant, her ladyship and her family came to occupy the mansion for this eventful season, and sate once more in the dismal dining-room under the picture of the defunct Sir Brian. A little of the splendour and hospitality of old days was revived in the house: entertainments were given by Lady Anne: and amongst other festivities a fine ball took place, when pretty Miss Alice, Miss Ethel's younger sister, made her first appearance in the world, to which she was afterwards to be presented by the Marchioness of Farintosh. All the little sisters were charmed, no doubt, that the beautiful Ethel was to become a beautiful Marchioness, who, as they came up to womanhood one after another, would introduce them severally to amiable young earls, dukes, and marquises, when they would be married off and wear coronets and diamonds of their own right. At Lady Anne's ball I saw my acquaintance, young Mumford, who was going to Oxford next October, and about to leave Rugby, where he was at the head of the school, looking very dismal as Miss Alice whirled round the room dancing in Viscount Bustington's arms; — Miss Alice, with whose mamma he used to take tea at Rugby, and for whose pretty sake Mumford did Alfred Newcome's verses for him and let him off his thrashings. Poor Mumford! he dismally went about under the protection of young Alfred, a fourth-form boy — not one soul did he know in that rattling London ballroom; his young face — as white as the large white tie, donned two hours since at the Tavistock with such nervousness and beating of heart!

With these lads, and decorated with a tie equally splendid, moved about young Sam Newcome, who was shirking from his sister and his mamma. Mrs. Hobson had actually assumed clean gloves for this festive occasion. Sam stared at all the "Nobs:" and insisted upon being introduced to "Farintosh," and congratulated his lordship with much graceful ease: and then pushed about the rooms perseveringly hanging on to Alfred's jacket. "I say, I wish you wouldn't call me Al'," I heard Mr. Alfred say to his cousin. Seeing my face, Mr. Samuel ran up to claim acquaintance. He was good enough to say he thought Farintosh seemed devilish haughty. Even my wife could not help saying, that Mr. Sam was an odious little creature.

So it was for young Alfred, and his brothers and sisters, who would want help and protection in the world, that Ethel was about to give up her independence, her inclination perhaps, and to bestow her life on yonder young nobleman. Looking at her as a girl devoting herself to her family, her sacrifice gave her a melancholy interest in our eyes. My wife and I watched her, grave and beautiful, moving through the rooms, receiving and returning a hundred greetings, bending to compliments, talking with this friend and that, with my lord's lordly relations, with himself, to whom she listened deferentially; faintly smiling as he spoke now and again; doing the honours of her mother's house. Lady after lady of his lordship's clan and kinsfolk complimented the girl and her pleased mother. Old Lady Kew was radiant (if one can call radiance the glances of those darkling old eyes). She sate in a little room apart, and thither people went to pay their court to her. Unwillingly I came in on this levee with my wife on my arm: Lady Kew scowled at me over her crutch, but without a sign of recognition. "What an awful countenance that old woman has!" Laura whispered as we retreated out of that gloomy presence.

And Doubt (as its wont is) whispered too a question in my ear, "Is it for her brothers and sisters only that Miss Ethel is sacrificing herself? Is it not for the coronet, and the triumph, and the fine houses?" "When two motives may actuate a friend, we surely may try and believe in the good one," says Laura. "But, but I am glad Clive does not marry her — poor fellow — he would not have been happy with her. She belongs to this great world: she has spent all her life in it: Clive would have entered into it very likely in her train; and you know, sir, it is not good that we should be our husbands' superiors," adds Mrs. Laura, with a curtsy.

She presently pronounced that the air was very hot in the rooms, and in fact wanted to go home to see her child. As we passed out, we saw Sir Barnes Newcome, eagerly smiling, smirking, bowing, and in the fondest conversation with his sister and Lord Farintosh. By Sir Barnes presently brushed Lieutenant-General Sir George Tufto, K.C.B., who, when he saw on whose foot he had trodden, grunted out, "H'm, beg your pardon!" and turning his back on Barnes, forthwith began complimenting Ethel and the Marquis. "Served with your lordship's father in Spain; glad to make your lordship's acquaintance," says Sir George. Ethel bows to us as we pass out of the rooms, and we hear no more of Sir George's conversation.

In the cloak-room sits Lady Clara Newcome, with a gentleman bending over her, just in such an attitude as the bride is in Hogarth's "Marriage a la Mode" as the counsellor talks to her. Lady Clara starts up as a crowd of blushes come into her wan face, and tries to smile, and rises to greet my wife, and says something about its being so dreadfully hot in the upper rooms, and so very tedious waiting for the carriages. The gentleman advances towards me with a military stride, and says, "How do you do, Mr. Pendennis? How's our young friend, the painter?" I answer Lord Highgate civilly enough, whereas my wife will scarce speak a word in reply to Lady Clara Newcome.

Lady Clara asked us to her ball, which my wife declined altogether to attend. Sir Barnes published a series of quite splendid entertainments on the happy occasion of his sister's betrothal. We read the names of all the clan Farintosh in the Morning Post, as attending these banquets. Mr. and Mrs. Hobson Newcome, in Bryanstone Square, gave also signs of rejoicing at their niece's marriage. They had a grand banquet followed by a tea, to which latter amusement the present biographer was invited. Lady Anne, and Lady Kew and her granddaughter, and the Baronet and his wife, and my Lord Highgate and Sir George Tufto attended the dinner; but it was rather a damp entertainment. "Farintosh," whispers Sam Newcome, "sent word just before dinner that he had a sore throat, and Barnes was as sulky as possible. Sir George wouldn't speak to him, and the Dowager wouldn't speak to Lord Highgate. Scarcely anything was drank," concluded Mr. Sam, with a slight hiccup. "I say, Pendennis, how sold Clive will be!" And the amiable youth went off to commune with others of his parents' guests.

Thus the Newcomes entertained the Farintoshes, and the Farintoshes entertained the Newcomes. And the Dowager Countess of Kew went from assembly to assembly every evening, and to jewellers and upholsterers and dressmakers every morning; and Lord Farintosh's town-house was splendidly re-decorated in the newest fashion; and he seemed to grow more and more attentive as the happy day approached, and he gave away all his cigars to his brother Rob; and his sisters were delighted with Ethel, and constantly in her company, and his mother was pleased with her, and thought a girl of her spirit and resolution would make a good wife for her son: and select crowds flocked to see the service of plate at Handyman's, and the diamonds which were being set for the lady; and Smee, R.A., painted her portrait, as a souvenir for mamma when Miss Newcome should be Miss Newcome no more; and Lady Kew made a will leaving all she could leave to her beloved granddaughter, Ethel, daughter of the late Sir Brian Newcome, Baronet; and Lord Kew wrote an affectionate letter to his cousin, congratulating her, and wishing her happiness with all his heart; and I was glancing over The Times newspaper at breakfast one morning; when I laid it down with an exclamation which caused my wife to start with surprise.

"What is it?" cries Laura, and I read as follows:—

"Death of the Countess Dowager of Kew. — We regret to have to announce the awfully sudden death of this venerable lady. Her ladyship, who had been at several parties of the nobility the night before last, seemingly in perfect health, was seized with a fit as she was waiting for her carriage, and about to quit Lady Pallgrave's assembly. Immediate medical assistance was procured, and her ladyship was carried to her own house, in Queen Street, Mayfair. But she never rallied, or, we believe, spoke, after the first fatal seizure, and sank at eleven o'clock last evening. The deceased, Louisa Joanna Gaunt, widow of Frederic, first Earl of Kew, was daughter of Charles, Earl of Gaunt, and sister of the late and aunt of the present Marquis of Steyne. The present Earl of Kew is her ladyship's grandson, his lordship's father, Lord Walham, having died before his own father, the first earl. Many noble families are placed in mourning by this sad event. Society has to deplore the death of a lady who has been its ornament for more than half a century, and who was known, we may say, throughout Europe for her remarkable sense, extraordinary memory, and brilliant wit."

CHAPTER LV

BARNES'S SKELETON CLOSET

The demise of Lady Kew of course put a stop for a while to the matrimonial projects so interesting to the house of Newcome. Hymen blew his torch out, put it into the cupboard for use on a future day, and exchanged his garish saffron-coloured robe for decent temporary mourning. Charles Honeyman improved the occasion at Lady Whittlesea's Chapel hard by; and "Death at the Festival" was one of his most thrilling sermons; reprinted at the request of some of the congregation. There were those of his flock, especially a pair whose quarter of the fold was the organ-loft, who were always charmed with the piping of that melodious pastor.

Shall we too, while the coffin yet rests on the earth's outer surface, enter the chapel whither these void remains of our dear sister departed are borne by the smug undertaker's gentlemen, and pronounce an elegy over that bedizened box of corruption? When the young are stricken down, and their roses nipped in an hour by the destroying blight, even the stranger can sympathise, who counts the scant years on the gravestone, or reads the notice in the newspaper corner. The contrast forces itself on you. A fair young creature, bright and blooming yesterday, distributing smiles, levying homage, inspiring desire, conscious of her power to charm, and gay with the natural enjoyment of her conquests — who in his walk through the world has not looked on many such a one; and, at the notion of her sudden call away from beauty, triumph, pleasure; her helpless outcries during her short pain; her vain pleas for a little respite; her sentence, and its execution; has not felt a shock of pity? When the days of a long life come to its close, and a white head sinks to rise no more, we bow our own with respect as the mourning train passes, and salute the heraldry and devices of yonder pomp, as symbols of age, wisdom, deserved respect and merited honour; long experience of suffering and action. The wealth he may have achieved is the harvest which he sowed; the titles on his hearse, fruits of the field he bravely and laboriously wrought in. But to live to fourscore years, and be found dancing among the idle virgins! to have had near a century of allotted time, and then be called away from the giddy notes of a Mayfair fiddle! To have to yield your roses too, and then drop out of the bony clutch of your old fingers a wreath that came from a Parisian bandbox! One fancies around some graves unseen troops of mourners waiting; many and many a poor pensioner trooping to the place; many weeping charities; many kind actions; many dear friends beloved and deplored, rising up at the toll of that bell to follow the honoured hearse; dead parents waiting above, and calling, "Come, daughter!" lost children, heaven's fondlings, hovering round like cherubim, and whispering, "Welcome, mother!" Here is one who reposes after a long feast where no love has been; after girlhood without kindly maternal nurture; marriage without affection; matronhood without its precious griefs and joys; after fourscore years of lonely vanity. Let us take off our hats to that procession too as it passes, admiring the different lots awarded to the children of men, and the various usages to which Heaven puts its creatures.

Leave we yonder velvet-palled box, spangled with fantastic heraldry, and containing within the aged slough and envelope of a soul gone to render its account. Look rather at the living audience standing round the shell; — the deep grief on Barnes Newcome's fine countenance; the sadness depicted in the face of the most noble the Marquis of Farintosh; the sympathy of her ladyship's medical man (who came in the third mourning carriage); better than these, the awe, and reverence, and emotion, exhibited in the kind face of one of the witnesses of this scene, as he listens to those words which the priest rehearses over our dead. What magnificent words! what a burning faith, what a glorious triumph; what a heroic life, death, hope, they record! They are read over all of us alike; as the sun shines on just and unjust. We have all of us heard them; and I have fancied, for my part, that they fell and smote like the sods on the coffin.

The ceremony over, the undertaker's gentlemen clamber on the roof of the vacant hearse, into which palls, tressels, trays of feathers, are inserted, and the horses break out into a trot, and the empty carriages, expressing the deep grief of the deceased lady's friends, depart homeward. It is remarked that Lord Kew hardly has any communication with his cousin, Sir Barnes Newcome. His lordship jumps into a cab, and goes to the railroad. Issuing from the cemetery, the Marquis of Farintosh hastily orders that thing to be taken off his hat, and returns to town in his brougham, smoking a cigar. Sir Barnes Newcome rides in the brougham beside Lord Farintosh as far as Oxford Street, where he gets a cab, and goes to the City. For business is business, and must be attended to, though grief be ever so severe.

A very short time previous to her demise, Mr. Rood (that was Mr. Rood — that other little gentleman in black, who

shared the third mourning coach along with her ladyship's medical man) had executed a will by which almost all the Countess's property was devised to her granddaughter, Ethel Newcome. Lady Kew's decease of course delayed the marriage projects for a while. The young heiress returned to her mother's house in Park Lane. I dare say the deep mourning habiliments in which the domestics of that establishment appeared, were purchased out of the funds left in his hands, which Ethel's banker and brother had at her disposal.

Sir Barnes Newcome, who was one of the trustees of his sister's property, grumbled no doubt because his grandmother had bequeathed to him but a paltry recompense of five hundred pounds for his pains and trouble of trusteeship; but his manner to Ethel was extremely bland and respectful: an heiress now, and to be a marchioness in a few months, Sir Barnes treated her with a very different regard to that which he was accustomed to show to other members of his family. For while this worthy Baronet would contradict his mother at every word she uttered, and take no pains to disguise his opinion that Lady Anne's intellect was of the very poorest order, he would listen deferentially to Ethel's smallest observations, exert himself to amuse her under her grief, which he chose to take for granted was very severe, visit her constantly, and show the most charming solicitude for her general comfort and welfare.

During this time my wife received constant notes from Ethel Newcome, and the intimacy between the two ladies much increased. Laura was so unlike the women of Ethel's circle, the young lady was pleased to say, that to be with her was Ethel's greatest comfort. Miss Newcome was now her own mistress, had her carriage, and would drive day after day to our cottage at Richmond. The frigid society of Lord Farintosh's sisters, the conversation of his mother, did not amuse Ethel, and she escaped from both with her usual impatience of control. She was at home every day dutifully to receive my lord's visits; but though she did not open her mind to Laura as freely regarding the young gentleman as she did when the character and disposition of her future mother and sisters-in-law was the subject of their talk, I could see, from the grave look of commiseration which my wife's face bore after her young friend's visits, that Mrs. Pendennis augured rather ill of the future happiness of this betrothed pair. Once, at Miss Newcome's special request, I took my wife to see her in Park Lane, where the Marquis of Farintosh found us. His lordship and I had already a half-acquaintance, which was not, however, improved after my regular presentation to him by Miss Newcome: he scowled at me with a countenance indicative of anything but welcome, and did not seem in the least more pleased when Ethel entreated her friend Laura not to take her bonnet, not to think of going away so soon. She came to see us the very next day, stayed much longer with us than usual, and returned to town quite late in the evening, in spite of the entreaties of the inhospitable Laura, who would have had her leave us long before. "I am sure," says clear-sighted Mrs. Laura, "she is come out of bravado, and after we went away yesterday that there were words between her and Lord Farintosh on our account."

"Confound the young man," breaks out Mr. Pendennis in a fume; "what does he mean by his insolent airs?"

"He may think we are partisans de l'autre," says Mrs. Pendennis, with a smile first, and a sigh afterwards, as she said "poor Clive!"

"Do you ever talk about Clive?" asks the husband.

"Never. Once, twice, perhaps, in the most natural manner in the world we mentioned where he is; but nothing further passes. The subject is a sealed one between us. She often looks at his drawings in my album (Clive had drawn our baby there and its mother in a great variety of attitudes), and gazes at his sketch of his dear old father: but of him she never says a word."

"So it is best," says Mr. Pendennis.

"Yes — best," echoes Laura, with a sigh.

"You think, Laura," continues the husband, "you think she —"

"She what?" What did Mr. Pendennis mean? Laura his wife certainly understood him, though upon my conscience the sentence went no further — for she answered at once:

"Yes — I think she certainly did, poor boy! But that, of course, is over now: and Ethel, though she cannot help being a worldly woman, has such firmness and resolution of character, that if she has once determined to conquer any inclination of that sort I am sure she will master it, and make Lord Farintosh a very good wife."

"Since the Colonel's quarrel with Sir Barnes," cries Mr. Pendennis, adverting by a natural transition from Ethel to her amiable brother, "our banking friend does not invite us any more: Lady Clara sends you no cards. I have a great mind to withdraw my account."

Laura, who understands nothing about accounts, did not perceive the fine irony of this remark: but her face straightway put on the severe expression which it chose to assume whenever Sir Barnes's family was mentioned, and she said, "My dear, I am very glad indeed that Lady Clara sends us no more of her invitations. You know very well why I disliked them."

"Why?"

"I hear baby crying," says Laura. Oh, Laura, Laura! how could you tell your husband such a fib? — and she quits the room without deigning to give any answer to that "Why?"

Let us pay a brief visit to Newcome in the north of England, and there we may get some answer to the question of which Mr. Pendennis had just in vain asked a reply from his wife. My design does not include a description of that great and flourishing town of Newcome, and of the manufactures which caused its prosperity; but only admits of the introduction of those Newcomites who are concerned in the affairs of the family which has given its respectable name to these volumes.

Thus in previous pages we have said nothing about the Mayor and Corporation of Newcome the magnificent bankers and manufacturers who had their places of business in the town, and their splendid villas outside its smoky precincts; people who would give their thousand guineas for a picture or a statue, and write you off a cheque for ten times the amount any day; people who, if there was a talk of a statue to the Queen or the Duke, would come down to the Town All and subscribe their one, two, three undred apiece (especially if in the neighbouring city of SLOWCOME they were putting up a statue to the Duke or the Queen)— not of such men have I spoken, the magnates of the place; but of the humble Sarah Mason in Jubilee Row — of the Reverend Dr. Bulders the Vicar, Mr. Vidler the apothecary, Mr. Puff the baker — of Tom Potts, the jolly reporter of the Newcome Independent, and ——— Batters, Esq., the proprietor of that journal — persons with whom our friends have had already, or will be found presently to have, some connexion. And it is from these that we shall arrive at some particulars regarding the Newcome family, which will show us that they have a skeleton or two in their closets, as well as their neighbours.

Now, how will you have the story? Worthy mammas of families — if you do not like to have your daughters told that bad husbands will make bad wives; that marriages begun in indifference make homes unhappy; that men whom girls are brought to swear to love and honour are sometimes false, selfish, and cruel; and that women forget the oaths which they have been made to swear — if you will not hear of this, ladies, close the book, and send for some other. Banish the newspaper out of your houses, and shut your eyes to the truth, the awful truth, of life and sin. Is the world made of Jennies and Jessamies; and passion the play of schoolboys and schoolgirls, scribbling valentines and interchanging lollipops? Is life all over when Jenny and Jessamy are married; and are there no subsequent trials, griefs, wars, bitter heart-pangs, dreadful temptations, defeats, remorse, sufferings to bear, and dangers to overcome? As you and I, friend, kneel with our children round about us, prostrate before the Father of us all, and asking mercy for miserable sinners, are the young ones to suppose the words are mere form, and don't apply to us? — to some outcasts in the free seats probably, or those naughty boys playing in the churchyard? Are they not to know that we err too, and pray with all our hearts to be rescued from temptation? If such a knowledge is wrong for them, send them to church apart. Go you and worship in private; or if not too proud, kneel humbly in the midst of them, owning your wrong, and praying Heaven to be merciful to you a sinner.

When Barnes Newcome became the reigning Prince of the Newcome family, and after the first agonies of grief for his father's death had subsided, he made strong attempts to conciliate the principal persons in the neighbourhood, and to render himself popular in the borough. He gave handsome entertainments to the townsfolk and to the county gentry; he tried even to bring those two warring classes together. He endeavoured to be civil to the Newcome Independent, the Opposition paper, as well as to the Newcome Sentinel that true old Uncompromising Blue. He asked the Dissenting clergyman to dinner, and the Low Church clergyman, as well as the orthodox Doctor Bulders and his curates. He gave a lecture at the Newcome Athenaeum, which everybody said was very amusing, and which Sentinel and Independent both agreed in praising. Of course he subscribed to that statue which the Newcomites were raising; to the philanthropic missions which Reverend Low Church gentlemen were engaged in; to the (for the young Newcomite manufacturers are as sporting as any gents in the North), to the hospital, the People's Library, the restoration of the rood-screen and the great painted window in Newcome Old Church (Rev. J. Bulders), and he had to pay in fine a most awful price for his privilege of sitting in Parliament as representative of his native place — as he called it in his speeches "the cradle of his forefathers, the home of his race," etc., though Barnes was in fact born at Clapham.

Lady Clara could not in the least help this young statesman in his designs upon Newcome and the Newcomites. After she came into Barnes's hands, a dreadful weight fell upon her. She would smile and simper, and talk kindly and gaily enough at first, during Sir Brian's life; and among women, when Barnes was not present. But as soon as he joined the company, it was remarked that his wife became silent, and looked eagerly towards him whenever he ventured to speak. She blundered, her eyes filled with tears; the little wit she had left her in her husband's presence: he grew angry, and tried to hide his anger with a sneer, or broke out with gibe and an oath, when he lost patience, and Clara, whimpering, would leave the room. Everybody at Newcome knew that Barnes bullied his wife.

People had worse charges against Barnes than wife-bullying. Do you suppose that little interruption which occurred at Barnes's marriage was not known in Newcome? His victim had been a Newcome girl, the man to whom she was betrothed was in a Newcome factory. When Barnes was a young man, and in his occasional visits to Newcome, lived along with those dashing young blades Sam Jollyman (Jollyman Brothers and Bowcher), Bob Homer, Cross Country Bill, Al Rackner (for whom his father had to pay eighteen thousand pounds after the Leger, the year Toggery won it) and that wild lot, all sorts of stories were told of them, and of Barnes especially. Most of them were settled, and steady business men by this time. Al, it was known had become very serious, besides making his fortune in cotton. Bob Homer managed the Bank; and as for S. Jollyman, Mrs. S. J. took uncommon good care that he didn't break out of bounds any more; why, he was not even allowed to play a game at billiards; or to dine out without her — I could go on giving you interesting particulars of a hundred members of the Newcome aristocracy, were not our attention especially directed to one respectable family.

All Barnes's endeavours at popularity were vain, partly from his own fault, and partly from the nature of mankind, and of the Newcome folks especially, whom no single person could possibly conciliate. Thus, suppose he gave the advertisements to the Independent; the old Blue paper the Sentinel was very angry: suppose he asked Mr. Hunch, the Dissenting minister, to bless the tablecloth after dinner, as he had begged Dr. Bulders to utter a benediction on the first course, Hunch and Bulders were both angry. He subscribed to the races — what heathenism! to the missionaries — what sanctimonious humbug! And the worst was that Barnes being young at that time, and not able to keep his tongue in order, could not help saying not to but of such and such a man, that he was an infernal ass, or a confounded old idiot, and so forth — peevish phrases, which undid in a moment the work of a dozen dinners, countless compliments, and months of grinning good-humour.

Now he is wiser. He is very proud of being Newcome of Newcome, and quite believes that the place is his hereditary principality. But still, he says, his father was a fool for ever representing the borough. "Dammy, sir," cries Sir Barnes, "never sit for a place that lies at your park-gates, and above all never try to conciliate 'em. Curse 'em! Hate 'em well, sir! Take a line, and flog the fellows on the other side. Since I have sate in Parliament for another place, I have saved myself I don't know how much a year. I never go to High Church or Low; don't give a shillin' to the confounded races, or the infernal souptickets, or to the miserable missionaries; and at last live in quiet."

So, in spite of all his subscriptions, and his coaxing of the various orders of Newcomites, Sir Barnes Newcome was not popular among them; and while he had enemies on all sides, had sturdy friends not even on his own. Scarce a man but felt Barnes was laughing at him; Bulders in his pulpit, Holder who seconded him in his election, the Newcome society; and the ladies, even more than the men, were uneasy under his ominous familiarity, and recovered their good-humour when he left them. People felt as if it was a truce only, and not an alliance with him, and always speculated on the possibility of war: when he turned his back on them in the market, men felt relieved, and, as they passed his gate, looked with no friendly glances over his park-wall.

What happened within was perfectly familiar to many persons. Our friend was insolent to all his servants; and of course very well served, but very much disliked, in consequence. The butler was familiar with Taplow — the housekeeper had a friend at Newcome; Mrs Taplow, in fact, of the King's Arms — one of the grooms at Newcome Park kept company with Mrs. Bulder's maid: the incomings and outgoings, the quarrels and tears, the company from London, and all the doings of the folks at Newcome Park were thus known to the neighbourhood round about. The apothecary brought an awful story back from Newcome. He had been called to Lady Clara in strong hysterical fits. He found her ladyship with a bruise on her face. When Sir Barnes approached her (he would not allow the medical man to see her except in his presence) she screamed and bade him not come near her. These things did Mr. Vidler weakly impart to Mrs. Vidler: these, under solemn vows of secrecy, Mrs. Vidler told to one or two friends. Sir Barnes and Lady Clara were seen shopping together very graciously in Newcome a short time afterwards; persons who dined at the Park said the Baronet and his wife

seemed on very good terms; but — but that story of the bruised cheek remained in the minds of certain people, and lay by at compound interest as such stories will.

Now, say people quarrel and make it up; or don't make it up, but wear a smirking face to society, and call each other "my dear" and "my love," and smooth over their countenances before John, who enters with the coals as they are barking and biting, or who announces the dinner as they are tearing each other's eyes out? Suppose a woman is ever so miserable, and yet smiles, and doesn't show her grief? "Quite right," say her prudent friends, and her husband's relations above all. "My dear, you have too much propriety to exhibit your grief before the world, or above all, before the darling children." So to lie is your duty, to lie to your friends, to yourself if you can, to your children.

Does this discipline of hypocrisy improve any mortal woman? Say she learns to smile after a blow, do you suppose in this matter alone she will be a hypocrite? Poor Lady Clara! I fancy a better lot for you than that to which fate handed you over. I fancy there need have been no deceit in your fond simple little heart, could it but have been given into other keeping. But you were consigned to a master, whose scorn and cruelty terrified you; under whose sardonic glances your scared eyes were afraid to look up, and before whose gloomy coldness you dared not be happy. Suppose a little plant, very frail and delicate from the first, but that might have bloomed sweetly and borne fair flowers, had it received warm shelter and kindly nurture; suppose a young creature taken out of her home, and given over to a hard master whose caresses are as insulting as his neglect; consigned to cruel usage; to weary loneliness; to bitter, bitter recollections of the past; suppose her schooled into hypocrisy by tyranny — and then, quick, let us hire an advocate to roar out to a British jury the wrongs of her injured husband, to paint the agonies of his bleeding heart (if Mr. Advocate gets plaintiff's brief in time, and before defendant's attorney has retained him), and to show Society injured through him. Let us console that martyr, I say, with thumping damages; and as for the woman — the guilty wretch! — let us lead her out and stone her.



CHAPTER LVI

ROSA QUO LOCORUM SERA MORATUR

Clive Newcome bore his defeat with such a courage and resolution as those who knew the young fellow's character were sure he would display. It was whilst he had a little lingering hope still that the poor lad was in the worst condition; as a gambler is restless and unhappy whilst his last few guineas remain with him, and he is venturing them against the overpowering chances of the bank. His last piece, however, gone, our friend rises up from that unlucky table beaten at the contest but not broken in spirit. He goes back into the world again and withdraws from that dangerous excitement; sometimes when he is alone or wakeful, tossing in his bed at nights, he may recall the fatal game, and think how he might have won it — think what a fool he was ever to have played it at all — but these cogitations Clive kept for himself. He was magnanimous enough not even to blame Ethel much, and to take her side against his father, who it must be confessed now exhibited a violent hostility against that young lady and her belongings. Slow to anger and utterly beyond deceit himself, when Thomas Newcome was once roused, or at length believed that he was cheated woe to the offender! From that day forth, Thomas believed no good of him. Every thought or action of his enemy's life seemed treason to the worthy Colonel. If Barnes gave a dinner-party, his uncle was ready to fancy that the banker wanted to poison somebody; if he made a little speech in the House of Commons (Barnes did make little speeches in the House of Commons), the Colonel was sure some infernal conspiracy lay under the villain's words. The whole of that branch of the Newcomes fared little better at their kinsman's hands — they were all deceitful, sordid, heartless, worldly; — Ethel herself no better now than the people who had bred her up. People hate, as they love, unreasonably. Whether is it the more mortifying to us, to feel that we are disliked or liked undeservedly?

Clive was not easy until he had the sea between him and his misfortune: and now Thomas Newcome had the chance of making that tour with his son, which in early days had been such a favourite project with the good man. They travelled Rhineland and Switzerland together — they crossed into Italy — went from Milan to Venice (where Clive saluted the greatest painting in the world — the glorious 'Assumption' of Titian)— they went to Trieste and over the beautiful Styrian Alps to Vienna — they beheld Danube, and the plain where the Turk and Sobieski fought. They travelled at a prodigious fast pace. They did not speak much to one another. They were a pattern pair of English travellers: I dare say many persons whom they met smiled to observe them; and shrugged their shoulders at the aspect of ces Anglais. They did not know the care in the young traveller's mind; and the deep tenderness and solicitude of the elder. Clive wrote to say it was a very pleasant tour, but I think I should not have liked to join it. Let us dismiss it in this single sentence. Other gentlemen have taken the same journey, and with sorrow perhaps as their silent fellow-traveller. How you remember the places afterwards, and the thoughts which pursued you! If in after days, when your grief is dead and buried, you revisit the scenes in which it was your companion, how its ghost rises and shows itself again! Suppose this part of Mr. Clive's life were to be described at length in several chapters, and not in a single brief sentence, what dreary pages they would be! In two or three months our friends saw a number of men, cities, mountains, rivers, and what not. It was yet early autumn when they were back in France again, and September found them at Brussels, where James Binnie, Esq., and his family were established in comfortable quarters, and where we may be sure Clive and his father were very welcome.

Dragged abroad at first sorely against his will, James Binnie had found the Continental life pretty much to his liking. He had passed a winter at Pau, a summer at Vichy, where the waters had done him good. His ladies had made several charming foreign acquaintances. Mrs. Mackenzie had quite a list of counts and marchionesses among her friends. The excellent Captain Goby, wandered about the country with them. Was it to Rosey, was it to her mother, the Captain was most attached? Rosey received him as a godpapa; Mrs. Mackenzie as a wicked, odious, good-for-nothing, dangerous, delightful creature. Is it humiliating, is it consolatory, to remark, with what small wit some of our friends are amused? The jovial sallies of Goby appeared exquisite to Rosey's mother, and to the girl probably; though that young Bahawder of a Clive Newcome chose to wear a grave face (confound his insolent airs!) at the very best of the Goby jokes.

In Goby's train was his fervent admirer and inseparable young friend, Clarence Hoby. Captain Hoby and Captain Goby travelled the world together, visited Hombourg and Baden, Cheltenham and Leamington, Paris and Brussels, in company, belonged to the same club in London — the centre of all pleasure, fashion, and joy, for the young officer and the older

campaigner. The jokes at the Flag, the dinners at the Flag, the committee of the Flag, were the theme of their constant conversation. Goby fifty years old, unattached, and with dyed moustaches, was the affable comrade of the youngest member of his club: when absent, a friend wrote him the last riddle from the smoking-room; when present, his knowledge of horses, of cookery, wines, and cigars, and military history, rendered him a most acceptable companion. He knew the history and achievements of every regiment in the army; of every general and commanding officer. He was known to have been 'out' more than once himself, and had made up a hundred quarrels. He was certainly not a man of an ascetic life or a profound intellectual culture: but though poor he was known to be most honourable; though more than middle-aged he was cheerful, busy, and kindly; and though the youngsters called him Old Goby, he bore his years very gaily and handsomely, and I dare say numbers of ladies besides Mrs. Mackenzie thought him delightful. Goby's talk and rattle perhaps somewhat bored James Binnie, but Thomas Newcome found the Captain excellent company; and Goby did justice to the good qualities of the Colonel.

Clive's father liked Brussels very well. He and his son occupied very handsome quarters, near the spacious apartments in the Park which James Binnie's family inhabited. Waterloo was not far off, to which the Indian officer paid several visits with Captain Goby for a guide; and many of Marlborough's battlefields were near, in which Goby certainly took but a minor interest; but on the other hand Clive beheld these with the greatest pleasure, and painted more than one dashing piece, in which Churchill and Eugene, Cutts and Cadogan, were the heroes; whose flowing periwigs, huge boots, and thundering Flemish chargers were, he thought, more novel and picturesque than the Duke's surtout, and the French Grenadiers' hairy caps, which so many English and French artists have portrayed.

Mr. and Mrs. Pendennis were invited by our kind Colonel to pass a month — six months if they chose — at Brussels, and were most splendidly entertained by our friends in that city. A suite of handsome rooms was set apart for us. My study communicated with Clive's atelier. Many an hour did we pass, and many a ride and walk did we take together. I observed that Clive never mentioned Miss Newcome's name, and Laura and I agreed that it was as well not to recall it. Only once, when we read the death of Lady Glenlivat, Lord Farintosh's mother, in the newspaper, I remember to have said, "I suppose that marriage will be put off again."

"Qu'est ce que cela me fait?" says Mr. Clive gloomily, over his picture — a cheerful piece representing Count Egmont going to execution; in which I have the honour to figure as a halberdier, Captain Goby as the Count, and Captain Goby as the Duke of Alva, looking out of window.

Mrs. Mackenzie was in a state of great happiness and glory during this winter. She had a carriage, and worked that vehicle most indefatigably. She knew a great deal of good company at Brussels. She had an evening for receiving. She herself went to countless evening-parties, and had the joy of being invited to a couple of court balls, at which I am bound to say her daughter and herself both looked very handsome. The Colonel brushed up his old uniform and attended these entertainments. M. Newcome fils, as I should judge, was not the worst-looking man in the room; and, as these young people waltzed together (in which accomplishment Clive was very much more skilful than Captain Goby) I dare say many people thought he and Rosey made a pretty couple.

Most persons, my wife included, difficult as that lady is to please, were pleased with the pretty little Rosey. She sang charmingly now, and looked so while singing. If her mother would but have omitted that chorus, which she cackled perseveringly behind her daughter's pretty back: about Rosey's angelic temper; about the compliments Signor Polonini paid her; about Sir Horace Dash, our minister, insisting upon her singing "Batti Batti" over again, and the Archduke clapping his hands and saying, "Oh, yes!" about Count Vanderslaapen's attentions to her, etc. etc.; but for these constant remarks of Mrs. Mack's, I am sure no one would have been better pleased with Miss Rosey's singing and behaviour than myself. As for Captain Goby, it was easy to see how he was affected towards Miss Rosalind's music and person.

And indeed few things could be pleasanter than to watch the behaviour of this pretty little maid with her Uncle James and his old chum the Colonel. The latter was soon as fond of her as James Binnie himself, whose face used to lighten with pleasure whenever it turned towards hers. She seemed to divine his wants, as she would trip across the room to fulfil them. She skipped into the carriage and covered his feet with a shawl. James was lazy and chilly now, when he took his drive. She sat opposite to him and smiled on him; and, if he dozed, quick, another handkerchief was round his neck. I do not know whether she understood his jokes, but she saluted them always with a sweet kind smile. How she kissed him, and how delighted she was if he bought her a bouquet for her ball that night! One day, upon occasion of one of these balls, James and Thomas, those two old boys, absolutely came into Mrs. Mackenzie's drawing-room with a bouquet apiece for Miss

Rosey; and there was a fine laughing.

“Oh, you little Susanna!” says James, after taking his usual payment; “now go and pay t’other elder.” Rosey did not quite understand at first, being, you see, more ready to laugh at jokes than to comprehend them: but when she did, I promise you she looked uncommonly pretty as she advanced to Colonel Newcome and put that pretty fresh cheek of hers up to his grizzled moustache.

“I protest I don’t know which of you blushes the most,” chuckles James Binnie — and the truth is, the old man and the young girl had both hung out those signals of amiable distress.

On this day, and as Miss Rosey was to be overpowered by flowers, who should come presently to dinner but Captain Hoby, with another bouquet? on which Uncle James said Rosey should go to the ball like an American Indian with her scalps at her belt.

“Scalps!” cries Mrs. Mackenzie.

“Scalps! Oh law, uncle!” exclaims Miss Rosey. “What can you mean by anything so horrid?”

Goby recalls to Mrs. Mack, Hook-ee-ma-goosh the Indian chief, whom she must have seen when the Hundred and Fiftieth were at Quebec, and who had his lodge full of them; and who used to lie about the barracks so drunk, and who used to beat his poor little European wife: and presently Mr. Clive Newcome joins this company, when the chirping, tittering, joking, laughing, cease somehow.

Has Clive brought a bouquet too? No. He has never thought about a bouquet. He is dressed in black, with long hair, a long moustache, and melancholy imperial. He looks very handsome, but as glum as an undertaker. And James Binnie says, “Egad, Tom, they used to call you the knight of the woeful countenance, and Clive has just inherited the paternal mug.” Then James calls out in a cheery voice, “Dinner, dinner!” and trots off with Mrs. Pendennis under his arm; Rosey nestles up against the Colonel; Goby and Mrs. Mack walk away arm-in-arm very contentedly; and I don’t know with which of her three nose-gays pretty Rosey appears at the ball.

Our stay with our friends at Brussels could not be prolonged beyond a month, for at the end of that period we were under an engagement to other friends in England, who were good enough to desire the presence of Mrs. Pendennis and her suite of baby, nurse, and husband. So we presently took leave of Rosey and the Campaigner, of the two stout elders, and our melancholy young Clive, who bore us company to Antwerp, and who won Laura’s heart by the neat way in which he took her child on board ship. Poor fellow! how sad he looked as he bowed to us and took off his hat! His eyes did not seem to be looking at us, though they and his thoughts were turned another way. He moved off immediately, with his head down, puffing his eternal cigar, and lost in his own meditations; our going or our staying was of very little importance to the lugubrious youth.

“I think it was a great pity they came to Brussels,” says Laura, as we sate on the deck, while her unconscious infant was cheerful, and while the water of the lazy Scheldt as yet was smooth.

“Who? The Colonel and Clive? They are very handsomely lodged. They have a good maitre d’hotel. Their dinners, I am sure, are excellent; and your child, madam, is as healthy as it possibly can be.”

“Blessed darling! Yes!” (Blessed darling crows, moos, jumps in his nurse’s arms, and holds out a little mottled hand for a biscuit of Savoy, which mamma supplies.) “I can’t help thinking, Arthur, that Rosey would have been much happier as Mrs. Hoby than she will be as Mrs. Newcome.”

“Who thinks of her being Mrs. Newcome?”

“Her mother, her uncle, and Clive’s father, Since the Colonel has been so rich, I think Mrs. Mackenzie sees a great deal of merit in Clive. Rosey will do anything her mother bids her. If Clive can be brought to the same obedience, Uncle James and the Colonel will be delighted. Uncle James has set his heart on this marriage. (He and his sister agree upon this point.) He told me, last night, that he would sing ‘Nunc dimittis,’ could he but see the two children happy; and that he should lie easier in purgatory if that could be brought about.”

“And what did you say, Laura?”

“I laughed, and told Uncle James I was of the Hoby faction. He is very good-natured, frank, honest, and gentlemanlike, Mr. Hoby. But Uncle James said he thought Mr. Hoby was so — well, so stupid — that his Rosey would be thrown away upon the poor Captain. So I did not tell Uncle James that, before Clive’s arrival, Rosey had found Captain Hoby far from stupid. He used to sing duets with her; he used to ride with her before Clive came. Last winter, when they

were at Pau, I feel certain Miss Rosey thought Captain Hoby very pleasant indeed. She thinks she was attached to Clive formerly, and now she admires him, and is dreadfully afraid of him. He is taller and handsomer, and richer and cleverer than Captain Hoby, certainly.”

“I should think so, indeed,” breaks out Mr. Pendennis. “Why, my dear, Clive is as fine a fellow as one can see on a summer’s day. It does one good to look at him. What a frank pair of bright blue eyes he has, or used to have, till this mishap overclouded them! What a pleasant laugh he has! What a well-built, agile figure it is — what pluck, and spirit, and honour, there is about my young chap! I don’t say he is a genius of the highest order, but he is the staunchest, the bravest, the cheeriest, the most truth-telling, the kindest heart. Compare him and Hoby! Why, Clive is an eagle, and yonder little creature a mousing owl!”

“I like to hear you speak so,” cries Mrs. Laura, very tenderly. “People say that you are always sneering, Arthur; but I know my husband better. We know papa better, don’t we, baby?” (Here my wife kisses the infant Pendennis with great effusion, who has come up dancing on his nurse’s arms.) “But,” says she, coming back and snuggling by her husband’s side again — “But suppose your favourite Clive is an eagle, Arthur, don’t you think he had better have an eagle for a mate? If he were to marry little Rosey, I dare say he would be very good to her; but I think neither he nor she would be very happy. My dear, she does not care for his pursuits; she does not understand him when he talks. The two captains, and Rosey and I, and the campaigner, as you call her, laugh and talk, and prattle, and have the merriest little jokes with one another, and we all are as quiet as mice when you and Clive come in.”

“What, am I an eagle, too? I have no aquiline pretensions at all, Mrs. Pendennis.”

“No. Well, we are not afraid of you. We are not afraid of papa, are we, darling?” this young woman now calls out to the other member of her family; who, if you will calculate, has just had time to be walked twice up and down the deck of the steamer, whilst Laura has been making her speech about eagles. And soon the mother, child, and attendant descend into the lower cabins: and then dinner is announced: and Captain Jackson treats us to champagne from his end of the table and yet a short while, and we are at sea, and conversation becomes impossible: and morning sees us under the grey London sky, and amid the million of masts in the Thames.



CHAPTER LVII

ROSEBURY AND NEWCOME

The friends to whom we were engaged in England were Florac and his wife, Madame la Princesse de Moncontour, who were determined to spend the Christmas holidays at the Princess's country seat. It was for the first time since their reconciliation, that the Prince and Princess dispensed their hospitalities at the latter's chateau. It is situated, as the reader has already been informed, at some five miles from the town of Newcome; away from the chimneys and smoky atmosphere of that place, in a sweet country of rural woodlands; over which quiet villages, grey church spires, and ancient gabled farmhouses are scattered: still wearing the peaceful aspect which belonged to them when Newcome was as yet but an antiquated country town, before mills were erected on its river-banks, and dyes and cinders blackened its stream. Twenty years since Newcome Park was the only great house in that district; now scores of fine villas have sprung up in the suburb lying between the town and park. Newcome New Town, as everybody knows, has grown round the park-gates, and the New Town Hotel (where the railway station is) is a splendid structure in the Tudor style, more ancient in appearance than the park itself; surrounded by little antique villas with spiked gables, stacks of crooked chimneys, and plate-glass windows looking upon trim lawns; with glistening hedges of evergreens, spotless gravel walks, and Elizabethan gig-houses. Under the great railway viaduct of the New Town, goes the old tranquil winding London highroad, once busy with a score of gay coaches, and ground by innumerable wheels: but at a few miles from the New Town Station the road has become so mouldy that the grass actually grows on it; and Rosebury, Madame de Moncontour's house, stands at one end of a village-green, which is even more quiet now than it was a hundred years ago.

When first Madame de Florac bought the place, it scarcely ranked amongst the country-houses; and she, the sister of manufacturers at Newcome and Manchester, did not of course visit the county families. A homely little body, married to a Frenchman from whom she was separated, may or may not have done a great deal of good in her village, have had pretty gardens, and won prizes at the Newcome flower and fruit shows; but, of course, she was nobody in such an aristocratic county as we know — shire is. She had her friends and relatives from Newcome. Many of them were Quakers — many were retail shopkeepers. She even frequented the little branch Ebenezer, on Rosebury Green; and it was only by her charities and kindness at Christmas-time, that the Rev. Dr. Potter, the rector at Rosebury, knew her. The old clergy, you see, live with the county families. Good little Madame de Florac was pitied and patronised by the Doctor, treated with no little superciliousness by Mrs. Potter, and the young ladies, who only kept the first society. Even when her rich brother died, and she got her share of all that money Mrs. Potter said poor Madame de Florac did well in not trying to move out of her natural sphere (Mrs. P. was the daughter of a bankrupt hatter in London, and had herself been governess in a noble family, out of which she married Mr. P., who was private tutor). Madame de Florac did well, she said, not to endeavour to leave her natural sphere, and that The County never would receive her. Tom Potter, the rector's son, with whom I had the good fortune to be a fellow-student at Saint Boniface College, Oxbridge — a rattling, forward, and it must be owned, vulgar youth — asked me whether Florac was not a billiard-marker by profession? and was even so kind as to caution his sisters not to speak of billiards before the lady of Rosebury. Tom was surprised to learn that Monsieur Paul de Florac was a gentleman of lineage incomparably better than that of any, except two or three families in England (including your own, my dear and respected reader, of course, if you hold to your pedigree). But the truth is, heraldically speaking, that union with the Higgs of Manchester was the first misalliance which the Florac family had made for long long years. Not that I would wish for a moment to insinuate that any nobleman is equal to an English nobleman; nay, that an English snob, with a coat-of-arms bought yesterday, or stolen out of Edmonton, or a pedigree purchased from a peerage-maker, has not a right to look down upon any of your paltry foreign nobility.

One day the carriage-and-four came in state from Newcome Park, with the well-known chaste liveries of the Newcomes, and drove up Rosebury Green, towards the parsonage gate, when Mrs. and the Miss Potters happened to be standing, cheapening fish from a donkey-man, with whom they were in the habit of dealing. The ladies were in their pokiest old head-gear and most dingy gowns, when they perceived the carriage approaching; and considering, of course, that the visit of the Park people was intended for them, dashed into the rectory to change their clothes, leaving Rowkins, the costermonger, in the very midst of the negotiation about the three mackerel. Mamma got that new bonnet out of the

bandbox; Lizzy and Liddy skipped up to their bedroom, and brought out those dresses which they wore at the dejeuner at the Newcome Athenaeum, when Lord Leveret came down to lecture; into which they no sooner had hooked their lovely shoulders, than they reflected with terror that mamma had been altering one of papa's flannel waistcoats and had left it in the drawing-room, when they were called out by the song of Rowkins, and the appearance of his donkey's ears over the green gate of the rectory. To think of the Park people coming, and the drawing-room in that dreadful state!

But when they came downstairs the Park people were not in the room — the woollen garment was still on the table (how they plunged it into the chiffonier!)— and the only visitor was Rowkins, the costermonger, grinning at the open French windows, with the three mackerel, and crying, "Make it sixpence, miss — don't say fippens, maam, to a pore fellow that has a wife and family." So that the young ladies had to cry — "Impudence!" "Get away, you vulgar insolent creature! — Go round, sir, to the back door!" "How dare you?" and the like; fearing lest Lady Anne Newcome, and Young Ethel, and Barnes should enter in the midst of this ignoble controversy.

They never came at all — those Park people. How very odd! They passed the rectory gate; they drove on to Madame de Florac's lodge. They went in. They stayed for half an hour; the horses driving round and round the gravel road before the house; and Mrs. Potter and the girls speedily going to the upper chambers, and looking out of the room where the maids slept, saw Lady Anne, Ethel, and Barnes walking with Madame de Florac, going into the conservatories, issuing thence with MacWhirter, the gardener, bearing huge bunches of grapes and large fascies of flowers; they saw Barnes talking in the most respectful manner to Madame de Florac: and when they went downstairs and had their work before them — Liddy her gilt music-book, Lizzy her embroidered altar-cloth, mamma her scarlet cloak for one of the old women — they had the agony of seeing the barouche over the railings whisk by, with the Park people inside, and Barnes driving the four horses.

It was on that day when Barnes had determined to take up Madame de Florac; when he was bent upon reconciling her to her husband. In spite of all Mrs. Potter's predictions, the county families did come and visit the manufacturer's daughter; and when Madame de Florac became Madame la Princesse de Moncontour, when it was announced that she was coming to stay at Rosebury for Christmas, I leave you to imagine whether the circumstance was or was not mentioned in the Newcome Sentinel and the Newcome Independent; and whether Rev. G. Potter, D.D., and Mrs. Potter did or did not call on the Prince and Princess. I leave you to imagine whether the lady did or did not inspect all the alterations which Vineer's people from Newcome were making at Rosebury House — the chaste yellow satin and gold of the drawing-room — the carved oak for the dining-room — the chintz for the bedrooms — the Princess's apartment — the Prince's apartment — the guests' apartments — the smoking-room, gracious goodness! — the stables (these were under Tom Potter's superintendence), "and I'm finished," says he one day, "if here doesn't come a billiard-table!"

The house was most comfortably and snugly appointed from top to bottom; and thus it will be seen that Mr. and Mrs. Pendennis were likely to be in very good quarters for Christmas of 184-.

Tom Potter was so kind as to call on me two days after our arrival; and to greet me in the Princess's pew at church on the previous day. Before desiring to be introduced to my wife, he requested me to present him to my friend the Prince. He called him your Highness. His Highness, who had behaved with exemplary gravity, save once when he shrieked an "ah!" as Miss Liddy led off the children in the organ-loft in a hymn, and the whole pack went woefully out of tune, complimented Monsieur Tom on the sermon of monsieur his father. Tom walked with us to Rosebury lodge-gate. "Will you not come in, and make a party of billiard with me?" says His Highness. "Ah Pardon! I forgot, you do not play the billiard the Sunday!" "Any other day, Prince, I shall be delighted," says Tom; and squeezed His Highness's hand tenderly at parting. "Your comrade of college was he?" asks Florac. "My dear, what men are these comrades of college! What men are you English! My word of honour, there are some of them here — if I were to say to them wax my boots, they would take them and wax them! Didst thou see how the Reverend eyed us during the sermon? He regarded us over his book, my word of honour!"

Madame de Florac said simply, she wished the Prince would go and hear Mr. Jacob at the Ebenezer. Mr. Potter was not a good preacher, certainly.

"Savez-vous qu'elle est furieusement belle, la fille du Reverend?" whispered His Highness to me. "I have made eyes at her during the sermon. They will be of pretty neighbours these meess!" and Paul looked unutterably roguish and victorious as he spoke. To my wife, I am bound to say, Monsieur de Moncontour showed a courtesy, a respect and kindness, that could not be exceeded. He admired her. He paid her compliments innumerable, and gave me I am sure sincere congratulations at possessing such a treasure. I do not think he doubted about his power of conquering her, or any other of the daughters of women. But I was the friend of his misfortunes — his guest; and he spared me.

I have seen nothing more amusing, odd, and pleasant than Florac at this time of his prosperity. We arrived, as this veracious chronicle has already asserted, on a Saturday evening. We were conducted to our most comfortable apartments; with crackling fires blazing on the hearths, and every warmth of welcome. Florac expanded and beamed with good-nature. He shook me many times by the hand; he patted me; he called me his good — his brave.

He cried to his maitre d'hotel, "Frederic, remember monsieur is master here! Run before his orders. Prostrate thyself to him. He was good to me in the days of my misfortune. Hearest thou, Frederic? See that everything be done for Monsieur Pendennis — for madame sa charmante lady — for her angelic infant, and the bonne. None of thy garrison tricks with that young person, Frederic! vieux scelerat! Garde-toi de la, Frederic; si non, je t'envoie a Botani Bay; je te traduis devant le Lord Mare!"

"En Angleterre je me fais Anglais, vois-tu, mon ami," continued the Prince. "Demain c'est Sunday, et tu vas voir! I hear the bell, dress thyself for the dinner — my friend!"; Here there was another squeeze of both hands from the good-natured fellow. "It do good to my art to ave you in my ouse! Heuh!" He hugged his guest; he had tears in his eyes as he performed this droll, this kind embrace. Not less kind in her way, though less expensive and embracive, was Madame de Moncontour to my wife, as I found on comparing notes with that young woman, when the day's hospitalities were ended. The little Princess trotted from bedchamber to nursery to see that everything was made comfortable for her guests. She sate and saw the child washed and put to bed. She had never beheld such a little angel. She brought it a fine toy to play with. She and her grim old maid frightened the little creature at first, but it was very speedily reconciled to their countenances. She was in the nursery almost as early as the child's mother. "Ah!" sighed the poor little woman, "how happy you must be to have one!" In fine, my wife was quite overcome by her goodness and welcome.

Sunday morning arrived in the course of time, and then Florac appeared as a most wonderful Briton indeed! He wore top-boots and buckskins; and after breakfast, when we went to church, a white great-coat with a little cape, in which garment he felt that his similarity to an English gentleman was perfect. In conversation with his grooms and servants he swore freely — not that he was accustomed to employ oaths in his own private talk, but he thought the employment of these expletives necessary as an English country gentleman. He never dined without a roast-beef, and insisted that the piece of meat should be bleeding, "as you love it, you others." He got up boxing-matches: and kept birds for combats of cock. He assumed the sporting language with admirable enthusiasm — drove over to cover with a steppere — rode across countri like a good one — was splendid in the hunting-field in his velvet cap and Napoleon boots, and made the Hunt welcome at Rosebury where his good-natured little wife was as kind to the gentlemen in scarlet as she used to be of old to the stout Dissenting gentlemen in black, who sang hymns and spake sermons on her lawn. These folks, scared at the change which had taken place in the little Princess's habits of life, lamented her falling away: but in the county she and her husband got a great popularity, and in Newcome town itself they were not less liked, for her benefactions were unceasing, and Paul's affability the theme of all praise. The Newcome Independent and the Newcome Sentinel both paid him compliments; the former journal contrasting his behaviour with that of Sir Barnes, their member. Florac's pleasure was to drive his Princess with four horses into Newcome. He called his carriage his "trappe," his "drague." The street-boys cheered and hurrayed the Prince as he passed through the town. One haberdasher had a yellow stock called the "Moncontour" displayed in his windows; another had a pink one marked "The Princely," and as such recommended it to the young Newcome gents.

The drague conveyed us once to the neighbouring house of Newcome, whither my wife accompanied Madame de Moncontour at that lady's own request, to whom Laura very properly did not think fit to confide her antipathy for Lady Clara Newcome. Coming away from a great house, how often she and I, egotistical philosophers, thanked our fates that our own home was a small one! How long will great houses last in this world? Do not their owners now prefer a lodging at Brighton, or a little entresol on the Boulevard, to the solitary ancestral palace in a park barred round with snow? We were as glad to get out of Newcome as out of a prison. My wife and our hostess skipped into the carriage, and began to talk freely as the lodge-gates closed after us. Would we be lords of such a place under the penalty of living in it? We agreed that the little angle of earth called Fair Oaks was dearer to us than the clumsy Newcome-pile of Tudor masonry. The house had been fitted up in the time of George IV. and the quasi-Gothic revival. We were made to pass through Gothic dining-rooms, where there was now no hospitality — Gothic drawing-rooms shrouded in brown hollands, to one little room at the end of the dusky suite, where Lady Clara sate alone, or in the company of the nurses and children. The blank gloom of the place had fallen upon the poor lady. Even when my wife talked about children (good-natured Madame de Moncontour vaunting

ours as a prodigy) Lady Clara did not brighten up! Her pair of young ones was exhibited and withdrawn. A something weighed upon the woman. We talked about Ethel's marriage. She said it was fixed for the new year, she believed. She did not know whether Glenlivat had been very handsomely fitted up. She had not seen Lord Farintosh's house in London. Sir Barnes came down once — twice — of a Saturday sometimes, for three or four days to hunt, to amuse himself, as all men do she supposed. She did not know when he was coming again. She rang languidly when we rose to take leave, and sank back on her sofa, where lay a heap of French novels. "She has chosen some pretty books," says Paul, as we drove through the sombre avenues through the grey park, mists lying about the melancholy ornamental waters, dingy herds of huddled sheep speckling the grass here and there; no smoke rising up from the great stacks of chimneys of the building we were leaving behind us, save one little feeble thread of white which we knew came from the fire by which the lonely mistress of Newcome was seated. "Ouf!" cries Florac, playing his whip, as the lodge-gates closed on us, and his team of horses rattled merrily along the road, "what a blessing it is to be out of that vault of a place! There is something fatal in this house — in this woman. One smells misfortune there."

The hotel which our friend Florac patronised on occasion of his visits to Newcome was the King's Arms, and it happened, one day, as we entered that place of entertainment in company, that a visitor of the house was issuing through the hall, to whom Florac seemed as if he would administer one of his customary embraces, and to whom the Prince called out "Jack," with great warmth and kindness as he ran towards the stranger.

Jack did not appear to be particularly well pleased on beholding us; he rather retreated from before the Frenchman's advances.

"My dear Jack, my good, my brave Ighgate! I am delighted to see you!" Florac continues, regardless of the stranger's reception, or of the landlord's looks towards us, who was bowing the Prince into his very best room.

"How do you do, Monsieur de Florac?" growls the new comer, surlily; and was for moving on after this brief salutation; but having a second thought seemingly, turned back and followed Florac into the apartment where our host conducted us. "A la bonne heure!" Florac renewed his cordial greetings to Lord Highgate. "I knew not, mon bon, what fly had stung you," says he to my lord. The landlord, rubbing his hands, smirking and bowing, was anxious to know whether the Prince would take anything after his drive. As the Prince's attendant and friend, the lustre of his reception partially illuminated me. When the chief was not by, I was treated with great attention (mingled with a certain degree of familiarity) by my landlord.

Lord Highgate waited until Mr. Taplow was out of the room; and then said to Florac, "Don't call me by my name here, please, Florac, I am here incog."

"Plait-il?" asks Florac. "Where is incog.?" He laughed when the word was interpreted to him. Lord Highgate had turned to me. "There was no rudeness, you understand, intended, Mr. Pendennis, but I am down here on some business, and don't care to wear the handle to my name. Fellows work it so, don't you understand? never leave you at rest in a country town — that sort of thing. Heard of our friend Clive lately?"

"Whether you ave andle or no andle, Jack, you are always the bien venu to me. What is thy affair? Old monster! I wager —"

"No, no, no such nonsense," says Jack, rather eagerly. "I give you my honour, I— I want to — to raise a sum of money — that is, to invest some in a speculation down here — deuced good the speculations down here; and, by the way, if the landlord asks you, I'm Mr. Harris — I'm a civil engineer — I'm waiting for the arrival of the Canada at Liverpool from America, and very uneasy about my brother who is on board."

"What does he recount to us there? Keep these stories for the landlord, Jack; to us 'tis not the pain to lie. My good Mr. Harris, why have we not seen you at Rosebury? The Princess will scold me if you do not come; and you must bring your dear brother when he arrive too. Do you hear?" The last part of this sentence was uttered for Mr. Taplow's benefit, who had re-entered the George bearing a tray of wine and biscuit.

The Master of Rosebury and Mr. Harris went out presently to look at a horse which was waiting the former's inspection in the stableyard of the hotel. The landlord took advantage of his business, to hear a bell which never was rung, and to ask me questions about the guest who had been staying at his house for a week past. Did I know that party? Mr. Pendennis said, "Yes, he knew that party."

"Most respectable party, I have no doubt," continues Boniface. "Do you suppose the Prince of Moncontour knows any but respectable parties?" asks Mr. Pendennis — a query of which the force was so great as to discomfit and silence our

landlord, who retreated to ask questions concerning Mr. Harris of Florac's grooms.

What was Highgate's business here? Was it mine to know? I might have suspicions, but should I entertain them or communicate them, and had I not best keep them to myself? I exchanged not a word on the subject of Highgate with Florac, as we drove home: though from the way in which we looked at one another each saw that the other was acquainted with that unhappy gentleman's secret. We fell to talking about Madame la Duchesse d'Ivry as we trotted on; and then of English manners by way of contrast, of intrigues, elopements, Gretna Grin, etc., etc. "You are a droll nation!" says Florac. "To make love well, you must absolutely have a chaise-de-poste, and a scandal afterwards. If our affairs of this kind made themselves on the grand route, what armies of postillions we should need!"

I held my peace. In that vision of Jack Belsize I saw misery, guilt, children dishonoured, homes deserted — ruin for all the actors and victims of the wretched conspiracy. Laura marked my disturbance when we reached home. She even divined the cause of it, and charged me with it at night, when we sate alone by our dressing-room fire, and had taken leave of our kind entertainers. Then, under her cross-examination, I own that I told what I had seen — Lord Highgate, under a feigned name staying at Newcome. It might be nothing. "Nothing! Gracious heavens! Could not this crime and misery be stopped?" "It might be too late," Laura's husband said sadly, bending down his head into the fire.

She was silent too for a while. I could see she was engaged where pious women ever will betake themselves in moments of doubt, of grief, of pain, of separation, of joy even, or whatsoever other trial. They have but to will, and as it were an invisible temple rises round them; their hearts can kneel down there; and they have an audience of the great, the merciful untiring Counsellor and Consoler. She would not have been frightened at Death near at hand. I have known her to tend the poor round about us, or to bear pain — not her own merely, but even her children's and mine, with a surprising outward constancy and calm. But the idea of this crime being enacted close at hand, and no help for it — quite overcame her. I believe she lay awake all that night; and rose quite haggard and pale after the bitter thoughts which had deprived her of rest.

She embraced her own child with extraordinary tenderness that morning, and even wept over it, calling it by a thousand fond names of maternal endearment "Would I leave you, my darling — could I ever, ever, ever quit you, my blessing, and treasure!" The unconscious little thing, hugged to his mother's bosom, and scared at her tones and tragic face, clung frightened and weeping round Laura's neck. Would you ask what the husband's feelings were as he looked at that sweet love, that sublime tenderness, that pure Saint blessing the life of him unworthy? Of all the gifts of Heaven to us below, that felicity is the sum and the chief. I tremble as I hold it lest I should lose it, and be left alone in the blank world without it: again, I feel humiliated to think that I possess it; as hastening home to a warm fireside and a plentiful table, I feel ashamed sometimes before the poor outcast beggar shivering in the street.

Breakfast was scarcely over when Laura asked for a pony carriage, and said she was bent on a private visit. She took her baby and nurse with her. She refused our company, and would not even say whither she was bound until she had passed the lodge-gate. I may have suspected what the object was of her journey. Florac and I did not talk of it. We rode out to meet the hounds of a cheery winter morning: on another day I might have been amused with my host — the, splendour of his raiment, the neatness of his velvet cap, the gloss of his hunting-boots; the cheers, shouts, salutations, to dog and man; the oaths and outcries of this Nimrod, who shouted louder than the whole field and the whole pack too — but on this morning — I was thinking of the tragedy yonder enacting, and came away early from the hunting-field, and found my wife already returned to Rosebury.

Laura had been, as I suspected, to Lady Clara. She did not know why, indeed. She scarce knew what she should say when she arrived — how she could say what she had in her mind. "I hoped, Arthur, that I should have something — something told me to say," whispered Laura, with her head on my shoulder; and as I lay awake last night thinking of her, prayed — that is, hoped, I might find a word of consolation for that poor lady. Do you know, I think she has hardly ever heard a kind word? She said so; she was very much affected after we had talked together a little.

"At first she was very indifferent; cold and haughty in her manner; asked what had caused the pleasure of this visit, for I would go in, though at the lodge they told me her ladyship was unwell, and they thought received no company. I said I wanted to show our boy to her — that the children ought to be acquainted — I don't know what I said. She seemed more and more surprised — then all of a sudden — I don't know how — I said, 'Lady Clara, I have had a dream about you and your children, and I was so frightened that I came over to you to speak about it.' And I had the dream, Pen; it came to me absolutely as I was speaking to her.

“She looked a little scared, and I went on telling her the dream. ‘My dear’ I said, ‘I dreamed that I saw you happy with those children.’

“‘Happy!’ says she — the three were playing in the conservatory into which her sitting-room opens.

“‘And that a bad spirit came and tore them from you, and drove you out into the darkness; and I saw you wandering about quite lonely and wretched, and looking back into the garden where the children were playing. And you asked and implored to see them; and the Keeper at the gate said ‘No, never.’ And then — then I thought they passed by you, and they did not know you.’

“‘Ah!’ said Lady Clara.

“‘And then I thought, as we do in dreams, you know, that it was my child who was separated from me, and who would not know me: and oh, what a pang that was! Fancy that! Let us pray God it was only a dream. And worse than that, when you, when I implored to come to the child, and the man said, ‘No, never,’ I thought there came a spirit — an angel that fetched the child to heaven, and you said, ‘Let me come too; oh, let me come too, I am so miserable.’ And the angel said, ‘No, never, never.’

“By this time Lady Clara was looking very pale. ‘What do you mean?’ she asked of me,” Laura continued.

“‘Oh, dear lady, for the sake of the little ones, and Him who calls them to Him, go you with them. Never, never part from them! Cling to His knees, and take shelter there.’ I took her hands, and I said more to her in this way, Arthur, that I need not, that I ought not to speak again. But she was touched at length when I kissed her; and she said I was very kind to her, and no one had ever been so, and that she was quite alone in the world and had no friend to fly to; and would I go and stay with her? and I said ‘yes;’ and we must go, my dear. I think you should see that person at Newcome — see him, and warn him,” cried Laura, warming as she spoke, “and pray God to enlighten and strengthen him, and to keep him from this temptation, and implore him to leave this poor, weak, frightened, trembling creature; if he has the heart of a gentleman and the courage of a man, he will, I know he will.”

“I think he would, my dearest,” I said, “if he but heard the petitioner.” Laura’s cheeks were blushing, her eyes brightened, her voice rang with a sweet pathos of love that vibrates through my whole being sometimes. It seems to me as if evil must give way, and bad thoughts retire before that purest creature.

“Why has she not some of her family with her, poor thing!” my wife continued. “She perishes in that solitude. Her husband prevents her, I think — and — oh — I know enough of him to know what his life is. I shudder, Arthur, to see you take the hand of that wicked, selfish man. You must break with him, do you hear, sir?”

“Before or after going to stay at his house, my love?” asks Mr. Pendennis.

“Poor thing! she lighted up at the idea of any one coming. She ran and showed me the rooms we were to have. It will be very stupid; and you don’t like that. But you can write your book, and still hunt and shoot with our friends here. And Lady Anne Newcome must be made to come back again. Sir Barnes quarrelled with his mother and drove her out of the house on her last visit — think of that! The servants here know it. Martha brought me the whole story from the housekeeper’s room. This Sir Barnes Newcome is a dreadful creature, Arthur. I am so glad I loathed him from the very first moment I saw him.”

“And into this ogre’s den you propose to put me and my family, madam!” says the husband. “Indeed, where won’t I go if you order me? Oh, who will pack my portmanteau?”

Florac and the Princess were both in desolation when, at dinner, we announced our resolution to go away — and to our neighbours at Newcome! that was more extraordinary. “Que diable goest thou to do in this galley?” asks our host as we sat alone over our wine.

But Laura’s intended visit to Lady Clara was never to have a fulfilment, for on this same evening, as we sate at our dessert, comes a messenger from Newcome, with a note for my wife from the lady there:—

“Dearest, kindest Mrs. Pendennis,” Lady Clara wrote, with many italics, and evidently in much distress of mind. “Your visit is not to be. I spoke about it to Sir B., who arrived this afternoon, and who has already begun to treat me in his usual way. Oh, I am so unhappy! Pray, pray do not be angry at this rudeness — though indeed it is only a kindness to keep you from this wretched place! I feel as if I cannot bear this much longer. But, whatever happens, I shall always remember your goodness, your beautiful goodness and kindness; and shall worship you as an angel deserves to be worshipped. Oh, why had I not such a friend earlier! But alas! I have none — only this odious family thrust upon me for companions to the

wretched, lonely, C. N.

"P.S. — He does not know of my writing. Do not be surprised if you get another note from me in the morning, written in a ceremonious style and regretting that we cannot have the pleasure of receiving Mr. and Mrs. Pendennis for the present at Newcome.

"P.S. — The hypocrite!"

This letter was handed to my wife at dinner-time, and she gave it to me as she passed out of the room with the other ladies.

I told Florac that the Newcomes could not receive us, and that we would remain, if he willed it, his guests for a little longer. The kind fellow was only too glad to keep us. "My wife would die without Bebi," he said. "She becomes quite dangerous about Bebi." It was gratifying that the good old lady was not to be parted as yet from the innocent object of her love.

My host knew as well as I the terms upon which Sir Barnes and his wife were living. Their quarrels were the talk of the whole county; one side brought forward his treatment of her, and his conduct elsewhere, and said that he was so bad that honest people should not know him. The other party laid the blame upon her, and declared that Lady Clara was a languid, silly, weak, frivolous creature; always crying out of season; who had notoriously taken Sir Barnes for his money and who as certainly had had an attachment elsewhere. Yes, the accusations were true on both sides. A bad, selfish husband had married a woman for her rank: a weak, thoughtless girl had been sold to a man for his money; and the union, which might have ended in a complete indifference, had taken an ill turn and resulted in misery, cruelty, fierce mutual recriminations, bitter tears shed in private, husband's curses and maledictions, and open scenes of wrath and violence for servants to witness and the world to sneer at. We arrange such matches every day; we sell or buy beauty, or rank, or wealth; we inaugurate the bargain in churches with sacramental services, in which the parties engaged call upon Heaven to witness their vows — we know them to be lies, and we seal them with God's name. "I, Barnes, promise to take you, Clara, to love and honour till death do us part" "I Clara, promise to take you, Barnes," etc, etc. Who has not heard the ancient words; and how many of us have uttered them, knowing them to be untrue: and is there a bishop on the bench that has not amen'd the humbug in his lawn sleeves and called a blessing over the kneeling perjurers?

"Does Mr. Harris know of Newcome's return?" Florac asked, when I acquainted him with this intelligence. "Ce scelerat de Highgate — Va!"

"Does Newcome know that Lord Highgate is here?" I thought within myself, admiring my wife's faithfulness and simplicity, and trying to believe with that pure and guileless creature that it was not yet too late to save the unhappy Lady Clara.

"Mr. Harris had best be warned," I said to Florac; "will you write him a word, and let us send a messenger to Newcome?"

At first Florac said, "Parbleu! No;" the affair was none of his, he attended himself always to this result of Lady Clara's marriage. He had even complimented Jack upon it years before at Baden, when scenes enough tragic, enough comical, *ma foi*, had taken place apropos of this affair. Why should he meddle with it now?

"Children dishonoured," said I, "honest families made miserable; for Heaven's sake, Florac, let us stay this catastrophe if we can." I spoke with much warmth, eagerly desirous to avert this calamity if possible, and very strongly moved by the tale which I had heard only just before dinner from that noble and innocent creature, whose pure heart had already prompted her to plead the cause of right and truth, and to try and rescue an unhappy desperate sister trembling on the verge of ruin.

"If you will not write to him," said I, in some heat, "if your grooms don't like to go out of a night" (this was one of the objections which Florac had raised), "I will walk." We were talking over the affair rather late in the evening, the ladies having retreated to their sleeping apartments, and some guests having taken leave, whom our hospitable host and hostess had entertained that night, and before whom I naturally did not care to speak upon a subject so dangerous.

"Parbleu, what virtue, my friend! what a Joseph!" cries Florac, puffing his cigar. "One sees well that your wife had made you the sermon. My poor Pendennis! You are henpecked, my *pauvre bon*! You become the husband model. It is true my mother writes that thy wife is an angel!"

"I do not object to obey such a woman when she bids me do right," I said; and would indeed at that woman's request

have gone out upon the errand, but that we here found another messenger. On days when dinner-parties were held at Rosebury, certain auxiliary waiters used to attend from Newcome whom the landlord of the King's Arms was accustomed to supply; indeed, it was to secure these, and make other necessary arrangements respecting fish, game, etc., that the Prince de Moncontour had ridden over to Newcome on the day when we met Lord Highgate, alias Mr. Harris, before the bar of the hotel. Whilst we were engaged in the above conversation a servant enters, and says, "My lord, Jenkins and the other man is going back to Newcome in their cart," and is there anything wanted?"

"It is the Heaven which sends him," says Florac, turning round to me with a laugh; "make Jenkins to wait five minutes, Robert; I have to write to a gentleman at the King's Arms." And so saying, Florac wrote a line which he showed me, and having sealed the note, directed it to Mr. Harris at the King's Arms. The cart, the note, and the assistant waiters departed on their way to Newcome. Florac bade me go to rest with a clear conscience. In truth, the warning was better given in that way than any other, and a word from Florac was more likely to be effectual than an expostulation from me. I had never thought of making it, perhaps; except at the expressed desire of a lady whose counsel in all the difficult circumstances of life I own I am disposed to take.

Mr. Jenkins's horse no doubt trotted at a very brisk pace, as gentlemen's horses will of a frosty night, after their masters have been regaled with plentiful supplies of wine and ale. I remember in my bachelor days that my horses always trotted quicker after I had had a good dinner; the champagne used to communicate itself to them somehow, and the claret get into their heels. Before midnight the letter for Mr. Harris was in Mr. Harris's hands in the King's Arms.

It has been said that in the Boscawen Room at the Arms, some of the jolly fellows of Newcome had a club, of which Parrot the auctioneer, Tom Potts the talented reporter, now editor of the Independent, Vidler the apothecary, and other gentlemen, were members.

When we first had occasion to mention that society, it was at an early stage of this history, long before Clive Newcome's fine moustache had grown. If Vidler the apothecary was old and infirm then, he is near ten years older now; he has had various assistants, of course, and one of them of late years had become his partner, though the firm continues to be known by Viller's ancient and respectable name. A jovial fellow was this partner — a capital convivial member of the Jolly Britons, where he used to sit very late, so as to be in readiness for any night-work that might come in.

So the Britons were all sitting, smoking, drinking, and making merry, in the Boscawen Room, when Jenkins enters with a note, which he straightway delivers to Mr. Vidler's partner. "From Rosebury? The Princess ill again, I suppose," says the surgeon, not sorry to let the company know that he attends her. "I wish the old girl would be ill in the daytime. Confound it," says he, "what's this ——" and he reads out, "'Sir Newcome est de retour. Bon voyage, mon ami. — F.' What does this mean?"

"I thought you knew French, Jack Harris," says Tom Potts; "you're always bothering us with your French songs."

"Of course I know French," says the other; "but what's the meaning of this?"

"Screwcome came back by the five o'clock train. I was in it, and his royal highness would scarcely speak to me. Took Brown's fly from the station. Brown won't enrich his family much by the operation," says Mr. Potts.

"But what do I care?" cries Jack Harris; "we don't attend him, and we don't lose much by that. Howell attends him, ever since Vidler and he had that row."

"Hulloh! I say, it's a mistake," cries Mr. Taplow, smoking in his chair. "This letter is for the party in the Benbow. The gent which the Prince spoke to him, and called him Jack the other day when he was here. Here's a nice business, and the seal broke, and all. Is the Benbow party gone to bed? John, you must carry him in this here note." John, quite innocent of the note and its contents, for he that moment had entered the clubroom with Mr. Potts's supper, took the note to the Benbow, from which he presently returned to his master with a very scared countenance. He said the gent in the Benbow was a most harbitrary gent. He had almost choked John after reading the letter, and John wouldn't stand it; and when John said he supposed that Mr. Harris in the Boscawen — that Mr. Jack Harris, had opened the letter, the other gent cursed and swore awful.

"Potts," said Taplow, who was only too communicative on some occasions after he had imbibed too much of his own brandy-and-water, "it's my belief that that party's name is no more Harris than mine is. I have sent his linen to the wash, and there was two white pocket-handkerchiefs with H. and a coronet."

On the next day we drove over to Newcome, hoping perhaps to find that Lord Highgate had taken the warning sent to

him and quitted the place. But we were disappointed. He was walking in front of the hotel, where a thousand persons might see him as well as ourselves.

We entered into his private apartment with him, and there expostulated upon his appearance in the public street, where Barnes Newcome or any passer-by might recognise him. He then told us of the mishap which had befallen Florac's letter on the previous night.

"I can't go away now, whatever might have happened previously: by this time that villain knows that I am here. If I go, he will say I was afraid of him, and ran away. Oh, how I wish he would come and find me!" He broke out with a savage laugh.

"It is best to run away," one of us interposed sadly.

"Pendennis," he said with a tone of great softness, "your wife is a good woman. God bless her! God bless her for all she has said and done — would have done, if that villain had let her! Do you know the poor thing hasn't a single friend in the world, not one, one — except me, and that girl they are selling to Farintosh, and who does not count for much. He has driven away all her friends from her: one and all turn upon her. Her relations, of course; when did they ever fail to hit a poor fellow or a poor girl when she was down? The poor angel! The mother who sold her comes and preaches at her; Kew's wife turns up her little cursed nose and scorns her; Rooster, forsooth, must ride high the horse, now he is married and lives at Chanticleire, and give her warning to avoid my company or his! Do you know the only friend she ever had was that old woman with the stick — old Kew; the old witch whom they buried four months ago after nobbling her money for the beauty of the family? She used to protect her — that old woman; heaven bless her for it, wherever she is now, the old hag — a good word won't do her any harm. Ha! ha!" His laughter was cruel to hear.

"Why did I come down?" he continued in reply to our sad queries. "Why did I come down, do you ask? Because she was wretched, and sent for me. Because if I was at the end of the world, and she was to say, 'Jack, come!' I'd come."

"And if she bade you go?" asked his friends.

"I would go; and I have gone. If she told me to jump into the sea, do you think I would not do it? But I go; and when she is alone with him, do you know what he does? He strikes her. Strikes that poor little thing! He has owned to it. She fled from him and sheltered with the old woman who's dead. He may be doing it now. Why did I ever shake hands with him? that's humiliation sufficient, isn't it? But she wished it; and I'd black his boots, curse him, if she told me. And because he wanted to keep my money in his confounded bank; and because he knew he might rely upon my honour and hers, poor dear child, he chooses to shake hands with me — me, whom he hates worse than a thousand devils — and quite right too. Why isn't there a place where we can go and meet, like man to man, and have it over! If I had a ball through my brains I shouldn't mind, I tell you. I've a mind to do it for myself, Pendennis. You don't understand me, Viscount."

"Il est vrai," said Florac, with a shrug, "I comprehend neither the suicide nor the chaise-de-poste. What will you? I am not yet enough English, my friend. We make marriages of convenience in our country, que diable, and what follows follows; but no scandal afterwards! Do not adopt our institutions a demi, my friend. Vous ne me comprenez pas non plus, mon pauvre Jack!"

"There is one way still, I think," said the third of the speakers in this scene. "Let Lord Highgate come to Rosebury in his own name, leaving that of Mr. Harris behind him. If Sir Barnes Newcome wants you, he can seek you there. If you will go, as go you should, and God speed you, you can go, and in your own name, too."

"Parbleu, c'est ça," cries Florac, "he speaks like a book — the romancier!" I confess, for my part, I thought that a good woman might plead with him, and touch that manly not disloyal heart now trembling on the awful balance between evil and good.

"Allons! let us make to come the drague!" cries Florac. "Jack, thou returnest with us, my friend! Madame Pendennis, an angel, my friend, a quakre the most charming, shall roucoule to thee the sweetest sermons. My wife shall tend thee like a mother — a grandmother. Go make thy packet!"

Lord Highgate was very much pleased and relieved seemingly. He shook our hands, he said he should never forget our kindness, never! In truth, the didactic part of our conversation was carried on at much greater length than as here noted down: and he would come that evening, but not with us, thank you; he had a particular engagement, some letters he must write. Those done, he would not fail us, and would be at Rosebury by dinner-time.

CHAPTER LVIII

“ONE MORE UNFORTUNATE”

The Fates did not ordain that the plan should succeed which Lord Highgate's friends had devised for Lady Clara's rescue or respite. He was bent upon one more interview with the unfortunate lady; and in that meeting the future destiny of their luckless lives was decided. On the morning of his return home, Barnes Newcome had information that Lord Highgate, under a feigned name, had been staying in the neighbourhood of his house, and had repeatedly been seen in the company of Lady Clara. She may have gone out to meet him but for one hour more. She had taken no leave of her children on the day when she left her home, and, far from making preparations for her own departure, had been engaged in getting the house ready for the reception of members of the family, whose arrival her husband announced as speedily to follow his own. Ethel and Lady Anne and some of the children were coming. Lord Farintosh's mother and sisters were to follow. It was to be a reunion previous to the marriage which was closer to unite the two families. Lady Clara said Yes to her husband's orders; rose mechanically to obey his wishes and arrange for the reception of the guests; and spoke tremblingly to the housekeeper as her husband gibed at her. The little ones had been consigned to bed early and before Sir Barnes's arrival. He did not think fit to see them in their sleep; nor did their mother. She did not know, as the poor little creatures left her room in charge of their nurses, that she looked on them for the last time. Perhaps, had she gone to their bedsides that evening, had the wretched panic-stricken soul been allowed leisure to pause, and to think, and to pray, the fate of the morrow might have been otherwise, and the trembling balance of the scale have inclined to right's side. But the pause was not allowed her. Her husband came and saluted her with his accustomed greetings of scorn, and sarcasm, and brutal insult. On a future day he never dared to call a servant of his household to testify to his treatment of her; though many were ready to attend to prove his cruelty and her terror. On that very last night, Lady Clara's maid, a country girl from her father's house at Chanticleire, told Sir Barnes in the midst of a conjugal dispute that her lady might bear his conduct but she could not, and that she would no longer live under the roof of such a brute. The girl's interference was not likely to benefit her mistress much: the wretched Lady Clara passed the last night under the roof of her husband and children, unattended save by this poor domestic who was about to leave her, in tears and hysterical outcries, and then in moaning stupor. Lady Clara put to sleep with laudanum, her maid carried down the story of her wrongs to the servants' quarters; and half a dozen of them took in their resignation to Sir Barnes as he sat over his breakfast the next morning — in his ancestral hall — surrounded by the portraits of his august forefathers — in his happy home.

Their mutiny of course did not add to their master's good-humour; and his letters brought him news which increased Barnes's fury. A messenger arrived with a letter from his man of business at Newcome, upon the receipt of which he started up with such an execration as frightened the servant waiting on him, and letter in hand he ran to Lady Clara's sitting-room. Her ladyship was up. Sir Barnes breakfasted rather late on the first morning after an arrival at Newcome. He had to look over the bailiff's books, and to look about him round the park and grounds; to curse the gardeners; to damn the stable and kennel grooms; to yell at the woodman for clearing not enough or too much; to rail at the poor old workpeople brooming away the fallen leaves, etc. So Lady Clara was up and dressed when her husband went to her room, which lay at the end of the house as we have said, the last of a suite of ancestral halls.

The mutinous servant heard high voices and curses within; then Lady Clara's screams; then Sir Barnes Newcome burst out of the room, locking the door and taking the key with him, and saluting with more curses James, the mutineer, over whom his master ran.

“Curse your wife, and don't curse me, Sir Barnes Newcome!” said James, the mutineer; and knocked down a hand which the infuriated Baronet raised against him, with an arm that was twice as strong as Barnes's own. This man and maid followed their mistress in the sad journey upon which she was bent. They treated her with unalterable respect. They never could be got to see that her conduct was wrong. When Barnes's counsel subsequently tried to impugn their testimony, they dared him; and hurt the plaintiff's case very much. For the balance had weighed over; and it was Barnes himself who caused what now ensued; and what we learned in a very few hours afterwards from Newcome, where it was the talk of the whole neighbourhood.

Florac and I, as yet ignorant of all that was occurring, met Barnes near his own lodge-gate riding in the direction of

Newcome, as we were ourselves returning to Rosebury. The Prince de Moncontour, who was driving, affably saluted the Baronet, who gave us a scowling recognition, and rode on, his groom behind him. "The figure of the garcon," says Florac, as our acquaintance passed, "is not agreeable. Of pale, he has become livid. I hope these two men will not meet, or evil will come!" Evil to Barnes there might be, Florac's companion thought, who knew the previous little affairs between Barnes and his uncle and cousin; and that Lord Highgate was quite able to take care of himself.

In half an hour after Florac spoke, that meeting between Barnes and Highgate actually had taken place — in the open square of Newcome, within four doors of the King's Arms inn, close to which lives Sir Barnes Newcome's man of business; and before which, Mr. Harris, as he was called, was walking, and waiting till a carriage which he had ordered came round from the inn yard. As Sir Barnes Newcome rode into the place many people touched their hats to him, however little they loved him. He was bowing and smirking to one of these, when he suddenly saw Belsize.

He started back, causing his horse to back with him on to the pavement, and it may have been rage and fury, or accident and nervousness merely, but at this instant Barnes Newcome, looking towards Lord Highgate, shook his whip.

"You cowardly villain!" said the other, springing forward. "I was going to your house."

"How dare you, sir," cries Sir Barnes, still holding up that unlucky cane, "how dare you to — to —"

"Dare, you scoundrel!" said Belsize. "Is that the cane you strike your wife with, you ruffian!" Belsize seized and tore him out of the saddle, flinging him screaming down on the pavement. The horse, rearing and making way for himself, galloped down the clattering street; a hundred people were round Sir Barnes in a moment.

The carriage which Belsize had ordered came round at this very juncture. Amidst the crowd, shrinking, bustling, expostulating, threatening, who pressed about him, he shouldered his way. Mr. Taplow, aghast, was one of the hundred spectators of the scene.

"I am Lord Highgate," said Barnes's adversary. "If Sir Barnes Newcome wants me, tell him I will send him word where he may hear of me." And getting into the carriage, he told the driver to go "to the usual place."

Imagine the hubbub in the town, the conclaves at the inns, the talks in the counting-houses, the commotion amongst the factory people, the paragraphs in the Newcome papers, the bustle of surgeons and lawyers, after this event. Crowds gathered at the King's Arms, and waited round Mr. Speers the lawyer's house, into which Sir Barnes was carried. In vain policemen told them to move on; fresh groups gathered after the seceders. On the next day, when Barnes Newcome, who was not much hurt, had a fly to go home, a factory man shook his fist in at the carriage window, and, with a curse, said, "Serve you right, you villain." It was the man whose sweetheart this Don Juan had seduced and deserted years before; whose wrongs were well known amongst his mates, a leader in the chorus of hatred which growled round Barnes Newcome.

Barnes's mother and sister Ethel had reached Newcome shortly before the return of the master of the house. The people there were in disturbance. Lady Anne and Miss Newcome came out with pallid looks to greet him. He laughed and reassured them about his accident: indeed his hurt had been trifling; he had been bled by the surgeon, a little jarred by the fall from his horse; but there was no sort of danger. Still their pale and doubtful looks continued. What caused them? In the open day, with a servant attending her Lady Clara Newcome had left her husband's house; and a letter was forwarded to him that same evening from my Lord Highgate, informing Sir Barnes Newcome that Lady Clara Pulleyn could bear his tyranny no longer, and had left his roof; that Lord Highgate proposed to leave England almost immediately, but would remain long enough to afford Sir Barnes Newcome the opportunity for an interview, in case he should be disposed to demand one: and a friend (of Lord Highgate's late regiment) was named who would receive letters and act in any way necessary for his lordship.

The debates of the House of Lords must tell what followed afterwards in the dreary history of Lady Clara Pulleyn. The proceedings in the Newcome Divorce Bill filled the usual number of columns in the papers — especially the Sunday papers. The witnesses were examined by learned peers whose business — nay, pleasure — it seems to be to enter into such matters; and, for the ends of justice and morality, doubtless, the whole story of Barnes Newcome's household was told to the British public. In the previous trial in the Court of Queen's Bench, how grandly Serjeant Rowland stood up for the rights of British husbands! with what pathos he depicted the conjugal paradise, the innocent children prattling round their happy parents, the serpent, the destroyer, entering into that Belgravian Eden; the wretched and deserted husband alone by his desecrated hearth, and calling for redress on his country! Rowland wept freely during his noble harangue. At not a shilling under

twenty thousand pounds would he estimate the cost of his client's injuries. The jury was very much affected: the evening papers gave Rowland's address in extenso, with some pretty sharp raps at the aristocracy in general. The Day, the principal morning journal of that period, came out with a leading article the next morning, in which every party concerned and every institution was knocked about. The disgrace of the peerage, the ruin of the monarchy (with a retrospective view of the well-known case of Gyges and Candaules), the monstrosity of the crime, and the absurdity of the tribunal and the punishment, were all set forth in the terrible leading article of the Day.

But when, on the next day, Serjeant Rowland was requested to call witnesses to prove that connubial happiness which he had depicted so pathetically, he had none at hand.

Oliver, Q.C., now had his innings. A man, a husband, and a father, Mr. Oliver could not attempt to defend the conduct of his unfortunate client; but if there could be any excuse for such conduct, that excuse he was free to confess the plaintiff had afforded, whose cruelty and neglect twenty witnesses in court were ready to prove — neglect so outrageous, cruelty so systematic, that he wondered the plaintiff had not been better advised than to bring this trial, with all its degrading particulars, to a public issue. On the very day when the ill-omened marriage took place, another victim of cruelty had interposed as vainly — as vainly as Serjeant Rowland himself interposed in Court to prevent this case being made known — and with piteous outcries, in the name of outraged neglected woman, of castaway children pleading in vain for bread, had besought the bride to pause, and the bridegroom to look upon the wretched beings who owed him life. Why had not Lady Clara Pulleyn's friends listened to that appeal? And so on, and so on, between Rowland and Oliver the battle waged fiercely that day. Many witnesses were mauled and slain. Out of that combat scarce anybody came well, except the two principal champions, Rowland, Serjeant, and Oliver, Q.C. The whole country looked on and heard the wretched story, not only of Barnes's fault and Highgate's fault, but of the private peccadilloes of their suborned footmen and conspiring housemaids. Mr. Justice C. Sawyer charged the jury at great length — those men were respectable men and fathers of families themselves — of course they dealt full measure to Lord Highgate for his delinquencies; consoled the injured husband with immense damages, and left him free to pursue the further steps for releasing himself altogether from the tie which had been bound with affecting episcopal benediction at St. George's, Hanover Square.

So Lady Clara flies from the custody of her tyrant, but to what a rescue! The very man who loves her, and gives her asylum, pities and deplores her. She scarce dares to look out of the windows of her new home upon the world, lest it should know and reproach her. All the sisterhood of friendship is cut off from her. If she dares to go abroad she feels the sneer of the world as she goes through it; and knows that malice and scorn whisper behind her. People, as criminal but undiscovered, make room for her, as if her touch were pollution. She knows she has darkened the lot and made wretched the home of the man whom she loves best; that his friends who see her, treat her with but a doubtful respect; and the domestics who attend her, with a suspicious obedience. In the country lanes, or the streets of the county town, neighbours look aside as the carriage passes in which she sits splendid and lonely. Rough hunting companions of her husband's come to her table: he is driven perforce to the company of flatterers and men of inferior sort; his equals, at least in his own home, will not live with him. She would be kind, perhaps, and charitable to the cottagers round about her, but she fears to visit them lest they too should scorn her. The clergyman who distributes her charities, blushes and looks awkward on passing her in the village, if he should be walking with his wife or one of his children. Shall they go to the Continent, and set up a grand house at Paris or at Florence? There they can get society, but of what a sort! Our acquaintances of Baden — Madame Schlangenbad, and Madame de Cruchecassee, and Madame d'Ivry, and Messrs. Loder, and Punter, and Blackball, and Deuceace, will come, and dance, and flirt, and quarrel, and gamble, and feast round about her; but what in common with such wild people has this poor, timid, shrinking soul? Even these scorn her. The leers and laughter on those painted faces are quite unlike her own sad countenance. She has no reply to their wit. Their infernal gaiety scares her more than the solitude at home. No wonder that her husband does not like home, except for a short while in the hunting season. No wonder that he is away all day; how can he like a home which she has made so wretched? In the midst of her sorrow, and doubt, and misery, a child comes to her: how she clings to it! how her whole being, and hope, and passion centres itself on this feeble infant! — but she no more belongs to our story; with the new name she has taken, the poor lady passes out of the history of the Newcomes.

If Barnes Newcome's children meet yonder solitary lady, do they know her? If her once-husband thinks upon the unhappy young creature whom his cruelty drove from him, does his conscience affect his sleep at night? Why should Sir Barnes Newcome's conscience be more squeamish than his country's, which has put money in his pocket for having

trampled on the poor weak young thing, and scorned her, and driven her to ruin? When the whole of the accounts of that wretched bankruptcy are brought up for final Audit, which of the unhappy partners shall be shown to be most guilty? Does the Right Reverend Prelate who did the benedictory business for Barnes and Clara his wife repent in secret? Do the parents who pressed the marriage, and the fine folks who signed the book, and ate the breakfast, and applauded the bridegroom's speech, feel a little ashamed? O Hymen Hymenaeae! The bishops, beadles, clergy, pew-openers, and other officers of the temple dedicated to Heaven under the invocation of St. George, will officiate in the same place at scores and scores more of such marriages: and St. George of England may behold virgin after virgin offered up to the devouring monster, Mammon (with many most respectable female dragons looking on)— may see virgin after virgin given away, just as in the Soldan of Babylon's time, but with never a champion to come to the rescue!



CHAPTER LIX

IN WHICH ACHILLES LOSES BRISEIS

Although the years of the Marquis of Farintosh were few, he had spent most of them in the habit of command; and, from his childhood upwards, had been obeyed by all persons round about him. As an infant he had but to roar, and his mother and nurses were as much frightened as though he had been a Libyan lion. What he willed and ordered was law amongst his clan and family. During the period of his London and Parisian dissipations his poor mother did not venture to remonstrate with her young prodigal, but shut her eyes, not daring to open them on his wild courses. As for the friends of his person and house, many of whom were portly elderly gentlemen, their affection for the young Marquis was so extreme that there was no company into which their fidelity would not lead them to follow him; and you might see him dancing at Mabilie with veteran aides-de-camp looking on, or disporting with opera-dancers at a Trois Freres banquet, which some old gentleman of his father's age had taken the pains to order. If his lordship Count Almaviva wants a friend to carry the lanthorn or to hold the ladder; do you suppose there are not many most respectable men in society who will act Figaro? When Farintosh thought fit, in the fulness of time and the blooming pride of manhood, to select a spouse, and to elevate a marchioness to his throne, no one dared gainsay him. When he called upon his mother and sisters, and their ladyships' hangers-on and attendants; upon his own particular kinsmen, led captains, and toadies; to bow the knee and do homage to the woman whom he delighted to honour, those duteous subjects trembled and obeyed; in fact, he thought that the position of a Marchioness of Farintosh was under heaven, and before men, so splendid, that, had he elevated a beggar-maid to that sublime rank, the inferior world was bound to worship her.

So my lord's lady-mother, and my lord's sisters, and his captains, and his players of billiards, and the toadies of his august person, all performed obeisance to his bride-elect, and never questioned the will of the young chieftain. What were the private comments of the ladies of the family we had no means of knowing; but it may naturally be supposed that his lordship's gentlemen-inwaiting, Captain Henchman, Jack Todhunter, and the rest, had many misgivings of their own respecting their patrons change in life, and could not view without anxiety the advent of a mistress who might reign over him and them, who might possibly not like their company, and might exert her influence over her husband to oust these honest fellows from places in which they were very comfortable. The jovial rogues had the run of my lord's kitchen, stables, cellars, and cigar-boxes. A new marchioness might hate hunting, smoking, jolly parties, and toad-eaters in general, or might bring into the house favourites of her own. I am sure any kind-hearted man of the world must feel for the position of these faithful, doubtful, disconsolate vassals, and have a sympathy for their rueful looks and demeanour as they eye the splendid preparations for the ensuing marriage, the grand furniture sent to my lord's castles and houses, the magnificent plate provided for his tables — tables at which they may never have a knife and fork; castles and houses of which the poor rogues may never be allowed to pass the doors.

When, then, "the elopement in High Life," which has been described in the previous pages, burst upon the town in the morning papers, I can fancy the agitation which the news occasioned in the faithful bosoms of the generous Todhunter, and the attached Henchman. My lord was not in his own house as yet. He and his friends still lingered on in the little house in Mayfair, the dear little bachelor's quarters, where they had enjoyed such good dinners, such good suppers, such rare doings, such a jolly time. I fancy Hench coming down to breakfast, and reading the Morning Post. I imagine Tod dropping in from his bedroom over the way, and Hench handing the paper over to Tod, and the conversation which ensued between those worthy men. Elopement in high life — excitement in N— come, and flight of Lady Cl — N— come, daughter of the late and sister of the present Earl of D-rking, with Lord H— gate; personal rencontre between Lord H— gate and Sir B— nes N— come. Extraordinary disclosures. I say, I can fancy Hench and Tod over this awful piece of news.

"Pretty news, ain't it, Toddy?" says Henchman, looking up from a Perigord-pie, which the faithful creature is discussing.

"Always expected it," remarks the other. "Anybody who saw them together last season must have known it. The Chief himself spoke of it to me."

"It'll cut him up awfully when he reads it. Is it in the Morning Post? He has the Post in his bedroom. I know he has rung his bell: I heard it. Bowman, has his lordship read his paper yet?"

Bowman, the, valet, said, "I believe you, he have read his paper. When he read it, he jumped out of bed and swore most awful. I cut as soon as I could," continued Mr. Bowman, who was on familiar — nay contemptuous terms with the other two gentlemen.

"Enough to make any man swear," says Toddy to Henchman; and both were alarmed in their noble souls, reflecting that their chieftain was now actually getting up and dressing himself; that he would speedily, and in course of nature, come downstairs; and, then, most probably, would begin swearing at them.

The most noble Mungo Malcolm Angus was in an awful state of mind when, at length, he appeared in the breakfast-room. "Why the dash do you make a taproom of this?" he cries. The trembling Henchman, who has begun to smoke — as he has done a hundred times before in this bachelor's hall — flings his cigar into the fire.

"There you go — nothing like it! Why don't you fling some more in? You can get 'em at Hudson's for five guineas a pound." bursts out the youthful peer.

"I understand why you are out of sorts, old boy," says Henchman, stretching out his manly hand. A tear of compassion twinkled in his eyelid, and coursed down his mottled cheek. "Cut away at old Frank, Farintosh — a fellow who has been attached to you since before you could speak. It's not when a fellow's down and cut up, and riled — naturally riled — as you are — I know you are, Marquis; it's not then that I'm going to be angry with you. Pitch into old Frank Henchman — hit away, my young one." And Frank put himself into an attitude as of one prepared to receive a pugilistic assault. He bared his breast, as it were, and showed his scars, and said, "Strike!" Frank Henchman was a florid toady. My uncle, Major Pendennis, has often laughed with me about the fellow's pompous flatteries and ebullient fidelity.

"You have read this confounded paragraph?" says the Marquis. "We have read it: and were deucedly cut up, too," says Henchman, "for your sake, my dear boy."

"I remembered what you said, last year, Marquis," cries Todhunter (not unadroitly). "You, yourself, pointed out, in this very room, I recollect, at this very table — that night Coralie and the little Spanish dancer and her mother supped here, and there was a talk about Highgate — you, yourself, pointed out what was likely to happen. I doubted it; for I have dined at the Newcomes', and seen Highgate and her together in society often. But though you are a younger bird, you have better eyes than I have — and you saw the thing at once — at once, don't you remember I and Coralie said how glad she was, because Sir Barnes ill-treated her friend. What was the name of Coralie's friend, Hench?"

"How should I know her confounded name?" Henchman briskly answers. "What do I care for Sir Barnes Newcome and his private affairs? He is no friend of mine. I never said he was a friend of mine. I never said I liked him. Out of respect for the Chief here, I held my tongue about him, and shall hold my tongue. Have some of this pate, Chief! No? Poor old boy! I know you haven't got an appetite. I know this news cuts you up. I say nothing, and make no pretence of condolence; though I feel for you — and you know you can count on old Frank Henchman — don't you, Malcolm?" And again he turns away to conceal his gallant sensibility and generous emotion.

"What does it matter to me?" bursts out the Marquis, garnishing his conversation with the usual expletives which adorned his eloquence when he was strongly moved. "What do I care for Barnes Newcome, and his confounded affairs and family? I never want to see him again, but in the light of a banker, when I go to the City, where he keeps my account. I say, I have nothing to do with him, or all the Newcomes under the sun. Why, one of them is a painter, and will paint my dog, Ratcatcher, by Jove! or my horse, or my groom, if I give him the order. Do you think I care for any one of the pack? It's not the fault of the Marchioness of Farintosh that her family is not equal to mine. Besides two others in England and Scotland, I should like to know what family is? I tell you what, Hench. I bet you five to two, that before an hour is over my mother will be here, and down on her knees to me, begging me to break off this engagement."

"And what will you do, Farintosh?" asks Henchman, slowly, "Will you break it off?"

"No!" shouts the Marquis. "Why shall I break off with the finest girl in England — and the best-plucked one, and the cleverest and wittiest, and the most beautiful creature, by Jove, that ever stepped, for no fault of hers, and because her sister-in-law leaves her brother, who I know treated her infernally? We have talked this matter over at home before. I wouldn't dine with the fellow; though he was always asking me; nor meet, except just out of civility, any of his confounded family. Lady Anne is different. She is a lady, she is. She is a good woman: and Kew is a most respectable man, though he is only a peer of George III.'s creation, and you should hear how he speaks of Miss Newcome, though she refused him. I should like to know who is to prevent me marrying Lady Anne Newcome's daughter?"

“By Jove, you are a good-plucked fellow, Farintosh — give me your hand, old boy,” says HENCHMAN.

“Heh! am I? You would have said, give me your hand, old boy, whichever way I determined, HENCH! I tell you, I ain’t intellectual, and that sort of thing. But I know my rank, and I know my place; and when a man of my station gives his word, he sticks to it, sir; and my lady, and my sisters, may go on their knees all round; and, by Jove, I won’t flinch.”

The justice of Lord Farintosh’s views was speedily proved by the appearance of his lordship’s mother, Lady Glenlivat, whose arrival put a stop to a conversation which Captain Francis HENCHMAN has often subsequently narrated. She besought to see her son in terms so urgent, that the young nobleman could not be denied to his parent; and, no doubt, a long and interesting interview took place, in which Lord Farintosh’s mother passionately implored him to break off a match upon which he was as resolutely bent.

Was it a sense of honour, a longing desire to possess this young beauty, and call her his own, or a fierce and profound dislike to being balked in any object of his wishes, which actuated the young lord? Certainly he had borne, very philosophically, delay after delay which had taken place in the devised union; and being quite sure of his mistress, had not cared to press on the marriage, but lingered over the dregs of his bachelor cup complacently still. We all know in what an affecting farewell he took leave of the associates of his *vie de garçon*: the speeches made (in both languages), the presents distributed, the tears and hysterics of some of the guests assembled; the cigar-boxes given over to this friend, the *ecrin* of diamonds to that, *et caetera, et caetera, et caetera*. Don’t we know? If we don’t it is not HENCHMAN’s fault, who has told the story of Farintosh’s betrothals a thousand and one times at his clubs, at the houses where he is asked to dine, on account of his intimacy with the nobility, among the young men of fashion, or no fashion, whom this two-bottle Mentor, and burly admirer of youth, has since taken upon himself to form. The farewell at Greenwich was so affecting that all “traversed the cart,” and took another farewell at Richmond, where there was crying too, but it was Eucharis cried because fair Calypso wanted to tear her eyes out; and where not only Telemachus (as was natural to his age), but Mentor likewise, quaffed the wine-cup too freely. You are virtuous, O reader! but there are still cakes and ale, Ask HENCHMAN if there be not. You will find him in the Park any afternoon; he will dine with you if no better man ask him in the interval. He will tell you story upon story regarding young Lord Farintosh, and his marriage, and what happened before his marriage, and afterwards; and he will sigh, weep almost at some moments, as he narrates their subsequent quarrel, and Farintosh’s unworthy conduct, and tells you how he formed that young man. My uncle and Captain HENCHMAN disliked each other very much, I am sorry to say — sorry to add that it was very amusing to hear either one of them speak of the other.

Lady Glenlivat, according to the Captain, then, had no success in the interview with her son; who, unmoved by the maternal tears, commands, and entreaties, swore he would marry Miss Newcome, and that no power on earth should prevent him. “As if trying to thwart that man could ever prevent his having his way!” ejaculated his quondam friend.

But on the next day, after ten thousand men in clubs and coteries had talked the news over; after the evening had repeated and improved the delightful theme of our “morning contemporaries;” after Calypso and Eucharis driving together in the Park, and reconciled now, had kissed their hands to Lord Farintosh, and made him their compliments — after a night of natural doubt, disturbance, defiance, fury — as men whispered to each other at the club where his lordship dined, and at the theatre where he took his recreation — after an awful time at breakfast in which Messrs. Bowman, valet, and Todhunter and HENCHMAN, captains of the Farintosh bodyguard, all got their share of kicks and growling — behold Lady Glenlivat came back to the charge again; and this time with such force that poor Lord Farintosh was shaken indeed.

Her ladyship’s ally was no other than Miss Newcome herself; from whom Lord Farintosh’s mother received, by that day’s post, a letter, which she was commissioned to read to her son.

“Dear Madam” (wrote the young lady in her firmest handwriting)—“Mamma is at this moment in a state of such grief and dismay at the cruel misfortune and humiliation which has just befallen our family, that she is really not able to write to you as she ought, and this task, painful as it is, must be mine. Dear Lady Glenlivat, the kindness and confidence which I have ever received from you and yours, merit truth, and most grateful respect and regard from me. And I feel after the late fatal occurrence, what I have often and often owned to myself though I did not dare to acknowledge it, that I ought to release Lord F., at once and for ever, from an engagement which he could never think of maintaining with a family so unfortunate as ours. I thank him with all my heart for his goodness in bearing with my humours so long; if I have given him pain, as I know I have sometimes, I beg his pardon, and would do so on my knees. I hope and pray he may be happy, as I feared he never could be with me. He has many good and noble qualities; and, in bidding him farewell, I trust I may retain his friendship, and that he will believe in the esteem and gratitude of your most sincere, Ethel Newcome.”

A copy of this farewell letter was seen by a lady who happened to be a neighbour of Miss Newcome's when the family misfortune occurred, and to whom, in her natural dismay and grief, the young lady fled for comfort and consolation. "Dearest Mrs. Pendennis," wrote Miss Ethel to my wife, "I hear you are at Rosebury; do, do come to your affectionate E. N." The next day, it was — "Dearest Laura — If you can, pray, pray come to Newcome this morning. I want very much to speak to you about the poor children, to consult you about something most important." Madame de Moncontour's pony-carriage was constantly trotting between Rosebury and Newcome in these days of calamity.

And my wife, as in duty bound, gave me full reports of all that happened in that house of mourning. On the very day of the flight, Lady Anne, her daughter, and some others of her family arrived at Newcome. The deserted little girl, Barnes's eldest child, ran, with tears and cries of joy, to her Aunt Ethel, whom she had always loved better than her mother; and clung to her and embraced her; and, in her artless little words, told her that mamma had gone away, and that Ethel should be her mamma now. Very strongly moved by the misfortune, as by the caresses and affection of the poor orphaned creature, Ethel took the little girl to her heart, and promised to be a mother to her, and that she would not leave her; in which pious resolve I scarcely need say Laura strengthened her, when, at her young friend's urgent summons, my wife came to her.

The household at Newcome was in a state of disorganisation after the catastrophe. Two of Lady Clara's servants; it has been stated already, went away with her. The luckless master of the house was lying wounded in the neighbouring town. Lady Anne Newcome, his mother, was terribly agitated by the news, which was abruptly broken to her, of the flight of her daughter-in-law and her son's danger. Now she thought of flying to Newcome to nurse him; and then feared lest she should be ill received by the invalid — indeed, ordered by Sir Barnes to go home, and not to bother him. So at home Lady Anne remained, where the thoughts of the sufferings she had already undergone in that house, of Sir Barnes's cruel behaviour to her at her last visit, which he had abruptly requested her to shorten, of the happy days which she had passed as mistress of that house and wife of the defunct Sir Brian; the sight of that departed angel's picture in the dining-room and wheel-chair in the gallery; the recollection of little Barnes as a cherub of a child in that very gallery, and pulled out of the fire by a nurse in the second year of his age, when he was all that a fond mother could wish — these incidents and reminiscences so agitated Lady Anne Newcome, that she, for her part, went off in a series of hysterical fits, and acted as one distraught: her second daughter screamed in sympathy with her and Miss Newcome had to take the command of the whole of this demented household, hysterical mamma and sister, mutineering servants, and shrieking abandoned nursery, and bring young people and old to peace and quiet.

On the morrow after his little concussion Sir Barnes Newcome came home, not much hurt in body, but woefully afflicted in temper, and venting his wrath upon everybody round about him in that strong language which he employed when displeased; and under which his valet, his housekeeper, his butler, his farm-bailiff, his lawyer, his doctor, his dishevelled mother herself — who rose from her couch and her sal-volatile to fling herself round her dear boy's knees — all had to suffer. Ethel Newcome, the Baronet's sister, was the only person in his house to whom Sir Barnes did not utter oaths or proffer rude speeches. He was afraid of offending her or encountering that resolute spirit, and lapsed into a surly silence in her presence. Indistinct maledictions growled about Sir Barnes's chair when he beheld my wife's pony-carriage drive up; and he asked what brought her here? But Ethel sternly told her brother that Mrs. Pendennis came at her particular request, and asked him whether he supposed anybody could come into that house for pleasure now, or for any other motive but kindness? Upon which, Sir Barnes fairly burst out into tears, intermingled with execrations against his enemies and his own fate, and assertions that he was the most miserable beggar alive. He would not see his children: but with more tears he would implore Ethel never to leave them, and, anon, would ask what he should do when she married, and he was left alone in that infernal house?

T. Potts, Esq., of the Newcome Independent, used to say afterwards that the Baronet was in the direst terror of another meeting with Lord Highgate, and kept a policeman at the lodge-gate, and a second in the kitchen, to interpose in event of a collision. But Mr. Potts made this statement in after days, when the quarrel between his party and paper and Sir Barnes Newcome was flagrant. Five or six days after the meeting of the two rivals in Newcome market-place, Sir Barnes received a letter from the friend of Lord Highgate, informing him that his lordship, having waited for him according to promise, had now left England, and presumed that the differences between them were to be settled by their respective lawyers — infamous behaviour on a par with the rest of Lord Highgate's villainy, the Baronet said. "When the scoundrel knew I could lift my pistol arm," Barnes said, "Lord Highgate fled the country;" — thus hinting that death, and not damages, were what

he intended to seek from his enemy.

After that interview in which Ethel communicated to Laura her farewell letter to Lord Farintosh, my wife returned to Rosebury with an extraordinary brightness and gaiety in her face and her demeanour. She pressed Madame de Moncontour's hands with such warmth, she blushed and looked so handsome, she sang and talked so gaily, that our host was struck by her behaviour, and paid her husband more compliments regarding her beauty, amiability, and other good qualities, than need be set down here. It may be that I like Paul de Florac so much, in spite of certain undeniable faults of character, because of his admiration for my wife. She was in such a hurry to talk to me, that night, that Paul's game and Nicotian amusements were cut short by her visit to the billiard-room; and when we were alone by the cosy dressing-room fire, she told me what had happened during the day. Why should Ethel's refusal of Lord Farintosh have so much elated my wife?

"Ah!" cries Mrs. Pendennis, "she has a generous nature, and the world has not had time to spoil it. Do you know there are many points that she never has thought of — I would say problems that she has to work out for herself, only you, Pen, do not like us poor ignorant women to use such a learned word as problems? Life and experience force things upon her mind which others learn from their parents or those who educate them, but, for which she has never had any teachers. Nobody has ever told her, Arthur, that it was wrong to marry without love, or pronounce lightly those awful vows which we utter before God at the altar. I believe, if she knew that her life was futile, it is but of late she has thought it could be otherwise, and that she might mend it. I have read (besides that poem of Goethe of which you are so fond) in books of Indian travels of Bayaderes, dancing-girls brought up by troops round about the temples, whose calling is to dance, and wear jewels, and look beautiful; I believe they are quite respected in-in Pagoda-land. They perform before the priests in the pagodas; and the Brahmins and the Indian princes marry them. Can we cry out against these poor creatures, or against the custom of their country? It seems to me that young women in our world are bred up in a way not very different. What they do they scarcely know to be wrong. They are educated for the world, and taught to display: their mothers will give them to the richest suitor, as they themselves were given before. How can these think seriously, Arthur, of souls to be saved, weak hearts to be kept out of temptation, prayers to be uttered, and a better world to be held always in view, when the vanities of this one are all their thought and scheme? Ethel's simple talk made me smile sometimes, do you know, and her strenuous way of imparting her discoveries. I thought of the shepherd boy who made a watch, and found on taking it into the town how very many watches there were, and how much better than his. But the poor child has had to make hers for herself, such as it is; and, indeed, is employed now in working on it. She told me very artlessly her little history, Arthur; it affected me to hear her simple talk, and — and I blessed God for our mother, my dear, and that my early days had had a better guide.

"You know that for a long time it was settled that she was to marry her cousin, Lord Kew. She was bred to that notion from her earliest youth; about which she spoke as we all can about our early days. They were spent, she said, in the nursery and schoolroom for the most part. She was allowed to come to her mother's dressing-room, and sometimes to see more of her during the winter at Newcome. She describes her mother as always the kindest of the kind: but from very early times the daughter must have felt her own superiority, I think, though she does not speak of it. You should see her at home now in their dreadful calamity. She seems the only person of the house who keeps her head.

"She told very nicely and modestly how it was Lord Kew who parted from her, not she who had dismissed him, as you know the Newcomes used to say. I have heard that — oh — that man Sir Barnes say so myself. She says humbly that her cousin Kew was a great deal too good for her; and so is every one almost, she adds, poor thing!"

"Poor every one! Did you ask about him, Laura?" said Mr. Pendennis.

"No; I did not venture. She looked at me out of her downright eyes, and went on with her little tale. 'I was scarcely more than a child then,' she continued, 'and though I liked Kew very much — who would not like such a generous honest creature? I felt somehow that I was taller than my cousin, and as if I ought not to marry him, or should make him unhappy if I did. When poor papa used to talk, we children remarked that mamma hardly listened to him; and so we did not respect him as we should, and Barnes was especially scoffing and odious with him. Why, when he was a boy, he used to sneer at papa openly before us younger ones. Now Harriet admires everything that Kew says, and that makes her a great deal happier at being with him.' And then," added Mrs. Pendennis, "Ethel said, 'I hope you respect your husband, Laura: depend on it, you will be happier if you do.' Was not that a fine discovery of Ethel's, Mr. Pen?"

"Clara's terror of Barnes frightened me when I stayed in the house," Ethel went on. "I am sure I would not tremble

before any man in the world as she did. I saw early that she used to deceive him, and tell him lies, Laura. I do not mean lies of words alone, but lies of looks and actions. Oh! I do not wonder at her flying from him. He was dreadful to be with: cruel, and selfish, and cold. He was made worse by marrying a woman he did not love; as she was, by that unfortunate union with him. Suppose he had found a clever woman who could have controlled him, and amused him, and whom he and his friends could have admired, instead of poor Clara, who made his home wearisome, and trembled when he entered it? Suppose she could have married that unhappy man to whom she was attached early? I was frightened, Laura, to think how ill this worldly marriage had prospered.

“My poor grandmother, whenever I spoke upon such a subject, would break out into a thousand gibes and sarcasms, and point to many of our friends who had made love-matches, and were quarrelling now as fiercely as though they had never loved each other. You remember that dreadful case in France Duc de — — who murdered his duchess? That was a love-match, and I can remember the sort of screech with which Lady Kew used to speak about it; and of the journal which the poor duchess kept, and in which she noted down all her husband’s ill-behaviour.”

“Hush, Laura! Do you remember where we are? If the Princess were to put down all Florac’s culpabilities in an album, what a ledger it would be — as big as Dr. Portman’s Chrysostom!” But this was parenthetical: and after a smile, and a little respite, the young woman proceeded in her narration of her friend’s history.

“I was willing enough to listen,’ Ethel said, ‘to grandmamma then: for we are glad of an excuse to do what we like; and I liked admiration, and rank, and great wealth, Laura; and Lord Farintosh offered me these. I liked to surpass my companions, and I saw them so eager in pursuing him! You cannot think, Laura, what meannesses women in the world will commit — mothers and daughters too, in the pursuit of a person of his great rank. Those Miss Burrs, you should have seen them at the country-houses where we visited together, and how they followed him; how they would meet him in the parks and shrubberies; how they liked smoking though I knew it made them ill; how they were always finding pretexts for getting near him! Oh, it was odious!”

I would not willingly interrupt the narrative, but let the reporter be allowed here to state that at this point of Miss Newcome’s story (which my wife gave with a very pretty imitation of the girl’s manner), we both burst out laughing so loud that little Madame de Moncontour put her head into the drawing-room and asked what we was a-laughing at? We did not tell our hostess that poor Ethel and her grandmother had been accused of doing the very same thing for which she found fault with the Misses Burr. Miss Newcome thought herself quite innocent, or how should she have cried out at the naughty behaviour of other people?

“Wherever we went, however,’ resumed my wife’s young penitent, ‘it was easy to see, I think I may say so without vanity, who was the object of Lord Farintosh’s attention. He followed us everywhere; and we could not go upon any visit in England or Scotland but he was in the same house. Grandmamma’s whole heart was bent upon that marriage, and when he proposed for me I do not disown that I was very pleased and vain.

“It is in these last months that I have heard about him more, and learned to know him better — him and myself too, Laura. Some one — some one you know, and whom I shall always love as a brother — reproached me in former days for a worldliness about which you talk too sometimes. But it is not worldly to give yourself up for your family, is it? One cannot help the rank in which one is born, and surely it is but natural and proper to marry in it. Not that Lord Farintosh thinks me or any one of his rank.’ (Here Miss Ethel laughed.) ‘He is the Sultan, and we, every unmarried girl in society, is his humblest slave. His Majesty’s opinions upon this subject did not suit me, I can assure you: I have no notion of such pride!

“But I do not disguise from you, dear Laura, that after accepting him, as I came to know him better, and heard him, and heard of him, and talked with him daily, and understood Lord Farintosh’s character, I looked forward with more and more doubt to the day when I was to become his wife. I have not learned to respect him in these months that I have known him, and during which there has been mourning in our families. I will not talk to you about him; I have no right, have I? — to hear him speak out his heart, and tell it to any friend. He said he liked me because I did not flatter him. Poor Malcolm! they all do. What was my acceptance of him, Laura, but flattery? Yes, flattery, and servility to rank, and a desire to possess it. Would I have accepted plain Malcolm Roy? I sent away a better than him, Laura.

“These things have been brooding in my mind for some months past. I must have been but an ill companion for him, and indeed he bore with my waywardness much more kindly than I ever thought possible; and when four days since we came to this sad house, where he was to have joined us, and I found only dismay and wretchedness, and these poor

children deprived of a mother, whom I pity, God help her, for she has been made so miserable — and is now and must be to the end of her days; as I lay awake, thinking of my own future life, and that I was going to marry, as poor Clara had married, but for an establishment and a position in life; I, my own mistress, and not obedient by nature, or a slave to others as that poor creature was — I thought to myself, why shall I do this? Now Clara has left us, and is, as it were, dead to us who made her so unhappy, let me be the mother to her orphans. I love the little girl, and she has always loved me, and came crying to me that day when we arrived, and put her dear little arms round my neck, and said, ‘You won’t go away, will you, Aunt Ethel?’ in her sweet voice. And I will stay with her; and will try and learn myself that I may teach her; and learn to be good too — better than I have been. Will praying help me, Laura? I did. I am sure I was right, and that it is my duty to stay here.”

Laura was greatly moved as she told her friend’s confession; and when the next day at church the clergyman read the opening words of the service I thought a peculiar radiance and happiness beamed from her bright face.

* * * * *

Some subsequent occurrences in the history of this branch of the Newcome family I am enabled to report from the testimony of the same informant who has just given us an account of her own feelings and life. Miss Ethel and my wife were now in daily communication, and “my-dearesting” each other with that female fervour, which, cold men of the world as we are — not only chary of warm expressions of friendship, but averse to entertaining warm feelings at all — we surely must admire in persons of the inferior sex, whose loves grow up and reach the skies in a night; who kiss, embrace, console, call each other by Christian names, in that sweet, kindly sisterhood of Misfortune and Compassion who are always entering into partnership here in life. I say the world is full of Miss Nightingales; and we, sick and wounded in our private Scutaris, have countless nurse-tenders. I did not see my wife ministering to the afflicted family at Newcome Park; but I can fancy her there amongst the women and children, her prudent counsel, her thousand gentle offices, her apt pity and cheerfulness, the love and truth glowing in her face, and inspiring her words, movements, demeanour.

Mrs. Pendennis’s husband for his part did not attempt to console Sir Barnes Newcome Newcome, Baronet. I never professed to have a halfpennyworth of pity at that gentleman’s command. Florac, who owed Barnes his principality and his present comforts in life, did make some futile efforts at condolence, but was received by the Baronet with such fierceness, and evident ill-humour, that he did not care to repeat his visits, and allowed him to vent his curses and peevishness on his own immediate dependents. We used to ask Laura on her return to Rosebury from her charity visits to Newcome about the poor suffering master of the house. She faltered and stammered in describing him and what she heard of him; she smiled, I grieve to say, for this unfortunate lady cannot help having a sense of humour; and we could not help laughing outright sometimes at the idea of that discomfited wretch, that overbearing creature overborne in his turn — which laughter Mrs. Laura used to chide as very naughty and unfeeling. When we went into Newcome the landlord of the King’s Arms looked knowing and quizzical: Tom Potts grinned at me and rubbed his hands. “This business serves the paper better than Mr. Warrington’s articles,” says Mr. Potts. “We have sold no end of Independents; and if you polled the whole borough, I bet that five to one would say Sir Screwcome Screwcome was served right. By the way, what’s up about the Marquis of Farintosh, Mr. Pendennis? He arrived at the Arms last night; went over to the Park this morning, and is gone back to town by the afternoon train.”

What had happened between the Marquis of Farintosh and Miss Newcome I am enabled to know from the report of Miss Newcome’s confidante. On the receipt of that letter of conge which has been mentioned in a former chapter, his lordship must have been very much excited, for he left town straightway by that evening’s mail, and on the next morning, after a few hours of rest at his inn, was at Newcome lodge-gate demanding to see the Baronet.

On that morning it chanced that Sir Barnes had left home with Mr Speer, his legal adviser; and hereupon the Marquis asked to see Miss Newcome; nor could the lodge-keeper venture to exclude so distinguished a person from the Park. His lordship drove up to the house, and his name was taken to Miss Ethel. She turned very pale when she heard it; and my wife divined at once who was her visitor. Lady Anne had not left her room as yet. Laura Pendennis remained in command of the little conclave of children, with whom the two ladies were sitting when Lord Farintosh arrived. Little Clara wanted to go with her aunt as she rose to leave the room — the child could scarcely be got to part from her now.

At the end of an hour the carriage was seen driving away, and Ethel returned looking as pale as before, and red about

the eyes. Miss Clara's mutton-chop for dinner coming in at the same time, the child was not so presently eager for her aunt's company. Aunt Ethel cut up the mutton-chop very neatly, and then, having seen the child comfortably seated at her meal, went with her friend into a neighbouring apartment (of course, with some pretext of showing Laura a picture, or a piece of china, or a new child's frock, or with some other hypocritical pretence by which the ingenuous female attendants pretended to be utterly blinded), and there, I have no doubt, before beginning her story, dearest Laura embraced dearest Ethel, and vice versa.

"He is gone!" at length gasps dearest Ethel.

"Pour toujours? poor young man!" sighs dearest Laura. "Was he very unhappy, Ethel?"

"He was more angry," Ethel answers. "He had a right to be hurt, but not to speak as he did. He lost his temper quite at last, and broke out in the most frantic reproaches. He forgot all respect and even gentlemanlike behaviour. Do you know he used words — words such as Barnes uses sometimes when he is angry! and dared this language to me! I was sorry till then, very sorry, and very much moved; but I know more than ever, now, that I was right in refusing Lord Farintosh."

Dearest Laura now pressed for an account of all that had happened, which may be briefly told as follows. Feeling very deeply upon the subject which brought him to Miss Newcome, it was no wonder that Lord Farintosh spoke at first in a way which moved her. He said he thought her letter to his mother was very rightly written under the circumstances, and thanked her for her generosity in offering to release him from his engagement. But the affair — the painful circumstance of Highgate, and that — which had happened in the Newcome family, was no fault of Miss Newcome's, and Lord Farintosh could not think of holding her accountable. His friends had long urged him to marry, and it was by his mother's own wish that the engagement was formed, which he was determined to maintain. In his course through the world (of which he was getting very tired), he had never seen a woman, a lady who was so — you understand, Ethel — whom he admired so much, who was likely to make so good a wife for him as you are. "You allude," he continued, "to differences we have had — and we have had them — but many of them, I own, have been from my fault. I have been bred up in a way different to most young men. I cannot help it if I have had temptations to which other men are not exposed; and have been placed by — by Providence — in a high rank of life; I am sure if you share it with me you will adorn it, and be in every way worthy of it, and make me much better than I have been. If you knew what a night of agony I passed after my mother read that letter to me — I know you'd pity me, Ethel — I know you would. The idea of losing you makes me wild. My mother was dreadfully alarmed when she saw the state I was in; so was the doctor — I assure you he was. And I had no rest at all, and no peace of mind, until I determined to come down to you; and say that I adored you, and you only; and that I would hold to my engagement in spite of everything — and prove to you that — that no man in the world could love you more sincerely than I do." Here the young gentleman was so overcome that he paused in his speech, and gave way to an emotion, for which, surely no man who has been in the same condition with Lord Farintosh will blame him.

Miss Newcome was also much touched by this exhibition of natural feeling; and, I dare say, it was at this time that her eyes showed the first symptoms of that malady of which the traces were visible an hour after.

"You are very generous and kind to me, Lord Farintosh," she said. "Your constancy honours me very much, and proves how good and loyal you are; but — but do not think hardly of me for saying that the more I have thought of what has happened here — of the wretched consequences of interested marriages; the long union growing each day so miserable, that at last it becomes intolerable and is burst asunder, as in poor Clara's case; — the more I am resolved not to commit that first fatal step of entering into a marriage without — without the degree of affection which people who take that vow ought to feel for one another."

"Affection! Can you doubt it? Gracious heavens, I adore you! Isn't my being here a proof that I do?" cries the young lady's lover.

"But I?" answered the girl. "I have asked my own heart that question before now. I have thought to myself — If he comes after all — if his affection for me survives this disgrace of our family, as it has, and every one of us should be thankful to you — ought I not to show at least gratitude for so much kindness and honour, and devote myself to one who makes such sacrifices for me? But, before all things I owe you the truth, Lord Farintosh. I never could make you happy; I know I could not: nor obey you as you are accustomed to be obeyed; nor give you such a devotion as you have a right to expect from your wife. I thought I might once. I can't now! I know that I took you because you were rich, and had a great name; not because you were honest, and attached to me as you show yourself to be. I ask your pardon for the deceit I

practised on you. — Look at Clara, poor child, and her misery! My pride, I know, would never have let me fall as far as she has done; but oh! I am humiliated to think that I could have been made to say I would take the first step in that awful career.”

“What career, in God’s name?” cries the astonished suitor. “Humiliated, Ethel? Who’s going to humiliate you? I suppose there is no woman in England who need be humiliated by becoming my wife. I should like to see the one that I can’t pretend to — or to royal blood if I like: it’s not better than mine. Humiliated, indeed! That is news. Ha! ha! You don’t suppose that your pedigree, which I know all about, and the Newcome family, with your barber-surgeon to Edward the Confessor, are equal to —”

“To yours? No. It is not very long that I have learned to disbelieve in that story altogether. I fancy it was an odd whim of my poor father’s, and that our family were quite poor people.

“I knew it,” said Lord Farintosh. “Do you suppose there was not plenty of women to tell it me?”

“It was not because we were poor that I am ashamed,” Ethel went on. That cannot be our fault, though some of us seem think it is, as they hide the truth so. One of my uncles used to tell me that my grandfather’s father was a labourer in Newcome: but I was a child then, and liked to believe the prettiest story best.”

“As if it matters!” cries Lord Farintosh.

“As if it matters in your wife? n’est-ce pas? I never thought that it would. I should have told you, as it was my duty to tell you all. It was not my ancestors you cared for; and it is you yourself that your wife must swear before heaven to love.”

“Of course it’s me,” answers the young man, not quite understanding the train of ideas in his companion’s mind. “And I’ve given up everything — everything — and have broken off with my old habits and — and things, you know — and intend to lead a regular life — and will never go to Tattersall’s again; nor bet a shilling; nor touch another cigar if you like — that is, if you don’t like; for I love you so, Ethel — I do, with all my heart I do!”

“You are very generous and kind, Lord Farintosh,” Ethel said. “It is myself, not you, I doubt. Oh, I am humiliated to make such a confession!”

“How humiliated?” Ethel withdrew the hand which the young nobleman endeavoured to seize.

“If,” she continued, “if I found it was your birth, and your name, and your wealth that I coveted, and had nearly taken, ought I not to feel humiliated, and ask pardon of you and of God? Oh, what perjuries poor Clara was made to speak — and see what has befallen her! We stood by and heard her without being shocked. We applauded even. And to what shame and misery we brought her! Why did her parents and mine consign her to such ruin! She might have lived pure and happy but for us. With her example before me — not her flight, poor child — I am not afraid of that happening to me — but her long solitude, the misery of her wasted years — my brother’s own wretchedness and faults aggravated a hundredfold by his unhappy union with her — I must pause while it is yet time, and recall a promise which I know I should make you unhappy if I fulfilled. I ask your pardon that I deceived you, Lord Farintosh, and feel ashamed for myself that I could have consented to do so.”

“Do you mean,” cried the young Marquis, “that after my conduct to you — after my loving you, so that even this — this disgrace in your family don’t prevent my going on — after my mother has been down on her knees to me to break off, and I wouldn’t — no, I wouldn’t — after all White’s sneering at me and laughing at me, and all my friends, friends of my family, who would go to — go anywhere for me, advising me, and saying, ‘Farintosh, what a fool you are! break off this match,’ — and I wouldn’t back out, because I loved you so, by Heaven, and because, as a man and a gentleman, when I give my word I keep it — do you mean that you throw me over? It’s a shame — it’s a shame!” And again there were tears of rage and anguish in Farintosh’s eyes.

“What I did was a shame, my lord,” Ethel said, humbly; “and again I ask your pardon for it. What I do now is only to tell you the truth, and to grieve with all my soul for the falsehood — yes the falsehood — which I told you, and which has given your kind heart such cruel pain.”

“Yes, it was a falsehood!” the poor lad cried out. “You follow a fellow, and you make a fool of him, and you make him frantic in love with you, and then you fling him over! I wonder you can look me in the face after such an infernal treason. You’ve done it to twenty fellows before, I know you have. Everybody said so, and warned me. You draw them on, and get them to be in love, and then you fling them away. Am I to go back to London and be made the laughing-stock of the whole town — I, who might marry any woman in Europe, and who am at the head of the nobility of England?”

“Upon my word, if you will believe me after deceiving you once,” Ethel interposed, still very humbly, “I will never say that it was I who withdrew from you, and that it was not you who refused me. What has happened here fully authorises you. Let the rupture of the engagement come from you, my lord. Indeed, indeed, I would spare you all the pain I can. I have done you wrong enough already, Lord Farintosh.”

And now the Marquis burst forth with tears and imprecations, wild cries of anger, love, and disappointment, so fierce and incoherent that the lady to whom they were addressed did not repeat them to her confidante. Only she generously charged Laura to remember, if ever she heard the matter talked of in the world, that it was Lord Farintosh’s family which broke off the marriage; but that his lordship had acted most kindly and generously throughout the whole affair.

He went back to London in such a state of fury, and raved so wildly amongst his friends against the whole Newcome family, that many men knew what the case really was. But all women averred that that intriguing worldly Ethel Newcome, the apt pupil of her wicked old grandmother, had met with a deserved rebuff; that, after doing everything in her power to catch the great parti, Lord Farintosh, who had long been tired of her, flung her over, not liking the connexion; and that she was living out of the world now at Newcome, under the pretence of taking care of that unfortunate Lady Clara’s children, but really because she was pining away for Lord Farintosh, who, as we all know, married six months afterwards.



CHAPTER LX

IN WHICH WE WRITE TO THE COLONEL

Deeming that her brother Barnes had cares enough of his own presently at hand, Ethel did not think fit to confide to him the particulars of her interview with Lord Farintosh; nor even was poor Lady Anne informed that she had lost a noble son-in-law. The news would come to both of them soon enough, Ethel thought; and indeed, before many hours were over, it reached Sir Barnes Newcome in a very abrupt and unpleasant way. He had dismal occasion now to see his lawyers every day; and on the day after Lord Farintosh's abrupt visit and departure, Sir Barnes, going into Newcome upon his own unfortunate affairs, was told by his attorney, Mr. Speers, how the Marquis of Farintosh had slept for a few hours at the King's Arms, and returned to town the same evening by the train. We may add, that his lordship had occupied the very room in which Lord Highgate had previously slept; and Mr. Taplow recommends the bed accordingly, and shows pride it with to this very day.

Much disturbed by this intelligence, Sir Barnes was making his way to his cheerless home in the evening, when near his own gate he overtook another messenger. This was the railway porter, who daily brought telegraphic messages from his uncle and the London bank. The message of that day was — "Consols, so-and-so. French Rentes, so much. Highgate's and Farintosh's accounts withdrawn." The wretched keeper of the lodge owned, with trembling, in reply to the curses and queries of his employer, that a gentleman, calling himself the Marquis of Farintosh, had gone up to the house the day before, and come away an hour afterwards — did not like to speak to Sir Barnes when he came home, Sir Barnes looked so bad like.

Now, of course, there could be no concealment from her brother, and Ethel and Barnes had a conversation, in which the latter expressed himself with that freedom of language which characterised the head of the house of Newcome. Madame de Moncontour's pony-chaise was in waiting at the hall door, when the owner of the house entered it; and my wife was just taking leave of Ethel and her little people when Sir Barnes Newcome entered the lady's sitting-room.

The livid scowl with which Barnes greeted my wife surprised that lady, though it did not induce her to prolong her visit to her friend. As Laura took leave, she heard Sir Barnes screaming to the nurses to "take those little beggars away," and she rightly conjectured that some more unpleasantries had occurred to disturb this luckless gentleman's temper.

On the morrow, dearest Ethel's usual courier, one of the boys from the lodge, trotted over on his donkey to dearest Laura at Rosebury, with one of those missives which were daily passing between the ladies. This letter said:—

"Barnes m'a fait une scene terrible hier. I was obliged to tell him everything about Lord F., and to use the plainest language. At first, he forbade you the house. He thinks that you have been the cause of F.'s dismissal, and charged me, most unjustly, with a desire to bring back poor C. N. I replied as became me, and told him fairly I would leave the house if odious insulting charges were made against me, if my friends were not received. He stormed, he cried, he employed his usual language, — he was in a dreadful state. He relented and asked pardon. He goes to town to-night by the mail-train. Of course you come as usual, dear, dear Laura. I am miserable without you; and you know I cannot leave poor mamma. Clarykin sends a thousand kisses to little Arty; and I am his mother's always affectionate — E. N.

"Will the gentlemen like to shoot our pheasants? Please ask the Prince to let Warren know when. I sent a brace to poor dear old Mrs. Mason, and had such a nice letter from her!"

"And who is poor dear Mrs. Mason" asks Mr. Pendennis, as yet but imperfectly acquainted with the history of the Newcomes.

And Laura told me — perhaps I had heard before, and forgotten — that Mrs. Mason was an old nurse and pensioner of the Colonel's, and how he had been to see her for the sake of old times; and how she was a great favourite with Ethel; and Laura kissed her little son, and was exceedingly bright, cheerful, and hilarious that evening, in spite of the affliction under which her dear friends at Newcome were labouring.

People in country-houses should be exceedingly careful about their blotting-paper. They should bring their own portfolios with them. If any kind readers will bear this simple little hint in mind, how much mischief may they save themselves — nay, enjoy possibly, by looking at the pages of the next portfolio in the next friend's bedroom in which they

sleep. From such a book I once cut out, in Charles Slyboots' well-known and perfectly clear handwriting, the words, "Miss Emily Hartington, James Street, Backingham Gate, London," and produced as legibly on the blotting-paper as on the envelope which the postman delivered. After showing the paper round to the company, I enclosed it in a note and sent it to Mr. Slyboots, who married Miss Hartington three months afterwards. In such a book at the club I read, as plainly as you may read this page, a holograph page of the Right Honourable the Earl of Bareacres, which informed the whole club of a painful and private circumstance, and said, "My dear Green — I am truly sorry that I shall not be able to take up the bill for eight hundred and fifty-six pounds, which becomes due next Tu ——" and upon such a book, going to write a note in Madame de Moncontour's drawing-room at Rosebury, what should I find but proofs that my own wife was engaged in a clandestine correspondence with a gentleman residing abroad!

"Colonel Newcome, C.B., Montagne de la Cour, Brussels," I read, in this young woman's handwriting; and asked, turning round upon Laura, who entered the room just as I discovered her guilt: "What have you been writing to Colonel Newcome about, miss?"

"I wanted him to get me some lace," she said.

"To lace some nightcaps for me, didn't you, my dear? He is such a fine judge of lace! If I had known you had been writing, I would have asked you to send him a message. I want something from Brussels. Is the letter — ahem — gone?" (In this artful way, you see, I just hinted that I should like to see letter.).

"The letter is — ahem — gone," says Laura. "What do you want from Brussels, Pen?"

"I want some Brussels sprouts, my love — they are so fine in their native country."

"Shall I write to him to send the letter back?" palpitates poor little Laura; for she thought her husband was offended, by using the ironic method.

"No, you dear little woman! You need not send for letter the back: and you need not tell me what was in it: and I will bet you a hundred yards of lace to a cotton nightcap — and you know whether I, madam, am a man a bonnet-de-coton — I will let you that I know what you have been writing about, under pretence of a message about lace, to our Colonel."

"He promised to send it me. He really did. Lady Rockminster gave me twenty pounds ——" gasps Laura.

"Under pretence of lace, you have been sending over a love-message. You want to see whether Clive is still of his old mind. You think the coast is now clear, and that dearest Ethel may like him. You think Mrs. Mason is growing very old and infirm, and the sight of her dear boy would —"

"Pen! Pen! did you open my letter?" cries Laura; and a laugh which could afford to be good-humoured (followed by yet another expression of the lips) ended this colloquy. No; Mr Pendennis did not see the letter — but he knew the writer; — flattered himself that he knew women in general.

"Where did you get your experience of them, sir?" asks Mrs. Laura. Question answered in the same manner as the previous demand.

"Well, my dear; and why should not the poor boy be made happy?" Laura continues, standing very close up to her husband. "It is evident to me that Ethel is fond of him. I would rather see her married to a good young man whom she loves, than the mistress of a thousand palaces and coronets. Suppose — suppose you had married Miss Amory, sir, what a wretched worldly creature you would have been by this time; whereas now —"

"Now that I am the humble slave of a good woman there is some chance for me," cries this model of husbands. "And all good women are match-makers, as we know very well; and you have had this match in your heart ever since you saw the two young people together. Now; madam, since I did not see your letter to the Colonel — though I have guessed part of it — tell me, what have you said in it? Have you by any chance told the Colonel that the Farintosh alliance was broken off?"

Laura owned that she had hinted as much.

"You have not ventured to say that Ethel is well inclined to Clive?"

"Oh, no — oh dear, no!" But after much cross-examining and a little blushing on Laura's part, she is brought to confess that she has asked the Colonel whether he will not come and see Mrs. Mason, who is pining to see him, and is growing very old. And I find out that she has been to see this Mrs. Mason; that she and Miss Newcome visited the old lady the day before yesterday; and Laura thought from the manner in which Ethel looked at Clive's picture, hanging up in the parlour of his father's old friend, that she really was very much, etc. etc. So, the letter being gone, Mrs. Pendennis is most eager about the

answer to it, and day after day examines the bag, and is provoked that it brings no letter bearing the Brussels post-mark.

Madame de Moncontour seems perfectly well to know what Mrs. Laura has been doing and is hoping. "What, no letters again today? Ain't it provoking?" she cries. She is in the conspiracy too; and presently Florac is one of the initiated. "These women wish to bacler a marriage between the belle miss and le petit Claive," Florac announces to me. He pays the highest compliments to Miss Newcome's person, as he speaks regarding the marriage. "I continue to adore your Anglaises," he is pleased to say. "What of freshness, what of beauty, what roses! And then they are so adorably good! Go, Pendennis, thou art a happy coquin!" Mr. Pendennis does not say No. He has won the twenty-thousand-pound prize; and we know there are worse blanks in that lottery.



CHAPTER LXI

IN WHICH WE ARE INTRODUCED TO A NEW NEWCOME

No answer came to Mrs. Pendennis's letter to Colonel Newcome at Brussels, for the Colonel was absent from that city, and at the time when Laura wrote was actually in London, whither affairs of his own had called him. A note from George Warrington acquainted me with this circumstance; he mentioned that he and the Colonel had dined together at Bays's on the day previous, and that the Colonel seemed to be in the highest spirits. High spirits about what? This news put Laura in a sad perplexity. Should she write and tell him to get his letters from Brussels? She would in five minutes have found some other pretext for writing to Colonel Newcome, had not her husband sternly cautioned the young woman to leave the matter alone.

The more readily perhaps because he had quarrelled with his nephew Sir Barnes, Thomas Newcome went to visit his brother Hobson and his sister-inlaw; bent on showing that there was no division between him and this branch of his family. And you may suppose that the admirable woman just named had a fine occasion for her virtuous conversational powers in discoursing upon the painful event which had just happened to Sir Barnes. When we fail, how our friends cry out for us! Mrs. Hobson's homilies must have been awful. How that outraged virtue must have groaned and lamented, gathered its children about its knees, wept over them and washed them; gone into sackcloth and ashes and tied up the knocker; confabulated with its spiritual adviser; uttered commonplaces to its husband; and bored the whole house! The punishment of worldliness and vanity, the evil of marrying out of one's station, how these points must have been explained and enlarged on! Surely the Peerage was taken off the drawing-room table and removed to papa's study, where it could not open, as it used naturally once, to Highgate, Baron, or Farintosh, Marquis of, being shut behind wires and closely jammed in on an upper shelf between Blackstone's Commentaries and the Farmer's Magazine! The breaking of the engagement with the Marquis of Farintosh was known in Bryanstone Square; and you may be sure interpreted by Mrs. Hobson in the light the most disadvantageous to Ethel Newcome. A young nobleman — with grief and pain Ethel's aunt must own the fact — a young man of notoriously dissipated habits but of great wealth and rank, had been pursued by the unhappy Lady Kew — Mrs. Hobson would not say by her niece, that were too dreadful — had been pursued, and followed, and hunted down in the most notorious manner, and finally made to propose! Let Ethel's conduct and punishment be a warning to my dearest girls, and let them bless Heaven they have parents who are not worldly! After all the trouble and pains, Mrs. Hobson did not say disgrace, the Marquis takes the very first pretext to break off the match, and leaves the unfortunate girl for ever!

And now we have to tell of the hardest blow which fell upon poor Ethel, and this was that her good uncle Thomas Newcome believed the charges against her. He was willing enough to listen now to anything which was said against that branch of the family. With such a traitor, double-dealer, dastard as Barnes at its head, what could the rest of the race be? When the Colonel offered to endow Ethel and Clive with every shilling he had in the world, had not Barnes, the arch-traitor, temporised and told him falsehoods, and hesitated about throwing him off until the Marquis had declared himself? Yes. The girl he and poor Clive loved so was ruined by her artful relatives, was unworthy of his affection and his boy's, was to be banished, like her worthless brother, out of his regard for ever. And the man she had chosen in preference to his Clive! — a roue, a libertine, whose extravagances and dissipations were the talk of every club, who had no wit, nor talents, not even constancy (for had he not taken the first opportunity to throw her off?) to recommend him — only a great title and a fortune wherewith to bribe her! For shame, for shame! Her engagement to this man was a blot upon her — the rupture only a just punishment and humiliation. Poor unhappy girl! let her take care of her wretched brother's abandoned children, give up the world, and amend her life.

This was the sentence Thomas Newcome delivered: a righteous and tender-hearted man, as we know, but judging in this case wrongly, and bearing much too hardly, as we who know her betters must think, upon one who had her faults certainly, but whose errors were not all of her own making. Who set her on the path she walked in? It was her parents' hands which led her, and her parents' voices which commanded her to accept the temptation set before her. What did she know of the character of the man selected to be her husband? Those who should have known better brought him to her, and vouched for him. Noble, unhappy young creature! are you the first of your sisterhood who has been bidden to traffic your beauty, to crush and slay your honest natural affections, to sell your truth and your life for rank and title? But the

Judge who sees not the outward acts merely, but their causes, and views not the wrong alone, but the temptations, struggles, ignorance of erring creatures, we know has a different code to ours — to ours, who fall upon the fallen, who fawn upon the prosperous so, who administer our praises and punishments so prematurely, who now strike so hard, and, anon, spare so shamelessly.

Our stay with our hospitable friends at Rosebury was perforce coming to a close, for indeed weeks after weeks had passed since we had been under their pleasant roof; and in spite of dearest Ethel's remonstrances it was clear that dearest Laura must take her farewell. In these last days, besides the visits which daily took place between one and other, the young messenger was put in ceaseless requisition, and his donkey must have been worn off his little legs with trotting to and fro between the two houses, Laura was quite anxious and hurt at not hearing from the Colonel; it was a shame that he did not have over his letters from Belgium and answer that one which she had honoured him by writing. By some information, received who knows how? our host was aware of the intrigue which Mrs. Pendennis was carrying on; and his little wife almost as much interested in it as my own. She whispered to me in her kind way that she would give a guinea, that she would, to see a certain couple made happy together; that they were born for one another, that they were; she was for having me go off to fetch Clive: but who was I to act as Hymen's messenger, or to interpose in such delicate family affairs?

All this while Sir Barnes Newcome, Bart., remained absent in London, attending to his banking duties there, and pursuing the dismal inquiries which ended, in the ensuing Michaelmas term, in the famous suit of *Newcome v. Lord Highgate*. Ethel, pursuing the plan which she had laid down for herself from the first, took entire charge of his children and house: Lady Anne returned to her own family: never indeed having been of much use in her son's dismal household. My wife talked to me of course about her pursuits and amusements at Newcome, in the ancestral hall which we have mentioned. The children played and ate their dinner (mine often partook of his infantine mutton, in company with little Clara and the poor young heir of Newcome) in the room which had been called my lady's own, and in which her husband had locked her, forgetting that the conservatories were open, through which the hapless woman had fled. Next to this was the baronial library, a side of which was fitted with the gloomy books from Clapham, which old Mrs. Newcome had amassed; rows of tracts, and missionary magazines, and dingy quarto volumes of worldly travel and history which that lady had admitted into her collection.

Almost on the last day of our stay at Rosebury, the two young ladies bethought them of paying a visit to the neighbouring town of Newcome, to that old Mrs. Mason who has been mentioned in a foregoing page in some yet earlier chapter of our history. She was very old now, very faithful to the recollections of her own early time, and oblivious of yesterday. Thanks to Colonel Newcome's bounty, she had lived in comfort for many a long year past; and he was as much her boy now as in those early days of which we have given but an outline. There were Clive's pictures of himself and his father over her little mantelpiece, near which she sat in comfort and warmth by the winter fire which his bounty supplied.

Mrs. Mason remembered Miss Newcome, prompted thereto by the hints of her little maid, who was much younger, and had a more faithful memory than her mistress. Why, Sarah Mason would have forgotten the pheasants whose very tails decorated the chimney-glass, had not Keziah, the maid, reminded her that the young lady was the donor. Then she recollected her benefactor, and asked after her father, the Baronet; and wondered, for her part, why her boy, the Colonel, was not made baronet, and why his brother had the property? Her father was a very good man; though Mrs. Mason had heard he was not much liked in those parts. "Dead and gone, was he, poor man?" (This came in reply to a hint from Keziah, the attendant, bawled in the old lady's ears, who was very deaf.) "Well, well, we must all go; and if we were all good, like the Colonel, what was the use of staying? I hope his wife will be good. I am sure such a good man deserves one," added Mrs. Mason.

The ladies thought the old woman doting, led thereto by the remark of Keziah, the maid, that Mrs. Mason have a lost her memory. And she asked who the other bonny lady was, and Ethel told her that Mrs. Pendennis was a friend of the Colonel's and Clive's.

"Oh, Clive's friend! Well, she was a pretty lady, and he was a dear pretty boy. He drew those pictures; and he took off me in my cap, with my old cat and all — my poor old cat that's buried this ever so long ago."

"She has had a letter from the Colonel, miss," cries out Keziah. "Haven't you had a letter from the Colonel, mum? It came only yesterday." And Keziah takes out the letter and shows it to the ladies. They read as follows:—

"London, Feb. 12, 184-.

“My Dear Old Mason — I have just heard from a friend of mine who has been staying in your neighbourhood, that you are well and happy, and that you have been making inquiries after your young scapegrace, Tom Newcome, who is well and happy too, and who proposes to be happier still before any very long time is over.

“The letter which was written to me about you was sent to me in Belgium, at Brussels, where I have been living — a town near the place where the famous Battle of Waterloo was fought; and as I had run away from Waterloo it followed me to England.

“I cannot come to Newcome just now to shake my dear old friend and nurse by the hand. I have business in London; and there are those of my name living in Newcome who would not be very happy to see me and mine.

“But I promise you a visit before very long, and Clive will come with me; and when we come I shall introduce a new friend to you, a very pretty little daughter-in-law, whom you must promise to love very much. She is a Scotch lassie, niece of my oldest friend, James Binnie, Esquire, of the Bengal Civil Service, who will give her a pretty bit of siller, and her present name is Miss Rosa Mackenzie.

“We shall send you a wedding cake soon, and a new gown for Keziah (to whom remember me), and when I am gone, my grandchildren after me will hear what a dear friend you were to your affectionate Thomas Newcome.”

Keziah must have thought that there was something between Clive and my wife, for when Laura had read the letter she laid it down on the table, and sitting down by it, and hiding her face in her hands, burst into tears.

Ethel looked steadily at the two pictures of Clive and his father. Then she put her hand on her friend's shoulder. “Come, my dear,” she said, “it is growing late, and I must go back to my children.” And she saluted Mrs. Mason and her maid in a very stately manner, and left them, leading my wife away, who was still exceedingly overcome.

We could not stay long at Rosebury after that. When Madame de Moncontour heard the news, the good lady cried too. Mrs. Pendennis's emotion was renewed as we passed the gates of Newcome Park on our way to the railroad.



CHAPTER LXII

MR. AND MRS. CLIVE NEWCOME

The friendship between Ethel and Laura, which the last narrated sentimental occurrences had so much increased, subsists very little impaired up to the present day. A lady with many domestic interests and increasing family, etc. etc., cannot be supposed to cultivate female intimacies out of doors with that ardour and eagerness which young spinsters exhibit in their intercourse; but Laura, whose kind heart first led her to sympathise with her young friend in the latter's days of distress and misfortune, has professed ever since a growing esteem for Ethel Newcome, and says, that the trials and perhaps grief which the young lady now had to undergo have brought out the noblest qualities of her disposition. She is a very different person from the giddy and worldly girl who compelled our admiration of late in the days of her triumphant youthful beauty, of her wayward generous humour, of her frivolities and her flirtations.

Did Ethel shed tears in secret over the marriage which had caused Laura's gentle eyes to overflow? We might divine the girl's grief, but we respected it. The subject was never mentioned by the ladies between themselves, and even in her most intimate communications with her husband that gentleman is bound to say his wife maintained a tender reserve upon the point, nor cared to speculate upon a subject which her friend held sacred. I could not for my part but acquiesce in this reticence; and, if Ethel felt regret and remorse, admire the dignity of her silence, and the sweet composure of her now changed and saddened demeanour.

The interchange of letters between the two friends was constant, and in these the younger lady described at length the duties, occupations, and pleasures of her new life. She had quite broken with the world, and devoted herself entirely to the nurture and education of her brother's orphan children. She educated herself in order to teach them. Her letters contain droll yet touching confessions of her own ignorance and her determination to overcome it. There was no lack of masters of all kinds in Newcome. She set herself to work like a schoolgirl. The little piano in the room near the conservatory was thumped by Aunt Ethel until it became quite obedient to her, and yielded the sweetest music under her fingers. When she came to pay us a visit at Fair Oaks some two years afterwards she played for our dancing children (our third is named Ethel, our second Helen, after one still more dear), and we were in admiration of her skill. There must have been the labour of many lonely nights when her little charges were at rest, and she and her sad thoughts sat up together, before she overcame the difficulties of the instrument so as to be able to soothe herself and to charm and delight her children.

When the divorce was pronounced, which came in due form, though we know that Lady Highgate was not much happier than the luckless Lady Clara Newcome had been, Ethel's dread was lest Sir Barnes should marry again, and by introducing a new mistress into his house should deprive her of the care of her children.

Miss Newcome judged her brother rightly in that he would try to marry, but a noble young lady to whom he offered himself rejected him, to his surprise and indignation, for a beggarly clergyman with a small living, on which she elected to starve; and the wealthy daughter of a neighbouring manufacturer whom he next proposed to honour with his gracious hand, fled from him with horror to the arms of her father, wondering how such a man as that should ever dare to propose marriage to an honest girl. Sir Barnes Newcome was much surprised at this outbreak of anger; he thought himself a very ill-used and unfortunate man, a victim of most cruel persecutions, which we may be sure did not improve his temper or tend to the happiness of his circle at home. Peevishness, and selfish rage, quarrels with servants and governesses, and other domestic disquiet, Ethel had of course to bear from her brother, but not actual personal ill-usage. The fiery temper of former days was subdued in her, but the haughty resolution remained, which was more than a match for her brother's cowardly tyranny: besides, she was the mistress of sixty thousand pounds, and by many wily hints and piteous appeals to his sister Sir Barnes sought to secure this desirable sum of money for his poor dear unfortunate children.

He professed to think that she was ruining herself for her younger brothers, whose expenses the young lady was defraying, this one at college, that in the army, and whose maintenance he thought might be amply defrayed out of their own little fortunes and his mother's jointure: and, by ingeniously proving that a vast number of his household expenses were personal to Miss Newcome and would never have been incurred but for her residence in his house, he subtracted for his own benefit no inconsiderable portion of her income. Thus the carriage-horses were hers, for what need had he, a miserable bachelor, of anything more than a riding-horse and a brougham? A certain number of the domestics were hers,

and as he could get no scoundrel of his own to stay with him, he took Miss Newcome's servants. He would have had her pay the coals which burned in his grate, and the taxes due to our sovereign lady the Queen; but in truth, at the end of the year, with her domestic bounties and her charities round about Newcome, which daily increased as she became acquainted with her indigent neighbours, Miss Ethel, the heiress, was as poor as many poorer persons.

Her charities increased daily with her means of knowing the people round about her. She gave much time to them and thought; visited from house to house, without ostentation; was awestricken by that spectacle of the poverty which we have with us always, of which the sight rebukes our selfish griefs into silence, the thought compels us to charity, humility, and devotion. The priests of our various creeds, who elsewhere are doing battle together continually, lay down their arms in its presence and kneel before it; subjugated by that overpowering master. Death, never dying out; hunger always crying; and children born to it day after day — our young London lady, flying from the splendours and follies in which her life had been past, found herself in the presence of these; threading darkling alleys which swarmed with wretched life; sitting by naked beds, whither by God's blessing she was sometimes enabled to carry a little comfort and consolation; or whence she came heart-stricken by the overpowering misery, or touched by the patient resignation of the new friends to whom fate had directed her. And here she met the priest upon his shrift, the homely missionary bearing his words of consolation, the quiet curate pacing his round; and was known to all these, and enabled now and again to help their people in trouble. "Oh! what good there is in this woman!" my wife would say to me, as she laid one of Miss Ethel's letters aside; "who would have thought this was the girl of your glaring London ballroom? If she has had grief to bear, how it has chastened and improved her!"

And now I have to confess that all this time, whilst Ethel Newcome has been growing in grace with my wife, poor Clive has been lapsing sadly out of favour. She has no patience with Clive. She drubs her little foot when his name is mentioned and turns the subject. Whither are all the tears and pities fled now? Mrs. Laura has transferred all her regard to Ethel, and when that lady's ex-suitor writes to his old friend, or other news is had of him, Laura flies out in her usual tirades against the world, the horrid wicked selfish world, which spoils everybody who comes near it. What has Clive done, in vain his apologist asks, that an old friend should be so angry with him?

She is not angry with him — not she. She only does not care about him. She wishes him no manner of harm — not the least, only she has lost all interest in him. And the Colonel too, the poor good old Colonel, was actually in Mrs. Pendennis' black books, and when he sent her the Brussels veil which we have heard of, she did not think it was a bargain at all — not particularly pretty, in fact, rather dear at the money. When we met Mr. and Mrs. Clive Newcome in London, whither they came a few months after their marriage, and where Rosey appeared as pretty, happy, good-humoured a little blushing bride as eyes need behold, Mrs. Pendennis's reception of her was quite a curiosity of decorum. "I, not receive her well?" cried Laura. "How on earth would you have me receive her? I talked to her about everything, and she only answered yes or no. I showed her the children, and she did not seem to care. Her only conversation was about millinery and Brussels balls, and about her dress at the drawing-room. The drawing-room! What business has she with such follies?"

The fact is, that the drawing-room was Tom Newcome's affair, not his son's, who was heartily ashamed of the figure he cut in that astounding costume, which English private gentlemen are made to sport when they bend the knee before their gracious Sovereign.

Warrington roasted poor Clive upon the occasion, and complimented him with his usual gravity, until the young fellow blushed and his father somewhat testily signified to our friend that his irony was not agreeable. "I suppose," says the Colonel, with great hauteur, "that there is nothing ridiculous in an English gentleman entertaining feelings of loyalty and testifying his respect to his Queen: and I presume that Her Majesty knows best, and has a right to order in what dress her subjects shall appear before her and I don't think it's kind of you, George, I say, I don't think it's kind of you to quiz my boy for doing his duty to his Queen and to his father too, sir — for it was at my request that Clive went, and we went together, sir — to the levee and then to the drawing-room afterwards with Rosey, who was presented by the lady of my old friend, Sir George Tufto, a lady of rank herself, and the wife of as brave an officer as ever drew a sword."

Warrington stammered an apology for his levity, but no explanations were satisfactory, and it was clear George had wounded the feelings of our dear simple old friend.

After Clive's marriage, which was performed at Brussels, Uncle James and the lady, his sister, whom we have sometimes flippantly ventured to call the Campaigner, went off to perform that journey to Scotland which James had meditated for ten years past; and, now little Rosey was made happy for life, to renew acquaintance with little Josey. The

Colonel and his son and daughter-inlaw came to London, not to the bachelor quarters, where we have seen them, but to an hotel, which they occupied until their new house could be provided for them, a sumptuous mansion in the Tyburnian district, and one which became people of their station.

We have been informed already what the Colonel's income was, and have the gratification of knowing that it was very considerable. The simple gentleman who would dine off a crust, and wear a coat for ten years, desired that his children should have the best of everything: ordered about upholsterers, painters, carriage-makers, in his splendid Indian way; presented pretty Rosey with brilliant jewels for her introduction at Court, and was made happy by the sight of the blooming young creature decked in these magnificences, and admired by all his little circle. The old boys, the old generals, the old colonels, the old qui-his from the club, came and paid her their homage; the directors' ladies, and the generals' ladies, called upon her, and feasted her at vast banquets served on sumptuous plate. Newcome purchased plate and gave banquets in return for these hospitalities. Mrs. Clive had a neat close carriage for evenings, and a splendid barouche to drive in the Park. It was pleasant to see this equipage at four o'clock of an afternoon, driving up to Bays's, with Rosey most gorgeously attired reclining within; and to behold the stately grace of the old gentleman as he stepped out to welcome his daughter-inlaw, and the bow he made before he entered her carriage. Then they would drive round the Park; round and round and round; and the old generals, and the old colonels, and old fogies, and their ladies and daughters, would nod and smile out of their carriages as they crossed each other upon this charming career of pleasure.

I confess that a dinner at the Colonel's, now he appeared in all his magnificence, was awfully slow. No peaches could look fresher than Rosey's cheeks — no damask was fairer than her pretty little shoulders. No one, I am sure, could be happier than she, but she did not impart her happiness to her friends; and replied chiefly by smiles to the conversation of the gentlemen at her side. It is true that these were for the most part elderly dignitaries, distinguished military officers with blue-black whiskers, retired old Indian judges, and the like, occupied with their victuals, and generally careless to please. But that solemn happiness of the Colonel, who shall depict it:— that look of affection with which he greeted his daughter as she entered, flounced to the waist, twinkling with innumerable jewels, holding a dainty pocket-handkerchief, with smiling eyes, dimpled cheeks, and golden ringlets! He would take her hand, or follow her about from group to group, exchanging precious observations about the weather, the Park, the exhibition, nay, the opera, for the old man actually went to the opera with his little girl, and solemnly snoozed by her side in a white waistcoat.

Very likely this was the happiest period of Thomas Newcome's life. No woman (save one perhaps fifty years ago) had ever seemed so fond of him as that little girl. What pride he had in her, and what care he took of her! If she was a little ailing, what anxiety and hurrying for doctors! What droll letters came from James Binnie, and how they laughed over them: with what respectful attention he acquainted Mrs. Mack with everything that took place: with what enthusiasm that Campaigner replied! Josey's husband called a special blessing upon his head in the church at Musselburgh; and little Jo herself sent a tinfal of Scotch bun to her darling sister, with a request from her husband that he might have a few shares in the famous Indian Company.

The Company was in a highly flourishing condition, as you may suppose, when one of its directors, who at the same time was one of the honestest men alive, thought it was his duty to live in the splendour in which we now behold him. Many wealthy City men did homage to him. His brother Hobson, though the Colonel had quarrelled with the chief of the firm, yet remained on amiable terms with Thomas Newcome, and shared and returned his banquets for a while. Charles Honeyman we may be sure was present at many of them, and smirked a blessing over the plenteous meal. The Colonel's influence was such with Mr. Sherrick that he pleaded Charles's cause with that gentleman, and actually brought to a successful termination that little love-affair in which we have seen Miss Sherrick and Charles engaged. Mr. Sherrick was not disposed to part with much money during his lifetime — indeed, he proved to Colonel Newcome that he was not so rich as the world supposed him. But, by the Colonel's interest, the chaplaincy of Boggley Wollah was procured for the Rev. C. Honeyman, who now forms the delight of that flourishing station.

All this while we have said little about Clive, who in truth was somehow in the background in this flourishing Newcome group. To please the best father in the world; the kindest old friend who endowed his niece with the best part of his savings; to settle that question about marriage and have an end of it; — Clive Newcome had taken a pretty and fond young girl, who respected and admired him beyond all men, and who heartily desired to make him happy. To do as much would not his father have stripped his coat from his back — have put his head under Juggernaut's chariot-wheel, have sacrificed any ease, comfort, or pleasure for the youngster's benefit? One great passion he had had and closed the account

of it: a worldly ambitious girl — how foolishly worshipped and passionately beloved no matter — had played with him for years; had flung him away when a dissolute suitor with a great fortune and title had offered himself. Was he to whine and despair because a jilt had fooled him? He had too much pride and courage for any such submission; he would accept the lot in life which was offered to him, no undesirable one surely; he would fulfil the wish of his father's heart, and cheer his kind declining years. In this way the marriage was brought about. It was but a whisper to Rosey in the drawing-room, a start and a blush from the little girl as he took the little willing hand, a kiss for her from her delighted old father-in-law, a twinkle in good old James's eyes, and double embrace from the Campaigner as she stood over them in a benedictory attitude; — expressing her surprise at an event for which she had been jockeying ever since she set eyes on young Newcome; and calling upon Heaven to bless her children. So, as a good thing when it is to be done had best be done quickly, these worthy folks went off almost straightway to a clergyman, and were married out of hand — to the astonishment of Captains Hoby and Goby when they came to hear of the event. Well, my gallant young painter and friend of my boyhood! if my wife chooses to be angry at your marriage, shall her husband not wish you happy?

Suppose we had married our first loves, others of us, were we the happier now? Ask Mr. Pendennis, who sulked in his tents when his Costigan, his Briseis, was ravished from him. Ask poor George Warrington, who had his own way, Heaven help him! There was no need why Clive should turn monk because number one refused him; and, that charmer removed, why he should not take to his heart number two. I am bound to say, that when I expressed these opinions to Mrs. Laura, she was more angry and provoked than ever.

It is in the nature of such a simple soul as Thomas Newcome, to see but one side of a question, and having once fixed Ethel's worldliness in his mind, and her brother's treason, to allow no argument of advocates of the other side to shake his displeasure. Hence the one or two appeals which Laura ventured to make on behalf of her friend, were checked by the good Colonel with a stern negation. If Ethel was not guiltless, she could not make him see at least that she was not guilty. He dashed away all excuses and palliations. Exasperated as he was, he persisted in regarding the poor girl's conduct in its most unfavourable light. "She was rejected, and deservedly rejected, by the Marquis of Farintosh," he broke out to me once, who was not indeed authorised to tell all I knew regarding the story; "the whole town knows it; all the clubs ring with it. I blush, sir, to think that my brother's child should have brought such a stain upon our name." In vain, I told him that my wife, who knew all the circumstances much better, judged Miss Newcome far more favourably, and indeed greatly esteemed and loved her. "Pshaw! sir," breaks out the indignant Colonel, "your wife is an innocent creature, who does not know the world as we men of experience do — as I do, sir;" and would have no more of the discussion. There is no doubt about it, there was a coolness between my old friend's father and us.

As for Barnes Newcome, we gave up that worthy, and the Colonel showed him no mercy. He recalled words used by Warrington, which I have recorded in a former page, and vowed that he only watched for an opportunity to crush the miserable reptile. He hated Barnes as a loathsome traitor, coward, and criminal; he made no secret of his opinion; and Clive, with the remembrance of former injuries, of dreadful heart-pangs; the inheritor of his father's blood, his honesty of nature, and his impetuous enmity against wrong; shared to the full his sire's antipathy against his cousin, and publicly expressed his scorn and contempt for him. About Ethel he would not speak. "Perhaps what you say, Pen, is true," he said. "I hope it is. Pray God it is." But his quivering lips and fierce countenance, when her name was mentioned or her defence attempted, showed that he too had come to think ill of her. "As for her brother, as for that scoundrel," he would say, clenching his fist, "if ever I can punish him I will. I shouldn't have the soul of a dog, if ever I forgot the wrongs that have been done me by that vagabond. Forgiveness? Pshaw! Are you dangling to sermons, Pen, at your wife's leading-strings? Are you preaching that cant? There are some injuries that no honest man should forgive, and I shall be a rogue on the day I shake hands with that villain."

"Clive has adopted the Iroquois ethics," says George Warrington, smoking his pipe sententiously, "rather than those which are at present received among us. I am not sure that something is not to be said, as against the Eastern, upon the Western, or Tomahawk, or Ojibbeway side of the question. I should not like," he added, "to be in a vendetta or feud, and to have you, Clive, and the old Colonel engaged against me."

"I would rather," I said, "for my part, have half a dozen such enemies as Clive and the Colonel, than one like Barnes. You never know where or when that villain may hit you." And before a very short period was over, Sir Barnes Newcome, Bart., hit his two hostile kinsmen such a blow, as one might expect from such a quarter.

CHAPTER LXIII

MRS. CLIVE AT HOME

Clive and his father did not think fit to conceal their opinions regarding their kinsman, Barnes Newcome, and uttered them in many public places when Sir Barnes's conduct was brought into question, we may be sure that their talk came to the Baronet's ears, and did not improve his already angry feeling towards those gentlemen. For a while they had the best of the attack. The Colonel routed Barnes out of his accustomed club at Bays's; where also the gallant Sir George Tufto expressed himself pretty openly with respect to the poor Baronet's want of courage: the Colonel had bullied and browbeaten Barnes in the parlour of his own bank, and the story was naturally well known in the City; where it certainly was not pleasant for Sir Barnes, as he walked to 'Change, to meet sometimes the scowls of the angry man of war, his uncle, striding down to the offices of the Bundelcund Bank, and armed with that terrible bamboo cane.

But though his wife had undeniably run away after notorious ill-treatment from her husband; though he had shown two white feathers in those unpleasant little affairs with his uncle and cousin; though Sir Barnes Newcome was certainly neither amiable nor popular in the City of London, his reputation as a most intelligent man of business still stood; the credit of his house was deservedly high, and people banked with him, and traded with him, in spite of faithless wives and hostile colonels.

When the outbreak between Colonel Newcome and his nephew took place, it may be remembered that Mr. Hobson Newcome, the other partner of the firm of Hobson Brothers, waited upon Colonel Newcome, as one of the principal English directors of the B. B. C., and hoped that although private differences would, of course, oblige Thomas Newcome to cease all personal dealings with the bank of Hobson, the affairs of the Company in which he was interested ought not to suffer on this account; and that the Indian firm should continue dealing with Hobsons on the same footing as before. Mr. Hobson Newcome represented to the Colonel, in his jolly frank way, that whatever happened between the latter and his nephew Barnes, Thomas Newcome had still one friend in the house; that the transactions between it and the Indian Company were mutually advantageous; finally, that the manager of the Indian bank might continue to do business with Hobsons as before. So the B. B. C. sent its consignments to Hobson Brothers, and drew its bills, which were duly honoured by that firm.

More than one of Colonel Newcome's City acquaintances, among them his agent, Mr. Jolly, and his ingenuous friend, Mr. Sherrick, especially, hinted to Thomas Newcome to be very cautious in his dealings with Hobson Brothers, and keep a special care lest that house should play him an evil turn. They both told him that Barnes Newcome had said more than once, in answer to reports of the Colonel's own speeches against Barnes. "I know that hot-headed, blundering Indian uncle of mine is furious against me, on account of an absurd private affair and misunderstanding, which he is too obstinate to see in the proper light. What is my return for the abuse and rant which he lavishes against me? I cannot forget that he is my grandfather's son, an old man, utterly ignorant both of society and business here; and as he is interested in this Indian Banking Company, which must be preciously conducted when it appointed him as the guardian and overseer of its affairs in England, I do my very best to serve the Company, and I can tell you, its blundering, muddleheaded managers, black and white, owe no little to the assistance which they have had from our house. If they don't like us, why do they go on dealing with us? We don't want them and their bills. We were a leading house fifty years before they were born, and shall continue to be so long after they come to an end." Such was Barnes's case, as stated by himself. It was not a very bad one, or very unfairly stated, considering the advocate. I believe he has always persisted in thinking that he never did his uncle any wrong.

Mr. Jolly and Mr. Sherrick, then, both entreated Thomas Newcome to use his best endeavours, and bring the connexion of the B. B. C. and Hobson Brothers to a speedy end. But Jolly was an interested party; he and his friends would have had the agency of the B. B. C., and the profits thereof, which Hobsons had taken from them. Mr. Sherrick was an outside practitioner, a guerilla amongst regular merchants. The opinions of one and the other, though submitted by Thomas Newcome duly to his co-partners, the managers and London board of directors of the Bundelcund Banking Company, were overruled by that assembly.

They had their establishment and apartments in the City; they had their clerks and messengers, their managers' room

and board-room, their meetings, where no doubt great quantities of letters were read, vast ledgers produced; where Tom Newcome was voted into the chair, and voted out with thanks; where speeches were made, and the affairs of the B. B. C. properly discussed. These subjects are mysterious, terrifying, unknown to me. I cannot pretend to describe them. Fred Bayham, I remember, used to be great in his knowledge of the affairs of the Bundelcund Banking Company. He talked of cotton, wool, copper, opium, indigo, Singapore, Manilla, China, Calcutta, Australia, with prodigious eloquence and fluency. His conversation was about millions. The most astounding paragraphs used to appear in the Pall Mall Gazette, regarding the annual dinner at Blackwall, which the directors gave, and to which he, and George, and I, as friends of the court, were invited. What orations were uttered, what flowing bumpers emptied in the praise of this great Company; what quantities of turtle and punch did Fred devour at its expense! Colonel Newcome was the kindly old chairman at these banquets; the prince, his son, taking but a modest part in the ceremonies, and sitting with us, his old cronies.

All the gentlemen connected with the board, all those with whom the B. B. C. traded in London, paid Thomas Newcome extraordinary respect. His character for wealth was deservedly great, and of course multiplied by the tongue of Rumour. F. B. knew to a few millions of rupees, more or less, what the Colonel possessed, and what Clive would inherit. Thomas Newcome's distinguished military services, his high bearing, lofty courtesy, simple but touching garrulity; — for the honest man talked much more now than he had been accustomed to do in former days, and was not insensible to the flattery which his wealth brought him — his reputation as a keen man of business, who had made his own fortune by operations equally prudent and spirited, and who might make the fortunes of hundreds of other people, brought the worthy Colonel a number of friends, and I promise you that the loudest huzzahs greeted his health when it was proposed at the Blackwall dinners. At the second annual dinner after Clive's marriage some friends presented Mrs. Clive Newcome with a fine testimonial. There was a superb silver cocoa-nut tree, whereof the leaves were dexterously arranged for holding candle and pickles; under the cocoa-nut was an Indian prince on a camel, giving his hand to a cavalry officer on horseback — a howitzer, a plough, a loom, a bale of cotton, on which were the East India Company's arms, a Brahmin, Britannia, and Commerce with a cornucopia were grouped round the principal figures: and if you would see a noble account of this chaste and elegant specimen of British art, you are referred to the pages of the Pall Mall Gazette of that year, as well as to Fred Bayham's noble speech in the course of the evening, when it was exhibited. The East and its wars, and its heroes, Assaye and Seringapatam ("and Lord Lake and Laswaree too," calls out the Colonel greatly elated), tiger-hunting, palanquins, Juggernaut, elephants, the burning of widows — all passed before us in F. B.'s splendid oration. He spoke of the product of the Indian forest, the palm-tree, the cocoa-nut tree, the banyan-tree. Palms the Colonel had already brought back with him, the palms of valour, won in the field of war (cheers). Cocoa-nut trees he had never seen, though he had heard wonders related regarding the milky contents of their fruit. Here at any rate was one tree of the kind, under the branches of which he humbly trusted often to repose — and, if he might be so bold as to carry on the Eastern metaphor, he would say, knowing the excellence of the Colonel's claret and the splendour of his hospitality, that he would prefer a cocoa-nut day at the Colonel's to a banyan day anywhere else. Whilst F. B.'s speech went on, I remember J. J. eyeing the trophy, and the queer expression of his shrewd face. The health of British Artists was drunk a propos of this splendid specimen of their skill, and poor J. J. Ridley, Esq., A.R.A., had scarce a word to say in return. He and Clive sat by one another, the latter very silent and gloomy. When J. J. and I met in the world, we talked about our friend, and it was easy for both of us to see that neither was satisfied with Clive's condition.

The fine house in Tyburnia was completed by this time, as gorgeous as money could make it. How different it was from the old Fitzroy Square mansion with its ramshackle furniture, and spoils of brokers' shops, and Tottenham Court Road odds and ends! An Oxford Street upholsterer had been let loose in the yet virgin chambers; and that inventive genius had decorated them with all the wonders his fancy could devise. Roses and cupids quivered on the ceilings, up to which golden arabesques crawled from the walls; your face (handsome or otherwise) was reflected by countless looking-glasses, so multiplied and arranged as, as it were, to carry you into the next street. You trod on velvet, pausing with respect in the centre of the carpet, where Rosey's cypher was worked in the sweet flowers which bear her name. What delightful crooked legs the chairs had! What corner cupboards there were filled with Dresden gimcracks, which it was a part of this little woman's business in life to purchase! What etageres, and bonbonnières, and chiffonnières! What awfully bad pastels there were on the walls! What frightful Boucher and Lancret shepherds and shepherdesses leered over the portieres! What velvet-bound volumes, mother-of-pearl albums, inkstands representing beasts of the field, prie-dieu chairs, and wonderful knick-knacks I can recollect! There was the most magnificent piano, though Rosey seldom sang any of her six songs now;

and when she kept her couch at a certain most interesting period, the good Colonel, ever anxious to procure amusement for his darling, asked whether she would not like a barrel-organ grinding fifty or sixty favourite pieces, which a bearer could turn? And he mentioned how Windus, of their regiment, who loved music exceedingly, had a very fine instrument of this kind out to Barrackpore in the year 1810, and relays of barrels by each ship with all the new tunes from Europe. The Testimonial took its place in the centre of Mrs. Clive's table, surrounded by satellites of plate. The delectable parties were constantly gathered together, the grand barouche rolling in the Park, or stopping at the principal shops. Little Rosey bloomed in millinery, and was still the smiling little pet of her father-in-law, and poor Clive, in the midst of all these splendours, was gaunt, and sad, and silent; listless at most times, bitter and savage at others, pleased only when he was out of the society which bored him, and in the company of George and J. J., the simple friends of his youth.

His careworn look and altered appearance mollified my wife towards him — who had almost taken him again into favour. But she did not care for Mrs. Clive, and the Colonel, somehow, grew cool towards us, and to look askance upon the little band of Clive's friends. It seemed as if there were two parties in the house. There was Clive's set — J. J., the shrewd, silent little painter; Warrington, the cynic; and the author of the present biography, who was, I believe, supposed to give himself contemptuous airs; and to have become very high and mighty since his marriage. Then there was the great, numerous, and eminently respectable set, whose names were all registered in little Rosey's little visiting-book, and to whose houses she drove round, duly delivering the cards of Mr. and Mrs. Clive Newcome, and Colonel Newcome; — the generals and colonels, the judges and the fogies. The only man who kept well with both sides of the house was F. Bayham, Esq., who, having got into clover, remained in the enjoyment of that welcome pasture; who really loved Clive and the Colonel too, and had a hundred pleasant things and funny stories (the droll old creature!) to tell to the little lady for whom we others could scarcely find a word. The old friends of the student-days were not forgotten, but they did not seem to get on in the new house. The Miss Gandishes came to one of Mrs. Clive's balls, still in blue crape, still with ringlets on their wizened old foreheads, accompanying papa, with his shirt-collars turned down — who gazed in mute wonder on the splendid scene. Warrington actually asked Miss Gandish to dance, making woeful blunders, however, in the quadrille, while Clive, with something like one of his old smiles on his face, took out Miss Zoe Gandish, her sister. We made Gandish overeat and overdrink himself in the supper-room, and Clive cheered him by ordering a full length of Mrs. Clive Newcome from his distinguished pencil. Never was seen a grander exhibition of white satin and jewels. Smee, R.A., was furious at the preference shown to his rival.

We had Sandy M'Collop, too, at the party, who had returned from Rome, with his red beard, and his picture of the murder of the Red Comyn, which made but a dim effect in the Octagon Room of the Royal Academy, where the bleeding agonies of the dying warrior were veiled in an unkind twilight. On Sandy and his brethren little Rosey looked rather coldly. She tossed up her little head in conversation with me, and gave me to understand that this party was only an omnium gatherum, not one of the select parties, from which Heaven defend us. "We are Poins, and Nym, and Pistol," growled out George Warrington, as he strode away to finish the evening in Clive's painting — and smoking-room. "Now Prince Hal is married, and shares the paternal throne, his Princess is ashamed of his brigand associates of former days." She came and looked at us with a feeble little smile, as we sat smoking, and let the daylight in on us from the open door, and hinted to Mr. Clive that it was time to go to bed.

So Clive Newcome lay in a bed of down and tossed and tumbled there. He went to fine dinners, and sat silent over them; rode fine horses, and black Care jumped up behind the moody horseman. He was cut off in a great measure from the friends of his youth, or saw them by a kind of stealth and sufferance; was a very lonely, poor fellow, I am afraid, now that people were testimonialising his wife, and many an old comrade growling at his haughtiness and prosperity.

In former days, when his good father recognised the difference which fate, and time, and temper, had set between him and his son, we have seen with what a gentle acquiescence the old man submitted to his inevitable fortune, and how humbly he bore that stroke of separation which afflicted the boy lightly enough, but caused the loving sire so much pain. Then there was no bitterness between them, in spite of the fatal division; but now, it seemed as if there was anger on Thomas Newcome's part, because, though come together again, they were not united, though with every outward appliance of happiness Clive was not happy. What young man on earth could look for more? a sweet young wife, a handsome home, of which the only encumbrance was an old father, who would give his last drop of blood in his son's behalf. And it was to bring about this end that Thomas Newcome had toiled and had amassed a fortune. Could not Clive, with his talents and education, go down once or twice a week to the City and take a decent part in the business by which his wealth was

secured? He appeared at the various board-rooms and City conclaves, yawned at the meetings, and drew figures on the blotting-paper of the Company; had no interest in its transactions, no heart in its affairs; went away and galloped his horse alone; or returned to his painting-room, put on his old velvet jacket, and worked with his palettes and brushes. Palettes and brushes! Could he not give up these toys when he was called to a much higher station in the world? Could he not go talk with Rosey; — drive with Rosey, kind little soul, whose whole desire was to make him happy? Such thoughts as these, no doubt, darkened the Colonel's mind, and deepened the furrows round his old eyes. So it is, we judge men by our own standards; judge our nearest and dearest often wrong.

Many and many a time did Clive try and talk with the little Rosey, who chirped and prattled so gaily to his father. Many a time would she come and sit by his easel, and try her little powers to charm him, bring him little tales about their acquaintances, stories about this ball and that concert, practise artless smiles upon him, gentle little bouderies, tears, perhaps, followed by caresses and reconciliation. At the end of which he would return to his cigar; and she, with a sigh and a heavy heart, to the good old man who had bidden her to go and talk with him. He used to feel that his father had sent her; the thought came across him in their conversations, and straightway his heart would shut up and his face grew gloomy. They were not made to mate with one another. This was the truth; the shoe was a very pretty little shoe, but Clive's foot was too big for it.

Just before the testimonial, Mr. Clive was in constant attendance at home, and very careful and kind and happy with his wife, and the whole family party went very agreeably. Doctors were in constant attendance at Mrs. Clive Newcome's door; prodigious care was taken by the good Colonel in wrapping her and in putting her little feet on sofas, and in leading her to her carriage. The Campaigner came over in immense flurry from Edinburgh (where Uncle James was now very comfortably lodged in Picardy Place with the most agreeable society round about him), and all this circle was in a word very close and happy and intimate; but woe is me, Thomas Newcome's fondest hopes were disappointed this time: his little grandson lived but to see the light and leave it: and sadly, sadly, those preparations were put away, those poor little robes and caps, those delicate muslins and cambrics over which many a care had been forgotten, many a fond prayer thought, if not uttered. Poor little Rosey! she felt the grief very keenly; but she rallied from it very soon. In a very few months, her cheeks were blooming and dimpling with smiles again, and she was telling us how her party was an omnium gatherum.

The Campaigner had ere this returned to the scene of her northern exploits; not, I believe, entirely of the worthy woman's own free will. Assuming the command of the household, whilst her daughter kept her sofa, Mrs. Mackenzie had set that establishment into uproar and mutiny. She had offended the butler, outraged the housekeeper, wounded the sensibilities of the footmen, insulted the doctor, and trampled on the inmost corns of the nurse. It was surprising what a change appeared in the Campaigner's conduct, and how little, in former days, Colonel Newcome had known her. What the Emperor Napoleon the First said respecting our Russian enemies, might be applied to this lady, Grattez-la, and she appeared a Tartar. Clive and his father had a little comfort and conversation in conspiring against her. The old man never dared to try, but was pleased with the younger's spirit and gallantry in the series of final actions which, commencing over poor little Rosey's prostrate body in the dressing-room, were continued in the drawing-room, resumed with terrible vigour on the enemy's part in the dining-room, and ended, to the triumph of the whole establishment, at the outside of the hall-door.

When the routed Tartar force had fled back to its native north, Rosey made a confession, which Clive told me afterwards, bursting with bitter laughter. "You and papa seem to be very much agitated," she said. (Rosey called the Colonel papa in the absence of the Campaigner.) "I do not mind it a bit, except just at first, when it made me a little nervous. Mamma used always to be so; she used to scold and scold all day, both me and Josey, in Scotland, till grandmamma sent her away; and then in Fitzroy Square, and then in Brussels, she used to box my ears, and go into such tantrums; and I think," adds Rosey, with one of her sweetest smiles, "she had quarrelled with Uncle James before she came to us."

"She used to box Rosey's ears," roars out poor Clive, "and go into such tantrums, in Fitzroy Square and Brussels afterwards, and the pair would come down with their arms round each other's waists, smirking and smiling as if they had done nothing but kiss each other all their mortal lives! This is what we know about women — this is what we get, and find years afterwards, when we think we have married a smiling, artless young creature! Are you all such hypocrites, Mrs. Pendennis?" and he pulled his mustachios in his wrath.

"Poor Clive!" says Laura, very kindly. "You would not have had her tell tales of her mother, would you?"

“Oh, of course not,” breaks out Clive; “that is what you all say, and so you are hypocrites out of sheer virtue.”

It was the first time Laura had called him Clive for many a day. She was becoming reconciled to him. We had our own opinion about the young fellow’s marriage.

And, to sum up all, upon a casual rencontre with the young gentleman in question, whom we saw descending from a hansom at the steps of the Flag, Pall Mall, I opined that dark thoughts of Hoby had entered into Clive Newcome’s mind. Othello-like, he scowled after that unconscious Cassio as the other passed into the club in his lacquered boots.



CHAPTER LXIV

ABSIT OMEN

At the first of the Blackwall festivals, Hobson Newcome was present, in spite of the quarrel which had taken place between his elder brother and the chief of the firm of Hobson Brothers and Newcome. But it was the individual Barnes and the individual Thomas who had had a difference together; the Bundelcund Bank was not at variance with its chief house of commission in London; no man drank prosperity to the B. B. C., upon occasion of this festival, with greater fervour than Hobson Newcome, and the manner in which he just slightly alluded, in his own little speech of thanks, to the notorious differences between Colonel Newcome and his nephew, praying that these might cease some day, and, meanwhile, that the confidence between the great Indian establishment and its London agents might never diminish, was appreciated and admired by six-and-thirty gentlemen, all brimful of claret and enthusiasm, and in that happy state of mind in which men appreciate and admire everything.

At the second dinner, when the testimonial was presented, Hobson was not present. Nor did his name figure amongst those engraven on the trunk of Mr. Newcome's allegorical silver cocoa-nut tree. As we travelled homewards in the omnibus, Fred Bayham noticed the circumstance to me. "I have looked over the list of names," says he, "not merely that on the trunk, sir, but the printed list; it was rolled up and placed in one of the nests on the top of the tree. Why is Hobson's name not there? — Ha! it mislikes me, Pendennis."

F. B., who was now very great about City affairs, discoursed about stocks and companies with immense learning, and gave me to understand that he had transacted one or two little operations in Capel Court on his own account, with great present, and still larger prospective, advantages to himself. It is a fact that Mr. Ridley was paid, and that F. B.'s costume, though still eccentric, was comfortable, cleanly, and variegated. He occupied the apartments once tenanted by the amiable Honeyman. He lived in ease and comfort there. "You don't suppose," says he, "that the wretched stipend I draw from the Pall Mall Gazette enables me to maintain this kind of thing? F. B., sir, has a station in the world; F. B. moves among moneyers and City nobs, and eats cabobs with wealthy nabobs. He may marry, sir, and settle in life." We cordially wished every worldly prosperity to the brave F. B.

Happening to descry him one day in the Park, I remarked that his countenance wore an ominous and tragic appearance, which seemed to deepen as he neared me. I thought he had been toying affably with a nursery-maid the moment before, who stood with some of her little charges watching the yachts upon the Serpentine. Howbeit, espying my approach, F. B. strode away from the maiden and her innocent companions, and advanced to greet his old acquaintance, enveloping his face with shades of funereal gloom.

"Yon were the children of my good friend Colonel Huckaback of the Bombay Marines! Alas! unconscious of their doom, the little infants play. I was watching them at their sports. There is a pleasing young woman in attendance upon the poor children. They were sailing their little boats upon the Serpentine; racing and laughing, and making merry; and as I looked on, Master Hastings Huckaback's boat went down! Absit omen, Pendennis! I was moved by the circumstance. F. B. hopes that the child's father's argosy may not meet with shipwreck!"

"You mean the little yellow-faced man whom we met at Colonel Newcome's?" says Mr. Pendennis.

"I do, sir," growled F. B. "You know that he is a brother director with our Colonel in the Bundelcund Bank?"

"Gracious Heavens!" I cried, in sincere anxiety, "nothin has happened, I hope, to the Bundelcund Bank?"

"No," answers the other, "nothing has happened, the good ship is safe, sir, as yet. But she has narrowly escaped a great danger, Pendennis," cries F. B., gripping my arm with great energy, "there was a traitor in her crew — she has weathered the storm nobly — who would have sent her on the rocks, sir, who would have scuttled her at midnight."

"Pray drop your nautical metaphors, and tell me what you mean," cries F. B.'s companion, and Bayham continued his narration.

"Were you in the least conversant with City affairs," he said, "or did you deign to visit the spot where merchants mostly congregate, you would have heard the story, which was over the whole City yesterday, and spread dismay from Threadneedle Street to Leadenhall. The story is, that the firm of Hobson Brothers and Newcome, yesterday refused

acceptance of thirty thousand pounds' worth of bills of the Bundelcund Banking Company of India.

"The news came like a thunderclap upon the London Board of Directors, who had received no notice of the intentions of Hobson Brothers, and caused a dreadful panic amongst the shareholders of the concern. The board-room was besieged by colonels and captains, widows and orphans; within an hour after protest of bills were taken up, and you will see, in the City article of the Globe this very evening, an announcement that henceforward the house of Baines and Jolly, of Job Court, will meet engagements of the Bundelcund Banking Company of India, being provided with ample funds to do honour to every possible liability of that Company. But the shares fell, sir, in consequence of the panic. I hope they will rally. I trust and believe they will rally. For our good Colonel's sake and that of his friends, for the sake of the innocent children sporting by the Serpentine yonder.

"I had my suspicions when they gave that testimonial," said F. B. "In my experience of life, sir, I always feel rather shy about testimonials, and when a party gets one, somehow look out to hear of his smashing the next month. Absit omen! I will say again. I like not the going down of yonder little yacht."

The Globe sure enough contained a paragraph that evening announcing the occurrence which Mr. Bayham had described, and the temporary panic which it had occasioned, and containing an advertisement stating that Messrs. Baines and Jolly would henceforth act as agents of the Indian Company. Legal proceedings were presently threatened by the solicitors of the Company against the banking firm which had caused so much mischief. Mr. Hobson Newcome was absent abroad when the circumstance took place, and it was known that the protest of the bills was solely attributable to his nephew and partner. But after the break between the two firms, there was a rupture between Hobson's family and Colonel Newcome. The exasperated Colonel vowed that his brother and his nephew were traitors alike, and would have no further dealings with one or the other. Even poor innocent Sam Newcome, coming up to London from Oxford, where he had been plucked, and offering a hand to Clive, was frowned away by our Colonel, who spoke in terms of great displeasure to his son for taking the least notice of the young traitor.

Our Colonel was changed, changed in his heart, changed in his whole demeanour towards the world, and above all towards his son, for whom he had made so many kind sacrifices in his old days. We have said how, ever since Clive's marriage, a tacit strife had been growing up between father and son. The boy's evident unhappiness was like a reproach to his father. His very silence angered the old man. His want of confidence daily chafed and annoyed him. At the head of a large fortune, which he rightly persisted in spending, he felt angry with himself because he could not enjoy it, angry with his son, who should have helped him in the administration of his new estate, and who was but a listless, useless member of the little confederacy, a living protest against all the schemes of the good man's past life. The catastrophe in the City again brought father and son together somewhat, and the vindictiveness of both was roused by Barnes's treason. Time was when the Colonel himself would have viewed his kinsman more charitably, but fate and circumstance had angered that originally friendly and gentle disposition; hate and suspicion had mastered him, and if it cannot be said that his new life had changed him, at least it had brought out faults for which there had hitherto been no occasion, and qualities latent before. Do we know ourselves, or what good or evil circumstance may bring from us? Did Cain know, as he and his younger brother played round their mother's knee, that the little hand which caressed Abel should one day grow larger, and seize a brand to slay him? Thrice fortunate he, to whom circumstance is made easy: whom fate visits with gentle trial, and kindly Heaven keeps out of temptation.

In the stage which the family feud now reached, and which the biographer of the Newcomes is bound to describe, there is one gentle moralist who gives her sentence decidedly against Clive's father; whilst on the other hand a rough philosopher and friend of mine, whose opinions used to have some weight with me, stoutly declares that they were right. "War and justice are good things," says George Warrington, rattling his clenched fist on the table. "I maintain them, and the common sense of the world maintains them, against the preaching of all the Honeymans that ever puled from the pulpit. I have not the least objection in life to a rogue being hung. When a scoundrel is whipped I am pleased, and say, serve him right. If any gentleman will horsewhip Sir Barnes Newcome, Baronet, I shall not be shocked, but, on the contrary, go home and order an extra mutton-chop for dinner."

"Ah! revenge is wrong, Pen," pleads the other counsellor.

"Let alone that the wisest and best of all Judges has condemned it. It blackens the hearts of men. It distorts their views of right. It sets them to devise evil. It causes them to think unjustly of others. It is not the noblest return for injury, not even the bravest way of meeting it. The greatest courage is to bear persecution, not to answer when you are reviled, and

when wrong has been done you to forgive. I am sorry for what you call the Colonel's triumph and his enemy's humiliation. Let Barnes be as odious as you will, he ought never to have humiliated Ethel's brother; but he is weak. Other gentlemen as well are weak, Mr. Pen, although you are so much cleverer than women. I have no patience with the Colonel, and I beg you to tell him, whether he asks you or not that he has lost my good graces, and that I for one will not huzzah at what his friends and flatterers call his triumphs, and that I don't think in this instance he has acted like the dear Colonel, and the good Colonel, and the good Christian that I once thought him."

We must now tell what the Colonel and Clive had been doing, and what caused two such different opinions respecting their conduct from the two critics just named. The refusal of the London Banking House to accept the bills of the Great Indian Company of course affected very much the credit of that Company in this country. Sedative announcements were issued by the Directors in London; brilliant accounts of the Company's affairs abroad were published; proof incontrovertible was given that the B. B. C. was never in so flourishing a state as at that time when Hobson Brothers had refused its drafts; there could be no question that the Company had received a severe wound and was deeply if not vitally injured by the conduct of the London firm.

The propensity to sell out became quite epidemic amongst the shareholders. Everybody was anxious to realise. Why, out of the thirty names inscribed on poor Mrs. Clive's cocoa-nut tree no less than twenty deserters might be mentioned, or at least who would desert could they find an opportunity of doing so with arms and baggage. Wrathfully the good Colonel scratched the names of those faithless ones out of his daughter's visiting-book: haughtily he met them in the street; to desert the B. B. C. at the hour of peril was, in his idea, like applying for leave of absence on the eve of an action. He would not see that the question was not one of sentiment at all, but of chances and arithmetic; he would not hear with patience of men quitting the ship, as he called it. "They may go, sir," says he, "but let them never more be officers of mine." With scorn and indignation he paid off one or two timid friends, who were anxious to fly, and purchased their shares out of his own pocket. But his purse was not long enough for this kind of amusement. What money he had was invested in the Company already, and his name further pledged for meeting the engagements from which their late London bankers had withdrawn.

Those gentlemen, in the meanwhile, spoke of their differences with the Indian Bank as quite natural, and laughed at the absurd charges of personal hostility which poor Thomas Newcome publicly preferred. "Here is a hot-headed old Indian dragoon," says Sir Barnes, "who knows no more about business than I do about cavalry tactics or Hindostanee; who gets into a partnership along with other dragoons and Indian wiseacres, with some uncommonly wily old native practitioners; and they pay great dividends, and they set up a bank. Of course we will do these people's business as long as we are covered, but I have always told their manager that we would run no risks whatever, and close the account the very moment it did not suit us to keep it: and so we parted company six weeks ago, since when there has been a panic in the Company, a panic which has been increased by Colonel Newcome's absurd swagger and folly. He says I am his enemy; enemy indeed! So I am in private life, but what has that to do with business? In business, begad, there are no friends and no enemies at all. I leave all my sentiment on the other side of Temple Bar."

So Thomas Newcome, and Clive the son of Thomas, had wrath in their hearts against Barnes, their kinsman, and desired to be revenged upon him, and were eager after his undoing, and longed for an opportunity when they might meet him and overcome him, and put him to shame.

When men are in this frame of mind, a certain personage is said always to be at hand to help them and give them occasion for indulging in their pretty little passion. What is sheer hate seems to the individual entertaining the sentiment so like indignant virtue, that he often indulges in the propensity to the full, nay, lauds himself for the exercise of it. I am sure if Thomas Newcome in his present desire for retaliation against Barnes, had known the real nature of his sentiments towards that worthy, his conduct would have been different, and we should have heard of no such active hostilities as ensued.



CHAPTER LXV

IN WHICH MRS. CLIVE COMES INTO HER FORTUNE

Speaking of the affairs of B. B. C., Sir Barnes Newcome always took care to maintain his candid surprise relating to the proceedings of that Company. He set about evil reports against it! He endeavour to do it a wrong — absurd! If a friend were to ask him (and it was quite curious what a number did manage to ask him) whether he thought the Company was an advantageous investment, of course he would give an answer. He could not say conscientiously he thought so — never once had said so — in the time of their connexion, which had been formed solely with a view of obliging his amiable uncle. It was a quarrelsome Company; a dragoon Company; a Company of gentlemen accustomed to gunpowder, and fed on mulligatawny. He, forsooth, be hostile to it! There were some Companies that required no enemies at all, and would be pretty sure to go to the deuce their own way.

Thus, and with this amiable candour, spake Barnes, about a commercial speculation, the merits of which he had a right to canvass as well as any other citizen. As for Uncle Hobson, his conduct was characterised by a timidity which one would scarcely have expected from a gentleman of his florid, jolly countenance, active habits, and generally manly demeanour. He kept away from the cocoa-nut feast, as we have seen: he protested privily to the Colonel that his private goodwill continued undiminished but he was deeply grieved at the B. B. C. affair, which took place while he was on the Continent — confound the Continent, my wife would go — and which was entirely without his cognisance. The Colonel received his brother's excuses, first with awful bows and ceremony, and finally with laughter. "My good Hobson," said he, with the most insufferable kindness, "of course you intended to be friendly; of course the affair was done without your knowledge. We understand that sort of thing. London bankers have no hearts — for these last fifty years past that I have known you and your brother, and my amiable nephew, the present commanding officer, has there been anything in your conduct that has led me to suppose you had?" and herewith Colonel Newcome burst out into a laugh. It was not a pleasant laugh to hear. Worthy Hobson took his hat, and walked away, brushing it round and round, and looking very confused. The Colonel strode after him downstairs, and made him an awful bow at the hall door. Never again did Hobson Newcome set foot in that Tyburnian mansion.

During the whole of that season of the testimonial the cocoa-nut figured in an extraordinary number of banquets. The Colonel's hospitalities were more profuse than ever, and Mrs. Clive's toilettes more brilliant. Clive, in his confidential conversations with his friends, was very dismal and gloomy. When I asked City news of our well-informed friend F. B., I am sorry to say, his countenance became funereal. The B. B. C. shares, which had been at an immense premium twelve months since, were now slowly falling, falling.

"I wish," said Mr. Sherrick to me, "the Colonel would realise, even now, like that Mr. Ratray who has just come out of the ship, and brought a hundred thousand pounds with him."

"Come out of the ship! You little know the Colonel, Mr. Sherrick, if you think he will ever do that."

Mr. Ratray, though he had returned to Europe, gave the most cheering accounts of the B. B. C. It was in the most flourishing state. Shares sure to get up again. He had sold out entirely on account of his liver. Must come home — the doctor said so.

Some months afterwards, another director, Mr. Hedges, came home. Both of these gentlemen, as we know, entertained the fashionable world, got seats in Parliament, purchased places in the country, and were greatly respected. Mr. Hedges came out, but his wealthy partner, Mr. M'Gaspey, entered into the B. B. C. The entry of Mr. M'Gaspey into the affairs of the Company did not seem to produce very great excitement in England. The shares slowly fell. However, there was a prodigious indigo crop. The London manager was in perfect good-humour. In spite of this and that, of defections, of unpleasanties, of unfavourable whispers, and doubtful friends — Thomas Newcome kept his head high, and his face was always kind and smiling, except when certain family enemies were mentioned, and he frowned like Jove in anger.

We have seen how very fond little Rosey was of her mamma, of her uncle, James Binnie, and now of her papa, as she affectionately styled Thomas Newcome. This affection, I am sure, the two gentlemen returned with all their hearts, and but that they were much too generous and simple-minded to entertain such a feeling. It may be wondered that the two good

old boys were not a little jealous of one another. Howbeit it does not appear that they entertained such a feeling; at least it never interrupted the kindly friendship between them, and Clive was regarded in the light of a son by both of them, and each contented himself with his moiety of the smiling little girl's affection.

As long as they were with her, the truth is, little Mrs. Clive was very fond of people, very docile, obedient, easily pleased, brisk, kind, and good-humoured. She charmed her two old friends with little songs, little smiles — little kind offices, little caresses; and having administered Thomas Newcome's cigar to him in the daintiest, prettiest way, she would trip off to drive with James Binnie, or sit at his dinner, if he was indisposed, and be as gay, neat-handed, watchful, and attentive a child as any old gentleman could desire.

She did not seem to be very sorry to part with mamma, a want of feeling which that lady bitterly deplored in her subsequent conversation with her friends about Mrs. Clive Newcome. Possibly there were reasons why Rosey should not be very much vexed at quitting mamma; but surely she might have dropped a little tear as she took leave of kind, good old James Binnie. Not she. The gentleman's voice faltered, but hers did not in the least. She kissed him on the face, all smiles, blushes, and happiness, and tripped into the railway carriage with her husband and father-in-law, leaving the poor old uncle very sad. Our women said, I know not why, that little Rosey had no heart at all. Women are accustomed to give such opinions respecting the wives of their newly married friends. I am bound to add (and I do so during Mr. Clive Newcome's absence from England, otherwise I should not like to venture upon the statement), that some men concur with the ladies' opinion of Mrs. Clive. For instance, Captains Goby and Hoby declare that her treatment of the latter, her encouragement, and desertion of him when Clive made his proposals, were shameful.

At this time Rosey was in a pupillary state. A good, obedient little girl, her duty was to obey the wishes of her dear mamma. How show her sense of virtue and obedience better than by promptly and cheerfully obeying mamma, and at the orders of that experienced Campaigner, giving up Bobby Hoby, and going to England to a fine house, to be presented at Court, to have all sorts of pleasure with a handsome young husband and a kind father-in-law by her side? No wonder Rosey was not in a very active state of grief at parting from Uncle James. He strove to console himself with these considerations when he had returned to the empty house, where she had danced, and smiled, and warbled; and he looked at the chair she sat in; and at the great mirror which had so often reflected her fresh pretty face; — the great callous mirror, which now only framed upon its shining sheet the turban, and the ringlets, and the plump person, and the resolute smile of the old Campaigner.

After that parting with her uncle at the Brussels railway, Rosey never again beheld him. He passed into the Campaigner's keeping, from which alone he was rescued by the summons of pallid death. He met that summons like a philosopher; rejected rather testily all the mortuary consolations which his nephew-in-law, Josey's husband, thought proper to bring to his bedside; and uttered opinions which scandalised that divine. But as he left Mrs. M'Craw only 500 pounds, thrice that sum to his sister, and the remainder of his property to his beloved niece, Rosa Mackenzie, now Rosa Newcome, let us trust that Mr. M'Craw, hurt and angry at the ill-favour shown to his wife, his third young wife, his best-beloved Josey, at the impatience with which the deceased had always received his, Mr. M'Craw's, own sermons; — let us hope, I say, that the reverend gentleman was mistaken in his views respecting the present position of Mr. James Binnie's soul; and that Heaven may have some regions yet accessible to James, which Mr. M'Craw's intellect has not yet explored. Look, gentlemen! Does a week pass without the announcement of the discovery of a new comet in the sky, a new star in the heaven, twinkling dimly out of a yet farther distance, and only now becoming visible to human ken though existent for ever and ever? So let us hope divine truths may be shining, and regions of light and love extant, which Geneva glasses cannot yet perceive, and are beyond the focus of Roman telescopes.

I think Clive and the Colonel were more affected by the news of James's death than Rosey, concerning whose wonderful strength of mind good Thomas Newcome discoursed to my Laura and me, when, fancying that my friend's wife needed comfort and consolation, Mrs. Pendennis went to visit her. "Of course we shall have no more parties this year," sighed Rosey. She looked very pretty in her black dress. Clive, in his hearty way, said a hundred kind feeling things about the departed friend. Thomas Newcome's recollections of him, and regret, were no less tender and sincere. "See," says he, "how that dear child's sense of duty makes her hide her feelings! Her grief is most deep, but she wears a calm countenance. I see her looking sad in private, but I no sooner speak than she smiles." "I think," said Laura, as we came away, "that Colonel Newcome performs all the courtship part in the marriage, and Clive, poor Clive, though he spoke very nobly and generously about Mr. Binnie, I am sure it is not his old friend's death merely, which makes him so unhappy."

Poor Clive, by right of his wife, was now rich Clive; the little lady having inherited from her kind relative no inconsiderable sum of money. In a very early part of this story, mention has been made of a small sum producing one hundred pounds a year, which Clive's father had made over to the lad when he sent him from India. This little sum Mr. Clive had settled upon his wife before his marriage, being indeed all he had of his own; for the famous bank shares which his father presented to him, were only made over formally when the young man came to London after his marriage, and at the paternal request and order appeared as a most inefficient director of the B. B. C. Now Mrs. Newcome, of her inheritance, possessed not only B. B. C. shares, but moneys in bank, and shares in East India Stock, so that Clive in the right of his wife had a seat in the assembly of East India shareholders, and a voice in the election of directors of that famous company. I promise you Mrs. Clive was a personage of no little importance. She carried her little head with an aplomb and gravity which amused some of us. F. B. bent his most respectfully down before her; she sent him on messages, and deigned to ask him to dinner. He once more wore a cheerful countenance; the clouds which gathered o'er the sun of Newcome were in the bosom of the ocean buried, Bayham said, by James Binnie's brilliant behaviour to his niece.

Clive was a proprietor of East India Stock, and had a vote in electing the directors of that Company; and who so fit to be a director of his affairs as Thomas Newcome, Esq., Companion of the Bath, and so long a distinguished officer in its army? To hold this position of director, used, up to very late days, to be the natural ambition of many East Indian gentlemen. Colonel Newcome had often thought of offering himself as a candidate, and now openly placed himself on the lists, and publicly announced his intention. His interest was rather powerful through the Indian bank, of which he was a director, and many of the shareholders of which were proprietors of the East India Company. To have a director of the B. B. C. also a member of the parliament in Leadenhall Street, would naturally be beneficial to the former institution. Thomas Newcome's prospectuses were issued accordingly, and his canvass received with tolerable favour.

Within a very short time another candidate appeared in the field — a retired Bombay lawyer, of considerable repute and large means — and at the head of this gentleman's committee appeared the names of Hobson Brothers and Newcome, very formidable personages at the East India House, with which the bank of Hobson Brothers have had dealings for half a century past, and where the old lady, who founded or consolidated that family, had had three stars before her own venerable name, which had descended upon her son Sir Brian, and her grandson, Sir Barnes.

War was thus openly declared between Thomas Newcome and his nephew. The canvass on both sides was very hot and eager. The number of promises was pretty equal. The election was not to come off yet for a while; for aspirants to the honourable office of director used to announce their wishes years before they could be fulfilled, and returned again and again to the contest before they finally won it. Howbeit, the Colonel's prospects were very fair, and a prodigious indigo crop came in to favour the B. B. C., with the most brilliant report from the board at Calcutta. The shares, still somewhat sluggish, rose again, the Colonel's hopes with them, and the courage of gentlemen at home who had invested their money in the transaction.

We were sitting one day round the Colonel's dinner-table; it was not one of the cocoa-nut-tree days; that emblem was locked up in the butler's pantry, and only beheld the lamps on occasions of state. It was a snug family party in the early part of the year, When scarcely anybody was in town; only George Warrington, and F. B., and Mr. and Mrs. Pendennis; and the ladies having retired, We were having such a talk as we used to enjoy in quiet old days, before marriages and cares and divisions had separated us.

F. B. led the conversation. The Colonel received his remarks with great gravity, and thought him an instructive personage. Others considered him rather as amusing than instructive, and so his eloquence was generally welcome. The canvass for the directorship was talked over. The improved affairs of a certain great Banking Company, which shall be nameless, but one which F. B. would take the liberty to state, would, in his opinion, for ever unite the mother country to our great Indian possessions; — the prosperity of this great Company was enthusiastically drunk by Mr. Bayham in some of the very best claret. The conduct of the enemies of that Company was characterised in terms of bitter, but not undeserved, satire. F. B. rather liked to air his oratory, and neglected few opportunities for making speeches after dinners.

The Colonel admired his voice and sentiments not the less, perhaps, because the latter were highly laudatory of the good man. And not from interest, at least, as far as he himself knew — not from any mean or selfish motives, did F. B. speak. He called Colonel Newcome his friend, his benefactor: kissed the hem of his garment: he wished fervently that he could have been the Colonel's son: he expressed, repeatedly, a desire that some one would speak ill of the Colonel, so that he, F. B., might have the opportunity of polishing that individual off in about two seconds. He covered the Colonel with all

his heart; nor is any gentleman proof altogether against this constant regard and devotion from another.

The Colonel used to wag his head wisely, and say Mr. Bayham's suggestions were often exceedingly valuable, as indeed the fact was, though his conduct was no more of a piece with his opinions than those of some other folks occasionally are.

"What the Colonel ought to do, sir, to help him in the direction," says F. B., "is to get into Parliament. The House of Commons would aid him into the Court of Directors, and the Court of Directors would help him in the House of Commons."

"Most wisely said," says Warrington.

The Colonel declined. "I have long had the House of Commons in my eye," he said; "but not for me. I wanted my boy to go there. It would be a proud day for me if I could see him there."

"I can't speak," says Clive, from his end of the table. "I don't understand about parties, like F. B. here."

"I believe I do know a thing or two," Mr. Bayham here interposes.

"And politics do not interest me in the least," Clive sighs out, drawing pictures with his fork on his napkin, and not heeding the other's interruption.

"I wish I knew what would interest him," his father whispers to me, who happened to be at his side. "He never cares to be out of his painting-room; and he doesn't seem to be very happy even in there. I wish to God, Pen, I knew what had come over the boy." I thought I knew; but what was the use of telling, now there was no remedy?

"A dissolution is expected every day," continued F. B. "The papers are full of it. Ministers cannot go on with this majority — cannot possibly go on, sir. I have it on the best authority; and men who are anxious about their seats are writing to their constituents, or are subscribing at missionary meetings, or are gone down to lecturing at Athenaeums, and that sort of thing."

Here Warrington burst out into a laughter much louder than the occasion of the speech of F. B. seemed to warrant; and the Colonel, turning round with some dignity, asked the cause of George's amusement.

"What do you think your darling, Sir Barnes Newcome Newcome, has been doing during the recess?" cries Warrington. "I had a letter this morning, from my liberal and punctual employer, Thomas Potts, Esquire, of the Newcome Independent, who states, in language scarcely respectful, that Sir Barnes Newcome Newcome is trying to come the religious dodge, as Mr. Potts calls it. He professes to be stricken down by grief on account of late family circumstances; wears black, and puts on the most piteous aspect, and asks ministers of various denominations to tea with him; and the last announcement is the most stupendous of all. Stop, I have it in my greatcoat;" and, ringing the bell, George orders a servant to bring him a newspaper from his great-coat pocket. "Here it is, actually in print," Warrington continues, and reads to us:—"Newcome Athenaeum. 1, for the benefit of the Newcome Orphan Children's Home, and 2, for the benefit of the Newcome Soup Association, without distinction of denomination. Sir Barnes Newcome Newcome, Bart., proposes to give two lectures, on Friday the 23rd, and Friday the 30th, instant. No. 1, The Poetry of Childhood: Doctor Watts, Mrs. Barbauld, Jane Taylor, No. 2, The Poetry of Womanhood, and the Affections: Mrs. Hemans, L. E. L. Threepence will be charged at the doors, which will go to the use of the above two admirable Societies.' Potts wants me to go down and hear him. He has an eye to business. He has had a quarrel with Sir Barnes, and wants me to go down and hear him, and smash him, he kindly says. Let us go down, Clive. You shall draw your cousin as you have drawn his villainous little mug a hundred times before; and I will do the smashing part, and we will have some fun out of the transaction."

"Besides, Florac will be in the country; going to Rosebury is a journey worth the taking, I can tell you; and we have old Mrs. Mason to go and see, who sighs after you, Colonel. My wife went to see her," remarks Mr. Pendennis, "and —"

"And Miss Newcome, I know," says the Colonel.

"She is away at Brighton, with her little charges, for sea air. My wife heard from her today."

"Oh, indeed. Mrs. Pendennis corresponds with her?" says our host, darkling under his eyebrows; and, at this moment, my neighbour, F. B., is kind enough to scrunch my foot under the table with the weight of his heel, as much as to warn me, by an appeal to my own corns, to avoid treading on so delicate a subject in that house. "Yes," said I, in spite, perhaps in consequence, of this interruption. "My wife does correspond with Miss Ethel, who is a noble creature, and whom those who know her know how to love and admire. She is very much changed since you knew her, Colonel Newcome; since the misfortunes in Sir Barnes's family, and the differences between you and him. Very much changed and very much improved. Ask my wife about her, who knows her most intimately, and hears from her constantly."

"Very likely, very likely," cried the Colonel, hurriedly, "I hope she is improved, with all my heart. I am sure there was room for it. Gentlemen, shall we go up to the ladies and have some coffee?" And herewith the colloquy ended, and the party ascended to the drawing-room.

The party ascended to the drawing-room, where no doubt both the ladies were pleased by the invasion which ended their talk. My wife and the Colonel talked apart, and I saw the latter looking gloomy, and the former pleading very eagerly, and using a great deal of action, as the little hands are wont to do, when the mistress's heart is very much moved. I was sure she was pleading Ethel's cause with her uncle.

So indeed she was. And Mr. George, too, knew what her thoughts were. "Look at her!" he said to me. "Don't you see what she is doing? She believes in that girl whom you all said Clive took a fancy to before he married his present little placid wife; a nice little simple creature, who is worth a dozen Ethels."

"Simple certainly," says Mr. P., with a shrug of the shoulders.

"A simpleton of twenty is better than a roue of twenty. It is better not to have thought at all, than to have thought such things as must go through a girl's mind whose life is passed in jilting and being jilted; whose eyes, as soon as they are opened, are turned to the main chance, and are taught to leer at earl, to languish at a marquis, and to grow blind before a commoner. I don't know much about fashionable life. Heaven help us (you young Brummell! I see the reproach in your face!) Why, sir, it absolutely appears to me as if this little hop-o'-my-thumb of a creature has begun to give herself airs since her marriage and her carriage. Do you know, I rather thought she patronised me? Are all women spoiled by their contact with the world, and their bloom rubbed off in the market? I know one who seems to me to remain pure! to be sure, I only know her, and this little person, and Mrs. Flanagan our laundress, and my sisters at home, who don't count. But that Miss Newcome to whom once you introduced me? Oh, the cockatrice! only that poison don't affect your wife, the other would kill her. I hope the Colonel will not believe a word which Laura says." And my wife's tete-a-tete with our host coming to an end about this time, Mr. Warrington in high spirits goes up to the ladies, recapitulates the news of Barnes's lecture, recites "How doth the little busy bee," and gives a quasi-satirical comment upon that well-known poem, which bewilders Mrs. Clive, until, set on by the laughter of the rest of the audience, she laughs very freely at that odd man, and calls him "you droll satirical creature you!" and says "she never was so much amused in her life. Were you, Mrs. Pendennis?"

Meanwhile Clive, who has been sitting apart moodily biting his nails, not listening to F. B.'s remarks, has broken into a laugh once or twice, and gone to a writing-book, on which, whilst George is still disserting, Clive is drawing.

At the end of the other's speech, F. B. goes up to the draughtsman, looks over his shoulder, makes one or two violent efforts as of inward convulsion, and finally explodes in an enormous guffaw. "It's capital! By Jove, it's capital! Sir Barnes would never dare to face his constituents with that picture of him hung up in Newcome!"

And F. B. holds up the drawing, at which we all laugh except Laura. As for the Colonel, he paces up and down the room, holding the sketch close to his eyes, holding it away from him, patting it, clapping his son delightedly on the shoulder. "Capital! capital! We'll have the picture printed, by Jove, sir; show vice it's own image; and shame the viper in his own nest, sir. That's what we will."

Mrs. Pendennis came away with rather a heavy heart from this party. She chose to interest herself about the right or wrong of her friends; and her mind was disturbed by the Colonel's vindictive spirit. On the subsequent day we had occasion to visit our friend J. J. (who was completing the sweetest little picture, No. 263 in the Exhibition, "Portrait of a Lady and Child"), and we found that Clive had been with the painter that morning likewise; and that J. J. was acquainted with his scheme. That he did not approve of it we could read in the artist's grave countenance. "Nor does Clive approve of it either!" cried Ridley, with greater eagerness than he usually displayed, and more openness than he was accustomed to exhibit in judging unfavourably of his friends.

"Among them they have taken him away from his art," Ridley said. "They don't understand him when he talks about it; they despise him for pursuing it. Why should I wonder at that? my parents despised it too, and my father was not a grand gentleman like the Colonel, Mrs. Pendennis. Ah! why did the Colonel ever grow rich? Why had not Clive to work for his bread as have? He would have done something that was worthy of him then; now his time must be spent in dancing attendance at balls and operas, and yawning at City board-rooms. They call that business: they think he is idling when he comes here, poor fellow! As if life was long enough for our art; and the best labour we can give, good enough for it! He went away groaning this morning, and quite saddened in spirits. The Colonel wants to set up himself for Parliament, or to set

Clive up; but he says he won't. I hope he won't; do not you, Mrs. Pendennis?"

The painter turned as he spoke; and the bright northern light which fell upon the sitter's head was intercepted, and lighted up his own as he addressed us. Out of that bright light looked his pale thoughtful face, and long locks and eager brown eyes. The palette on his arm was a great shield painted of many colours: he carried his maul-stick and a sheaf of brushes along with the weapons of his glorious but harmless war. With these he achieves conquests, wherein none are wounded save the envious: with that he shelters him against how much idleness, ambition, temptations! Occupied over that consoling work, idle thoughts cannot gain mastery over him: selfish wishes or desires are kept at bay. Art is truth: and truth is religion: and its study and practice a daily work of pious duty. What are the world's struggles, brawls, successes, to that calm recluse pursuing his calling? See, twinkling in the darkness round his chamber, numberless beautiful trophies of the graceful victories which he has won:— sweet flowers of fancy reared by him:— kind shapes of beauty which he has devised and moulded. The world enters into the artist's studio, and scornfully bids him a price for his genius, or makes dull pretence to admire it. What know you of his art? You cannot read the alphabet of that sacred book, good old Thomas Newcome! What can you tell of its glories, joys, secrets, consolations? Between his two best-beloved mistresses, poor Clive's luckless father somehow interposes; and with sorrowful, even angry protests. In place of Art the Colonel brings him a ledger; and in lieu of first love, shows him Rosey.

No wonder that Clive hangs his head; rebels sometimes, desponds always: he has positively determined to refuse to stand for Newcome, Ridley says. Laura is glad of his refusal, and begins to think of him once more as of the Clive of old days.



CHAPTER LXVI

IN WHICH THE COLONEL AND THE NEWCOME ATHENAEUM ARE BOTH LECTURED

At breakfast with his family, on the morning after the little entertainment to which we were bidden, in the last chapter, Colonel Newcome was full of the projected invasion of Barnes's territories, and delighted to think that there was an opportunity of at last humiliating that rascal.

"Clive does not think he is a rascal at all, papa," cries Rosey, from behind her tea-urn; "that is, you said you thought papa judged him too harshly; you know you did, this morning!" And from her husband's angry glances, she flies to his father's for protection. Those were even fiercer than Clive's. Revenge flashed from beneath Thomas Newcome's grizzled eyebrows, and glanced in the direction where Clive sat. Then the Colonel's face flushed up, and he cast his eyes down towards his tea-cup, which he lifted with a trembling hand. The father and son loved each other so, that each was afraid of the other. A war between two such men is dreadful; pretty little pink-faced Rosey, in a sweet little morning cap and ribbons, her pretty little fingers twinkling with a score of rings, sat simpering before her silver tea-urn, which reflected her pretty little pink baby face. Little artless creature! what did she know of the dreadful wounds which her little words inflicted in the one generous breast and the other?

"My boy's heart is gone from me," thinks poor Thomas Newcome; "our family is insulted, our enterprises ruined, by that traitor, and my son is not even angry! he does not care for the success of our plans — for the honour of our name even; I make him a position of which any young man in England might be proud, and Clive scarcely deigns to accept it."

"My wife appeals to my father," thinks poor Clive; "it is from him she asks counsel, and not from me. Be it about the ribbon in her cap, or any other transaction in our lives, she takes her colour from his opinion, and goes to him for advice, and I have to wait till it is given, and conform myself to it. If I differ from the dear old father, I wound him; if I yield up my opinion, as I do always, it is with a bad grace, and I wound him still. With the best intentions in the world, what a slave's life it is that he has made for me!"

"How interested you are in your papers!" resumes the sprightly nose. "What can you find in those horrid politics?" Both gentlemen are looking at their papers with all their might, and no doubt cannot see one single word which those brilliant and witty leading articles contain.

"Clive is like you, Rosey," says the Colonel, laying his paper down, "and does not care for politics."

"He only cares for pictures, papa," says Mrs. Clive. "He would not drive with me yesterday in the Park, but spent hours in his room, while you were toiling in the City, poor papa! — spent hours painting a horrid beggar-man dressed up as a monk. And this morning, he got up quite early, quite early, and has been out ever so long, and only came in for breakfast just now! just before the bell rung."

"I like a ride before breakfast," says Clive.

"A ride! I know where you have been, sir! He goes away morning after morning, to that little Mr. Ridley's — his chums, papa, and he comes back with his hands all over horrid paint. He did this morning; you know you did, Clive."

"I did not keep any one waiting, Rosa," says Clive. "I like to have two or three hours at my painting when I can spare time." Indeed, the poor fellow used so to run away of summer meetings for Ridley's instructions, and gallop home again, so as to be in time for the family meal.

"Yes," cries Rosey, tossing up the cap and ribbons, "he gets up so early in the morning, that at night he falls asleep after dinner; very pleasant and polite, isn't he, papa?"

"I am up betimes too, my dear," says the Colonel (many and many a time he must have heard Clive as he left the house); "I have a great many letters to write, affairs of the greatest importance to examine and conduct. Mr. Betts from the City is often with me for hours before I come down to your breakfast-table. A man who has the affairs of such a great bank as ours to look to, must be up with the lark. We are all early risers in India."

"You dear kind papa!" says little Rosey, with unfeigned admiration; and she puts out one of the plump white little jewelled hands, and pats the lean brown paw of the Colonel which is nearest to her.

"Is Ridley's picture getting on well, Clive?" asks the Colonel, trying to interest himself about Ridley and his picture.

"Very well; it is beautiful; he has sold it for a great price; they must make him an Academician next year," replies Clive.

"A most industrious and meritorious young man; he deserves every honour that may happen to him," says the old soldier. "Rosa, my dear, it is time that you should ask Mr. Ridley to dinner, and Mr. Smee, and some of those gentlemen. We will drive this afternoon and see your portrait."

"Clive does not go to sleep after dinner when Mr. Ridley comes here," cries Rosa.

"No; I think it is my turn then," says the Colonel, with a glance of kindness. The anger has disappeared from under his brows; at that moment the menaced battle is postponed.

"And yet I know that it must come," says poor Clive, telling me the story as he hangs on my arm, and we pace through the Park. "The Colonel and I are walking on a mine, and that poor little wife of mine is perpetually flinging little shells to fire it. I sometimes wish it were blown up, and I were done for, Pen. I don't think my widow would break her heart about me. No; I have no right to say that; it's a shame to say that; she tries her very best to please me, poor little dear. It's the fault of my temper, perhaps, that she can't. But they neither understand me, don't you see? the Colonel can't help thinking I am a degraded being, because I am fond of painting. Still, dear old boy, he patronises Ridley; a man of genius, whom those sentries ought to salute, by Jove, sir, when he passes. Ridley patronised by an old officer of Indian dragoons, a little bit of a Rosey, and a fellow who is not fit to lay his palette for him! I want sometimes to ask J. J.'s pardon, after the Colonel has been talking to him in his confounded condescending way, uttering some awful bosh about the fine arts. Rosey follows him, and trips round J. J.'s studio, and pretends to admire, and says, 'How soft; how sweet!' recalling some of mamma-in-law's dreadful expressions, which make me shudder when I hear them. If my poor old father had a confidant into whose arm he could hook his own, and whom he could pester with his family griefs as I do you, the dear old boy would have his dreary story to tell too. I hate banks, bankers, Bundelcund, indigo, cotton, and the whole business. I go to that confounded board, and never hear one syllable that the fellows are talking about. I sit there because he wishes me to sit there; don't you think he sees that my heart is out of the business; that I would rather be at home in my painting-room? We don't understand each other, but we feel each other, as it were by instinct. Each thinks in his own way, but knows what the other is thinking. We fight mute battles, don't you see, and, our thoughts, though we don't express them, are perceptible to one another, and come out from our eyes, or pass out from us somehow, and meet, and fight, and strike, and wound."

Of course Clive's confidant saw how sore and unhappy the poor fellow was, and commiserated his fatal but natural condition. The little ills of life are the hardest to bear, as we all very well know. What would the possession of a hundred thousand a year, or fame, and the applause of one's countrymen, or the loveliest and best-beloved woman — of any glory, and happiness, or good-fortune avail to a gentleman, for instance, who was allowed to enjoy them only with the condition of wearing a shoe with a couple of nails or sharp pebbles inside it? All fame and happiness would disappear, and plunge down that shoe. All life would rankle round those little nails. I strove, by such philosophic sedatives as confidants are wont to apply on these occasions, to soothe my poor friend's anger and pain; and I dare say the little nails hurt the patient just as much as before.

Clive pursued his lugubrious talk through the Park, and continued it as far as the modest-furnished house which we then occupied in the Pimlico region. It so happened that the Colonel and Mrs. Clive also called upon us that day, and found this culprit in Laura's drawing-room, when they entered it, descending out of that splendid barouche in which we have already shown Mrs. Clive to the public.

"He has not been here for months before; nor have you Rosa; nor have you, Colonel; though we have smothered our indignation, and been to dine with you, and to call, ever so many times!" cries Laura.

The Colonel pleaded his business engagements; Rosa, that little woman of the world, had a thousand calls to make, and who knows how much to do? since she came out. She had been to fetch papa, at Bays's, and the porter had told the Colonel that Mr. Clive and Mr. Pendennis had just left the club together.

"Clive scarcely ever drives with me," says Rosa; "papa almost always does."

"Rosey's is such a swell carriage, that I feel ashamed," says Clive.

"I don't understand you young men. I don't see why you need be ashamed to go on the Course with your wife in her carriage, Clive," remarks the Colonel.

"The Course! the Course is at Calcutta, papa!" cries Rosey. "We drive in the Park."

"We have a park at Barrackpore too, my dear," says papa.

"And he calls his grooms saices! He said he was going to send away a saice for being tipsy, and I did not know in the least what he could mean, Laura!"

"Mr. Newcome! you must go and drive on the Course with Rosa now; and the Colonel must sit and talk with me, whom he has not been to see for such a long time." Clive presently went off in state by Rosey's side, and then Laura showed Colonel Newcome his beautiful white Cashmere shawl round a successor of that little person who had first been wrapped in that web, now a stout young gentleman whose noise could be clearly heard in the upper regions.

"I wish you could come down with us, Arthur, upon our electioneering visit."

"That of which you were talking last night? Are you bent upon it?"

"Yes, I am determined on it."

Laura heard a child's cry at this moment, and left the room with a parting glance at her husband, who in fact had talked over the matter with Mrs. Pendennis, and agreed with her in opinion.

As the Colonel had opened the question, I ventured to make a respectful remonstrance against the scheme. Vindictiveness on the part of a man so simple and generous, so fair and noble in all his dealings as Thomas Newcome, appeared in my mind unworthy of him. Surely his kinsman had sorrow and humiliation enough already at home. Barnes's further punishment, we thought, might be left to time, to remorse, to the Judge of right and wrong; Who better understands than we can do, our causes and temptations towards evil actions, Who reserves the sentence for His own tribunal. But when angered, the best of us mistake our own motives, as we do those of the enemy who inflames us. What may be private revenge, we take to be indignant virtue and just revolt against wrong. The Colonel would not hear of counsels of moderation, such as I bore him from a sweet Christian pleader. "Remorse!" he cried out with a laugh, "that villain will never feel it until he is tied up and whipped at the cart's tail! Time change that rogue! Unless he is wholesomely punished, he will grow a greater scoundrel every year. I am inclined to think, sir," says he, his honest brows darkling as he looked towards me, "that you too are spoiled by this wicked world, and these heartless, fashionable, fine people. You wish to live well with the enemy, and with us too, Pendennis. It can't be. He who is not with us is against us. I very much fear, sir, that the women, the women, you understand, have been talking you over. Do not let us speak any more about this subject, for I don't wish that my son, and my son's old friend, should have a quarrel." His face became red, his voice quivered with agitation, and he looked with glances which I was pained to behold in those kind old eyes: not because his wrath and suspicion visited myself, but because an impartial witness, nay, a friend to Thomas Newcome in that family quarrel, I grieved to think that a generous heart was led astray, and to see a good man do wrong. So with no more thanks for his interference than a man usually gets who meddles in domestic strifes, the present luckless advocate ceased pleading.

To be sure, the Colonel and Clive had other advisers, who did not take the peaceful side. George Warrington was one of these; he was for war a l'outrance with Barnes Newcome; for keeping no terms with such a villain. He found a pleasure in hunting him, and whipping him. "Barnes ought to be punished," George said, "for his poor wife's misfortune; it was Barnes's infernal cruelty, wickedness, selfishness, which had driven her into misery and wrong." Mr. Warrington went down to Newcome, and was present at that lecture whereof mention has been made in a previous chapter. I am afraid his behaviour was very indecorous; he laughed at the pathetic allusions of the respected Member for Newcome; he sneered at the sublime passages; he wrote an awful critique in the Newcome Independent two days after, whereof the irony was so subtle, that half the readers of the paper mistook his grave scorn for respect, and his gibes for praise.

Clive, his father, and Frederick Bayham, their faithful aide-de-camp, were at Newcome likewise when Sir Barnes's oration was delivered. At first it was given out at Newcome that the Colonel visited the place for the purpose of seeing his dear old friend and pensioner, Mrs. Mason, who was now not long to enjoy his bounty, and so old, as scarcely to know her benefactor. Only after her sleep, or when the sun warmed her and the old wine with which he supplied her, was the good old woman able to recognise her Colonel. She mingled father and son together in her mind. A lady who now often came in to her, thought she was wandering in her talk, when the poor old woman spoke of a visit she had had from her boy; and then the attendant told Miss Newcome that such a visit had actually taken place, and that but yesterday Clive and his father had been in that room, and occupied the chair where she sat. "The young lady was taken quite ill, and seemed ready to faint almost," Mrs. Mason's servant and spokeswoman told Colonel Newcome when that gentleman arrived shortly after Ethel's departure, to see his old nurse. "Indeed! he was very sorry." The maid told many stories about Miss Newcome's

goodness and charity; how she was constantly visiting the poor now; how she was for ever engaged in good works for the young, the sick, and the aged. She had had a dreadful misfortune in love; she was going to be married to a young marquis; richer even than Prince de Moncontour down at Rosebury; but it was all broke off on account of that dreadful affair at the Hall.

Was she very good to the poor? did she come often to see her grandfather's old friend? it was no more than she ought "to do," Colonel Newcome said; without, however, thinking fit to tell his informant that he had himself met his niece Ethel, five minutes before he had entered Mrs. Mason's door.

The poor thing was in discourse with Mr. Harris, the surgeon, and talking (as best she might, for no doubt the news which she had just heard had agitated her), talking about blankets, and arrowroot, wine, and medicaments for her poor, when she saw her uncle coming towards her. She tottered a step or two forwards to meet him; held both her hands out, and called his name; but he looked her sternly in the face, took off his hat and bowed, and passed on. He did not think fit to mention the meeting even to his son, Clive; but we may be sure Mr. Harris, the surgeon, spoke of the circumstance that night after the lecture, at the club, where a crowd of gentlemen were gathered together, smoking their cigars, and enjoying themselves according to their custom, and discussing Sir Barnes Newcome's performance.

According to established usage in such cases, our esteemed representative was received by the committee of the Newcome Athenaeum, assembled in their committee-room, and thence marshalled by the chairman and vice-chairman to his rostrum in the lecture-hall, round about which the magnates of the institution and the notabilities of the town were rallied on this public occasion. The Baronet came in some state from his own house, arriving at Newcome in his carriage with four horses, accompanied by my lady his mother, and Miss Ethel his beautiful sister, who now was mistress at the Hall. His little girl was brought — five years old now; she sate on her aunt's knee, and slept during a greater part of the performance. A fine bustle, we may be sure, was made on the introduction of these personages to their reserved seats on the platform, where they sate encompassed by others of the great ladies of Newcome, to whom they and the lecturer were especially gracious at this season. Was not Parliament about to be dissolved, and were not the folks at Newcome Park particularly civil at that interesting period? So Barnes Newcome mounts his pulpit, bows round to the crowded assembly in acknowledgment of their buzz of applause or recognition, passes his lily-white pocket-handkerchief across his thin lips, and dashes off into his lecture about Mrs. Hemans and the poetry of the affections. A public man, a commercial man as we well know, yet his heart is in his home, and his joy in his affections; the presence of this immense assembly here this evening; of the industrious capitalists; of the intelligent middle class; of the pride and mainstay of England, the operatives of Newcome; these, surrounded by their wives and their children (a graceful bow to the bonnets to the right of the platform), show that they too have hearts to feel, and homes to cherish; that they, too, feel the love of women, the innocence of children, the love of song! Our lecturer then makes a distinction between man's poetry and woman's poetry, charging considerably in favour of the latter. We show that to appeal to the affections is after all the true office of the bard; to decorate the homely threshold, to wreath flowers round the domestic hearth, the delightful duty of the Christian singer. We glance at Mrs. Hemans's biography, and state where she was born, and under what circumstances she must have at first, etc. etc. Is this a correct account of Sir Barnes Newcome's lecture? I was not present, and did not read the report. Very likely the above may be a reminiscence of that mock lecture which Warrington delivered in anticipation of the Baronet's oration.

After he had read for about five minutes, it was remarked the Baronet suddenly stopped and became exceedingly confused over his manuscript: betaking himself to his auxiliary glass of water before he resumed his discourse, which for a long time was languid, low, and disturbed in tone. This period of disturbance, no doubt, must have occurred when Sir Barnes saw before him F. Bayham and Warrington seated in the amphitheatre; and, by the side of those fierce scornful countenances, Clive Newcome's pale face.

Clive Newcome was not looking at Barnes. His eyes were fixed upon the lady seated not far from the lecturer — upon Ethel, with her arm round her little niece's shoulder, and her thick black ringlets drooping down over a face paler than Clive's own.

Of course she knew that Clive was present. She was aware of him as she entered the hall; saw him at the very first moment; saw nothing but him, I dare say, though her eyes were shut and her head was turned now towards her mother, and now bent down on the little niece's golden curls. And the past and its dear histories, and youth and its hopes and passions, and tones and looks for ever echoing in the heart, and present in the memory — these, no doubt, poor Clive saw

and heard as he looked across the great gulf of time, and parting, and grief, and beheld the woman he had loved for many years. There she sits; the same, but changed: as gone from him as if she were dead; departed indeed into another sphere, and entered into a kind of death. If there is no love more in yonder heart, it is but a corpse unburied. Strew round it the flowers of youth. Wash it with tears of passion. Wrap it and envelop it with fond devotion. Break heart, and fling yourself on the bier, and kiss her cold lips and press her hand! It falls back dead on the cold breast again. The beautiful lips have never a blush or a smile. Cover them and lay them in the ground, and so take thy hatband off, good friend, and go to thy business. Do you suppose you are the only man who has had to attend such a funeral? You will find some men smiling and at work the day after. Some come to the grave now and again out of the world, and say a brief prayer, and a "God bless her!" With some men, she gone, and her viduous mansion your heart to let, her successor, the new occupant, poking in all the drawers and corners, and cupboards of the tenement, finds her miniature and some of her dusty old letters hidden away somewhere, and says — Was this the face he admired so? Why, allowing even for the painter's flattery, it is quite ordinary, and the eyes certainly do not look straight. Are these the letters you thought so charming? Well, upon my word, I never read anything more commonplace in my life! See, here's a line half blotted out. Oh, I suppose she was crying then — some of her tears, idle tears — Hark, there is Barnes Newcome's eloquence still plapping on like water from a cistern — and our thoughts, where have they wandered? far away from the lecture — as far away as Clive's almost. And now the fountain ceases to trickle; the mouth from which issued that cool and limpid flux ceases to smile; the figure is seen to bow and retire; a buzz, a hum, a whisper, a scuffle, a meeting of bonnets and wagging of feathers and rustling of silks ensues. "Thank you! delightful, I am sure!" "I really was quite overcome;" "Excellent;" "So much obliged," are rapid phrases heard amongst the polite on the platform. While down below, "Yaw! quite enough of that;" "Mary Jane, cover your throat up, and don't kitch cold, and don't push me, please, sir;" "Arry! coom along and ave a pint a ale," etc., are the remarks heard, or perhaps not heard, by Clive Newcome, as he watches at the private entrance of the Athenaeum, where Sir Barnes's carriage is waiting with its flaming lamps, and domestics in state liveries. One of them comes out of the building bearing the little girl in his arms, and lays her in the carriage. Then Sir Barnes, and Lady Anne, and the Mayor; then Ethel issues forth, and as she passes under the lamps, beholds Clive's face as pale and sad as her own.

Shall we go visit the lodge-gates of Newcome Park the moon shining on their carving? Is there any pleasure in walking by miles of grey paling, and endless palisades of firs? Oh, you fool, what do you hope to see behind that curtain? Absurd fugitive, whither would you run? Can you burst the tether of fate: and is not poor dear little Rosey Mackenzie sitting yonder waiting for you by the stake? Go home, sir; and don't catch cold. So Mr. Clive returns to the King's Arms, and goes up to his bedroom, and he hears Mr. F. Bayham's deep voice as he passes by the Boscawen Room, where the Jolly Britons are as usual assembled.



CHAPTER LXVII

NEWCOME AND LIBERTY

WE have said that the Baronet's lecture was discussed in the midnight senate assembled at the King's Arms, where Mr. Tom Potts showed the orator no mercy. The senate of the King's Arms was hostile to Sir Barnes Newcome. Many other Newcomites besides were savage and inclined to revolt against the representative of their borough. As these patriots met over their cups, and over the bumper of friendship uttered the sentiments of freedom, they had often asked of one another, where should a man be found to rid Newcome of its dictator? Generous hearts writhed under the oppression: patriotic eyes scowled when Barnes Newcome went by: with fine satire, Tom Potts at Brown the hatter's shop, who made the hats for Sir Barnes Newcome's domestics, proposed to take one of the beavers — a gold-laced one with a cockade and a cord — and set it up in the market-place and bid all Newcome come bow to it, as to the hat of Gessler. "Don't you think, Potts," says F. Bayham, who of course was admitted into the King's Arms club, and ornamented that assembly by his presence and discourse, "Don't you think the Colonel would make a good William Tell to combat against that Gessler?" Ha! Proposal received with acclamation — eagerly adopted by Charles Tucker, Esq., Attorney-at-Law, who would not have the slightest objection to conduct Colonel Newcome's, or any other gentleman's electioneering business in Newcome or elsewhere.

Like those three gentlemen in the plays and pictures of William Tell, who conspire under the moon, calling upon liberty and resolving to elect Tell as their especial champion — like Arnold, Melchthal, and Werner — Tom Potts, Fred Bayham, and Charles Tucker, Esqs., conspired round a punch-bowl, and determined that Thomas Newcome should be requested to free his country. A deputation from the electors of Newcome, that is to say, these very gentlemen waited on the Colonel in his apartment the very next morning, and set before him the state of the borough; Barnes Newcome's tyranny, under which it groaned; and the yearning of all honest men to be free from that usurpation. Thomas Newcome received the deputation with great solemnity and politeness, crossed his legs, folded his arms, smoked his cheroot, and listened moat decorously, as now Potts, now Tucker, expounded to him; Bayham giving the benefit of his emphatic "hear, hear," to their statements, and explaining dubious phrases to the Colonel in the most affable manner.

Whatever the conspirators had to say against Barnes, Colonel Newcome was only too ready to believe. He had made up his mind that that criminal ought to be punished and exposed. The lawyer's covert innuendoes, who was ready to insinuate any amount of evil against Barnes which could safely be uttered, were by no means strong enough for Thomas Newcome. "Sharp practice! exceedingly alive to his own interests — reported violence of temper and tenacity of money — say swindling at once, sir — say falsehood and rapacity — say cruelty and avarice," cries the Colonel. "I believe, upon my honour and conscience, that unfortunate young man to be guilty of every one of those crimes."

Mr. Bayham remarks to Mr. Potts that our friend the Colonel, when he does utter an opinion, takes care that there shall be no mistake about it.

"And I took care there should be no mistake before I uttered it at all, Bayham!" cries F. B.'s patron. "As long as I was in any doubt about this young man, I gave the criminal the benefit of it, as a man who admires our glorious constitution should do, and kept my own counsel, sir."

"At least," remarks Mr. Tucker, "enough is proven to show that Sir Barnes Newcome Newcome, Baronet, is scarce a fit person to represent this great borough in Parliament."

"Represent Newcome in Parliament! It is a disgrace to that noble institution the English House of Commons, that Barnes Newcome should sit in it. A man whose word you cannot trust; a man stained with every private crime. What right has he to sit in the assembly of the legislators of the land, sir?" cries the Colonel, waving his hand as if addressing a chamber of deputies.

"You are for upholding the House of Commons?" inquires the lawyer.

"Of course, sir, of course."

"And for increasing the franchise, Colonel Newcome, I should hope?" continues Mr. Tucker.

"Every man who can read and write ought to have a vote, sir; that is my opinion!" cries the Colonel.

"He's a Liberal to the backbone," says Potts to Tucker.

"To the backbone!" responds Tucker to Potts. "The Colonel will do for us, Potts."

"We want such a man, Tucker; the Independent has been crying out for such a man for years past. We ought to have a Liberal as second representative of this great town — not a sneaking half-and-half Ministerialist like Sir Barnes, a fellow with one leg in the Carlton and the other in Brookes's. Old Mr. Bunce we can't touch. His place is safe; he is a good man of business: we can't meddle with Mr. Bunce — I know that, who know the feeling of the country pretty well."

"Pretty well! Better than any man in Newcome, Potts!" cries Mr. Tucker.

"But a good man like the Colonel — a good Liberal like the Colonel — a man who goes in for household suffrage —"

"Certainly, gentlemen."

"And the general great Liberal principles — we know, of course — such a man would assuredly have a chance against Sir Barnes Newcome at the coming election! could we find such a man! a real friend of the people!"

"I know a friend of the people if ever there was one," F. Bayham interposes.

"A man of wealth, station, experience; a man who has fought for his country; a man who is beloved in this place as you are, Colonel Newcome: for your goodness is known, sir — You are not ashamed of your origin, and there is not a Newcomite old or young, but knows how admirably good you have been to your old friend, Mrs. — Mrs. What-d'-you-call'-em."

"Mrs. Mason," from F. B.

"Mrs. Mason. If such a man as you, sir, would consent to put himself in nomination at the next election, every true Liberal in this place would rush to support you; and crush the oligarchy who rides over the liberties of this borough!"

"Something of this sort, gentlemen, I own to you had crossed my mind," Thomas Newcome remarked. "When I saw that disgrace to my name, and the name of my father's birthplace, representing the borough in Parliament, I thought for the credit of the town and the family, the Member for Newcome at least might be an honest man. I am an old soldier; have passed all my life in India; and am little conversant with affairs at home" (cries of "You are, you are"). "I hoped that my son, Mr. Clive Newcome, might have been found qualified to contest this borough against his unworthy cousin, and possibly to sit as your representative in Parliament. The wealth I have had the good fortune to amass will descend to him naturally, and at no very distant period of time, for I am nearly seventy years of age, gentlemen."

The gentlemen are astonished at this statement.

"But," resumed the Colonel; "my son Clive, as my friend Bayham knows, and to my own regret and mortification, as I don't care to confess to you, declares he has no interest or desire in politics, or for public distinction — prefers his own pursuits — and even these I fear do not absorb him — declines the offer which I made him, to present himself in opposition to Sir Barnes Newcome. It becomes men in a certain station, as I think, to assert that station; and though a few years back I never should have thought of public life at all, and proposed to end my days in quiet as a retired dragoon officer, since — since it has pleased Heaven to increase very greatly my pecuniary means, to place me, as a director and manager of an important banking company, in a station of great public responsibility, I and my brother-directors have thought it but right that one of us should sit in Parliament, if possible, and I am not a man to shirk from that or from any other duty."

"Colonel, will you attend a meeting of electors which we will call, and say as much to them and as well?" cries Mr. Potts. "Shall I put an announcement in my paper to the effect that you are ready to come forward?"

"I am prepared to do so, my good sir."

And presently this solemn palaver ended.

Besides the critical article upon the Baronet's lecture, of which Mr. Warrington was the author, there appeared in the leading columns of the ensuing number of Mr. Potts' Independent, some remarks of a very smashing or hostile nature, against the Member for Newcome. "This gentleman has shown such talent in the lecturing business," the Independent said, "that it is a great pity he should not withdraw himself from politics, and cultivate what all Newcome knows are the arts which he understands best; namely, poetry and the domestic affections. The performance of our talented representative last night was so pathetic as to bring tears into the eyes of several of our fair friends. We have heard, but never believed until now, that Sir Barnes Newcome possessed such a genius for making women cry. Last week we had the talented Miss Noakes, from Slowcome, reading Milton to us; how far superior was the eloquence of Sir Barnes Newcome Newcome,

Bart., even to that of the celebrated jestress! Bets were freely offered in the room last night that Sir Barnes would beat any woman — bets which were not taken, as we scarcely need say, so well do our citizens appreciate the character of our excellent, our admirable representative. — Let the Baronet stick to his lectures, and let Newcome relieve him of his political occupations. He is not fit for them, he is too sentimental a man for us; the men of Newcome want a sound practical person; the Liberals of Newcome have a desire to be represented. When we elected Sir Barnes, he talked liberally enough, and we thought he would do, but you see the honourable Baronet is so poetical! we ought to have known that, and not to have believed him. Let us have a straightforward gentleman. If not a man of words, at least let us have a practical man. If not a man of eloquence, one at any rate whose word we can trust, and we can't trust Sir Barnes Newcome's; we have tried him, and we can't really. Last night when the ladies were crying, we could not for the souls of us help laughing. We hope we know how to conduct ourselves as gentlemen. We trust we did not interrupt the harmony of the evening; but Sir Barnes Newcome, prating about children and virtue, and affection and poetry, this is really too strong.

"The Independent, faithful to its name, and ever actuated by principles of honour, has been, as our thousands of readers know, disposed to give Sir Barnes Newcome Newcome, Bart., a fair trial. When he came forward after his father's death, we believed in his pledges and promises, as a retrencher and reformer, and we stuck by him. Is there any man in Newcome, except, perhaps, our twaddling old contemporary the Sentinel, who believes in Sir B. N. any more? We say no, and we now give the readers of the Independent, and the electors of this borough, fair notice, that when the dissolution of Parliament takes place, a good man, a true man, a man of experience, no dangerous Radical, or brawling tap orator — Mr. Hicks's friends well understand whom we mean — but a gentleman of Liberal principles, well-won wealth, and deserved station and honour, will ask the electors of Newcome whether they are, or are not discontented with their present unworthy Member. The Independent for one, says, we know good men of your family, we know in it men who would do honour to any name; but you, Sir Barnes Newcome Newcome, Bart., we trust no more."

In the electioneering matter, which had occasioned my unlucky interference, and that subsequent little coolness upon the good Colonel's part, Clive Newcome had himself shown that the scheme was not to his liking; had then submitted as his custom was: and doing so with a bad grace, as also was to be expected, had got little thanks for his obedience. Thomas Newcome was hurt at his son's faint-heartedness, and of course little Rosey was displeased at his hanging back. He set off in his father's train, a silent, unwilling partisan. Thomas Newcome had the leisure to survey Clive's glum face opposite to him during the whole of their journey, and to chew his mustachios, and brood upon his wrath and wrongs. His life had been a sacrifice for that boy! What darling schemes had he not formed in his behalf, and how superciliously did Clive meet his projects! The Colonel could not see the harm of which he had himself been the author. Had he not done everything in mortal's power for his son's happiness, and how many young men in England were there with such advantages as this moody, discontented, spoiled boy? As Clive backed out of the contest, of course his father urged it only the more vehemently. Clive slunk away from committees and canvassing, and lounged about the Newcome manufactories, whilst his father, with anger and bitterness in his heart, remained at the post of honour, as he called it, bent upon overcoming his enemy and carrying his point against Barnes Newcome. "If Paris will not fight, sir," the Colonel said, with a sad look following his son, "Priam must." Good old Priam believed his cause to be a perfectly just one, and that duty and his honour called upon him to draw the sword. So there was difference between Thomas Newcome and Clive his son. I protest it is with pain and reluctance I have to write that the good old man was in error — that there was a wrong-doer, and that Atticus was he.

Atticus, be it remembered, thought himself compelled by the very best motives. Thomas Newcome, the Indian banker, was at war with Barnes, the English banker. The latter had commenced the hostilities by a sudden and cowardly act of treason. There were private wrongs to envenom the contest, but it was the mercantile quarrel on which the Colonel chose to set his declaration of war. Barnes's first dastardly blow had occasioned it, and his uncle was determined to carry it through. This I have said was also George Warrington's judgment, who, in the ensuing struggle between Sir Barnes and his uncle, acted as a very warm and efficient partisan of the latter. "Kinsmanship!" says George, "what has old Tom Newcome ever had from his kinsman but cowardice and treachery? If Barnes had held up his finger, the young one might have been happy; if he could have effected it, the Colonel and his bank would have been ruined. I am for war, and for seeing the old boy in Parliament. He knows no more about politics than I do about dancing the polka; but there are five hundred wiseacres in that assembly who know no more than he does, and an honest man taking his seat there, in place of a confounded little rogue, at least makes a change for the better."

I dare say Thomas Newcome, Esq. would by no means have concurred in the above estimate of his political knowledge, and thought himself as well informed as another. He used to speak with the greatest gravity about our constitution as the pride and envy of the world, though he surprised you as much by the latitudinarian reforms, which he was eager to press forward, as by the most singular old Tory opinions which he advocated on other occasions. He was for having every man to vote; every poor man to labour short time and get high wages; every poor curate to be paid double or treble; every bishop to be docked of his salary, and dismissed from the House of Lords. But he was a staunch admirer of that assembly, and a supporter of the rights of the Crown. He was for sweeping off taxes from the poor, and as money must be raised to carry on government, he opined that the rich should pay. He uttered all these opinions with the greatest gravity and emphasis, before a large assembly of electors, and others convened in the Newcome Town Hall, amid the roars of applause of the non-electors, and the bewilderment and consternation of Mr. Potts, of the Independent, who had represented the Colonel in his paper as a safe and steady reformer. Of course the Sentinel showed him up as a most dangerous radical, a sepoy republican, and so forth, to the wrath and indignation of Colonel Newcome. He a republican! he scorned the name! He would die as he had bled many a time for his sovereign. He an enemy of our beloved Church! He esteemed and honoured it, as he hated and abhorred the superstitions of Rome. (Yells, from the Irish in the crowd.) He an enemy of the House of Lords! He held it to be the safeguard of the constitution and the legitimate prize of our most illustrious, naval, military, and — and — legal heroes (ironical cheers). He repelled with scorn the dastard attacks of the journal which had assailed him; he asked, laying his hands on his heart, if as a gentleman, an officer bearing Her Majesty's commission, he could be guilty of a desire to subvert her empire and to insult the dignity of her crown?

After this second speech at the Town Hall, it was asserted by a considerable party in Newcome, that Old Tom (as the mob familiarly called him) was a Tory, while an equal number averred that he was a Radical. Mr. Potts tried to reconcile his statements, a work in which I should think the talented editor of the Independent had no little difficulty. "He knows nothing about it," poor Clive said with a sigh; "his politics are all sentiment and kindness; he will have the poor man paid double wages, and does not remember that the employer would be ruined: you have heard him, Pen, talking in this way at his own table, but when he comes out armed cap-a-pied, and careers against windmills in public, don't you see that as Don Quixote's son I had rather the dear brave old gentleman was at home?"

So this faineant took but little part in the electioneering doings, holding moodily aloof from the meetings, and councils, and public-houses, where his father's partisans were assembled.



CHAPTER LXVIII

A LETTER AND A RECONCILIATION

Miss Ethel Newcome to Mrs. Pendennis:

“Dearest Laura — I have not written to you for many weeks past. There have been some things too trivial, and some too sad, to write about; some things I know I shall write of if I begin, and yet that I know I had best leave; for of what good is looking to the past now? Why vex you or myself by reverting to it? Does not every day bring its own duty and task, and are these not enough to occupy one? What a fright you must have had with my little goddaughter! Thank heaven she is well now, and restored to you. You and your husband I know do not think it essential, but I do, most essential, and am very grateful that she was taken to church before her illness.

“Is Mr. Pendennis proceeding with his canvass? I try and avoid a certain subject, but it will come. You know who is canvassing against us here. My poor uncle has met with very considerable success amongst the lower classes. He makes them rambling speeches at which my brother and his friends laugh, but which the people applaud. I saw him only yesterday, on the balcony of the King’s Arms, speaking to a great mob, who were cheering vociferously below. I had met him before. He would not even stop and give his Ethel of old days his hand. I would have given him I don’t know what, for one kiss, for one kind word; but he passed on and would not answer me. He thinks me — what the world thinks me, worldly and heartless; what I was. But at least, dear Laura, you know that I always truly loved him, and do now, although he is our enemy, though he believes and utters the most cruel things against Barnes, though he says that Barnes Newcome, my father’s son, my brother, Laura, is not an honest man. Hard, selfish, worldly, I own my poor brother to be, and pray Heaven to amend him; but dishonest! and to be so maligned by the person one loves best in the world! This is a hard trial. I pray a proud heart may be bettered by it.

“And I have seen my cousin; once at a lecture which poor Barnes gave, and who seemed very much disturbed on perceiving Clive; once afterwards at good old Mrs. Mason’s, whom I have always continued to visit for uncle’s sake. The poor old woman, whose wits are very nearly gone, held both our hands, and asked when we were going to be married? and laughed, poor old thing! I cried out to her that Mr. Clive had a wife at home, a young dear wife, I said. He gave a dreadful sort of laugh, and turned away into the window. He looks terribly ill, pale, and oldened.

“I asked him a great deal about his wife, whom I remember a very pretty, sweet-looking girl indeed, at my Aunt Hobson’s, but with a not agreeable mother as I thought then. He answered me by monosyllables, appeared as though he would speak, and then became silent. I am pained, and yet glad that I saw him, I said, not very distinctly, I dare say, that I hoped the difference between Barnes and uncle would not extinguish his regard for mamma and me, who have always loved him; when I said loved him, he give one of his bitter laughs again; and so he did when I said I hoped his wife was well. You never would tell me much about Mrs. Newcome; and I fear she does not make my cousin happy. And yet this marriage was of my uncle’s making; another of the unfortunate marriages in our family. I am glad that I paused in time, before the commission of that sin; I strive my best, and to amend my temper, my inexperience, my shortcomings, and try to be the mother of my poor brother’s children. But Barnes has never forgiven me my refusal of Lord Farintosh. He is of the world still, Laura. Nor must we deal too harshly with people of his nature, who cannot perhaps comprehend a world beyond. I remember in old days, when we were travelling on the Rhine, in the happiest days of my whole life, I used to hear Clive and his friend Mr. Ridley, talk of art and of nature in a way that I could not understand at first, but came to comprehend better as my cousin taught me; and since then, I see pictures, landscapes, and flowers, with quite different eyes, and beautiful secrets as it were, of which I had no idea before. The secret of all secrets, the secret of the other life, and the better world beyond ours, may not this be unrevealed to some? I pray for them all, dearest Laura, for those nearest and dearest to me, that the truth may lighten their darkness, and Heaven’s great mercy defend them in the perils and dangers of their night.

“My boy at Sandhurst has done very well indeed; and Egbert, I am happy to say, thinks of taking orders; he has been very moderate at College. Not so Alfred; but the Guards are a sadly dangerous school for a young man; I have promised to pay his debts, and he is to exchange into the line. Mamma is coming to us at Christmas with Alice; my sister is very pretty indeed, I think, and I am rejoiced she is to marry young Mr. Mumford, who has a tolerable living, and who has been

attached to her ever since he was a boy at Rugby School.

"Little Barnes comes on bravely with his Latin; and Mr. Whitestock, a most excellent and valuable person in this place, where there is so much Romanism and Dissent, speaks highly of him. Little Clara is so like her unhappy mother in a thousand ways and actions, that I am shocked often; and see my brother starting back and turning his head away, as if suddenly wounded. I have heard the most deplorable accounts of Lord and Lady Highgate. Oh, dearest friend and sister!—save you, I think I scarce know any one that is happy in the world: I trust you may continue so—you who impart your goodness and kindness to all who come near you—you in whose sweet serene happiness I am thankful to be allowed to repose sometimes. You are the island in the desert, Laura! and the birds sing there, and the fountain flows; and we come and repose by you for a little while, and tomorrow the march begins again, and the toil, and the struggle, and the desert. Good-bye, fountain! Whisper kisses to my dearest little ones from their affectionate Aunt Ethel.

"A friend of his, a Mr. Warrington, has spoken against us several times with extraordinary ability, as Barnes owns. Do you know Mr. W.? He wrote a dreadful article in the Independent, about the last poor lecture, which was indeed sad, sentimental, commonplace: and the critique is terribly comical. I could not help laughing, remembering some passages in it, when Barnes mentioned it: and my brother became so angry! They have put up a dreadful caricature of B. in Newcome: and my brother says he did it, but I hope not. It is very droll, though: he used to make them very funnily. I am glad he has spirits for it. Good-bye again. — E. N."

"He says he did it!" cries Mr. Pendennis, laying the letter down. "Barnes Newcome would scarcely caricature himself, my dear?"

"'He' often means — means Clive — I think," says Mrs. Pendennis, in an offhand manner.

"Oh! he means Clive, does he, Laura?"

"Yes — and you mean goose, Mr. Pendennis!" that saucy lady replies.

It must have been about the very time when this letter was written, that a critical conversation occurred between Clive and his father, of which the lad did not inform me until much later days; as was the case — the reader has been more than once begged to believe — with many other portions of this biography.

One night the Colonel, having come home from a round of electioneering visits, not half satisfied with himself; exceedingly annoyed (much more than he cared to own) with the impudence of some rude fellows at the public-houses, who had interrupted his fine speeches with odious hiccups and familiar jeers, was seated brooding over his cheroot by the chimney-fire; friend F. B. (of whose companionship his patron was occasionally tired) finding much better amusement with the Jolly Britons in the Boscawen Room below. The Colonel, as an electioneering business, had made his appearance in the club. But that ancient Roman warrior had frightened those simple Britons. His manners were too awful for them: so were Clive's, who visited them also under Mr. Pott's introduction; but the two gentlemen, each being full of care and personal annoyance at the time, acted like wet blankets upon the Britons — whereas F. B. warmed them and cheered them, affably partook of their meals with them, and graciously shared their cups. So the Colonel was alone, listening to the far-off roar of the Britons' choruses by an expiring fire, as he sate by a glass of cold negus and the ashes of his cigar.

I dare say he may have been thinking that his fire was well-nigh out — his cup of the dregs, his pipe little more now than dust and ashes — when Clive, candle in hand, came into their sitting-room.

As each saw the other's face, it was so very sad and worn and pale, that the young man started back; and the elder, with quite the tenderness of old days, cried, "God bless me, my boy, how ill you look! Come and warm yourself — look, the fire's out. Have something, Clive!"

For months past they had not had a really kind word. The tender old voice smote upon Clive, and he burst into sudden tears. They rained upon his father's trembling old brown hand, and stooped down and kissed it.

"You look very ill too, father," says Clive.

"Ill? not I!" cries the father, still keeping the boy's hand under both his own on the mantelpiece. "Such a battered old fellow as I am has a right to look the worse for wear; but you, boy, why do you look so pale?"

"I have seen a ghost, father," Clive answered. Thomas, however, looked alarmed and inquisitive as though the boy was wandering in his mind.

"The ghost of my youth, father, the ghost of my happiness, and the best days of my life," groaned out the young man. "I saw Ethel today. I went to see Sarah Mason, and she was there."

"I had seen her, but I did not speak of her," said the father. I thought it was best not to mention her to you, my poor boy. And are — are you fond of her still, Clive?"

"Still! once means always in these things, father, doesn't it? Once means today, and yesterday, and forever and ever."

"Nay, my boy, you mustn't talk to me so, or even to yourself so. You have the dearest little wife at home, a dear little wife and child."

"You had a son, and have been kind enough to him, God knows. You had a wife: but that doesn't prevent other — other thoughts. Do you know you never spoke twice in your life about my mother? You didn't care for her."

"I— I did my duty by her; I denied her nothing. I scarcely ever had a word with her, and I did my best to make her happy," interposed the Colonel.

"I know, but your heart was with the other. So is mine. It's fatal; it runs in the family, father."

The boy looked so ineffably wretched that the father's heart melted still more. "I did my best, Clive," the Colonel gasped out. "I went to that villain Barnes and offered him to settle every shilling I was worth on you — I did — you didn't know that — I'd kill myself for your sake, Clivy. What's an old fellow worth living for? I can live upon a crust and a cigar. I don't care about a carriage, and only go in it to please Rosey. I wanted to give up all for you, but he played me false, that scoundrel cheated us both; he did, and so did Ethel."

"No, sir; I may have thought so in my rage once, but I know better now. She was the victim and not the agent. Did Madame de Florac play you false when she married her husband? It was her fate, and she underwent it. We all bow to it, we are in the track and the car passes over us. You know it does, father." The Colonel was a fatalist: he had often advanced this Oriental creed in his simple discourses with his son and Clive's friends.

"Besides," Clive went on, "Ethel does not care for me. She received me today quite coldly, and held her hand out as if we had only parted last year. I suppose she likes that marquis who jilted her — God bless her! How shall we know what wins the hearts of women? She has mine. There was my Fate. Praise be to Allah! It is over."

"But there's that villain who injured you. His isn't over yet," cried the Colonel, clenching his trembling hand.

"Ah, father! Let us leave him to Allah too! Suppose Madame de Florac had a brother who insulted you. You know you wouldn't have revenged yourself. You would have wounded her in striking him."

"You called out Barnes yourself, boy," cried the father.

"That was for another cause, and not for my quarrel. And how do you know I intended to fire? By Jove, I was so miserable then that an ounce of lead would have done me little harm!"

The father saw the son's mind more clearly than he had ever done hitherto. They had scarcely ever talked upon that subject which the Colonel found was so deeply fixed in Clive's heart. He thought of his own early days, and how he had suffered, and beheld his son before him racked with the same cruel pangs of enduring grief. And he began to own that he had pressed him too hastily in his marriage; and to make an allowance for an unhappiness of which he had in part been the cause.

"Mashallah! Clive, my boy," said the old man, "what is done is done."

"Let us break up our camp before this place, and not go to war with Barnes, father," said Clive. "Let us have peace — and forgive him if we can."

"And retreat before this scoundrel, Clive?"

"What is a victory over such a fellow? One gives a chimney-sweep the wall, father."

"I say again — What is done is done. I have promised to meet him at the hustings, and I will. I think it is best: and you are right: and you act like a high-minded gentleman — and my dear old boy — not to meddle in the quarrel — though I didn't think so — and the difference gave me a great deal of pain — and so did what Pendennis said — and I'm wrong — and thank God I am wrong — and God bless you, my own boy!" the Colonel cried out in a burst of emotion; and the two went to their bedrooms together, and were happier as they shook hands at the doors of their adjoining chambers than they had been for many a long day and year.



CHAPTER LXIX

THE ELECTION

Having thus given his challenge, reconnoitred the enemy, and pledged himself to do battle at the ensuing election, our Colonel took leave of the town of Newcome, and returned to his banking affairs in London. His departure was as that of a great public personage; the gentlemen of the Committee followed him obsequiously down to the train. “Quick,” bawls out Mr. Potts to Mr. Brown, the station-master, “Quick, Mr. Brown, a carriage for Colonel Newcome!” Half a dozen hats are taken off as he enters into the carriage, F. Bayham and his servant after him, with portfolios, umbrellas, shawls, despatch-boxes. Clive was not there to act as his father’s aide-de-camp. After their conversation together the young man had returned to Mrs. Clive and his other duties in life.

It has been said that Mr. Pendennis was in the country, engaged in a pursuit exactly similar to that which occupied Colonel Newcome. The menaced dissolution of Parliament did not take place so soon as we expected. The Ministry still hung together, and by consequence, Sir Barnes Newcome kept the seat in the House of Commons, from which his elder kinsman was eager to oust him. Away from London, and having but few correspondents, save on affairs of business, I heard little of Clive and the Colonel, save an occasional puff of one of Colonel Newcome’s entertainments in the Pall Mall Gazette, to which journal F. Bayham still condescended to contribute; and a satisfactory announcement in a certain part of that paper, that on such a day, in Hyde Park Gardens, Mrs. Clive Newcome had presented her husband with a son. Clive wrote to me presently, to inform me of the circumstance, stating at the same time, with but moderate gratification on his own part, that the Campaigner, Mrs. Newcome’s mamma, had upon this second occasion made a second lodgment in her daughter’s house and bedchamber, and showed herself affably disposed to forget the little unpleasantness which had clouded over the sunshine of her former visit.

Laura, with a smile of some humour, said she thought now would be the time when, if Clive could be spared from his bank, he might pay us that visit at Fair Oaks which had been due so long, and hinted that change of air and a temporary absence from Mrs. Mackenzie might be agreeable to my old friend.

It was, on the contrary, Mr. Pendennis’s opinion that his wife artfully chose that period of time when little Rosey was, perforce, kept at home and occupied with her delightful maternal duties, to invite Clive to see us. Mrs. Laura frankly owned that she liked our Clive better without his wife than with her, and never ceased to regret that pretty Rosey had not bestowed her little hand upon Captain Hoby, as she had been very well disposed at one time to do. Against all marriages of interest this sentimental Laura never failed to utter indignant protests; and Clive’s had been a marriage of interest, a marriage made up by the old people, a marriage which the young man had only yielded out of good-nature and obedience. She would apostrophise her unconscious young ones, and inform those innocent babies that they should never be made to marry except for love, never — an announcement which was received with perfect indifference by little Arthur on his rocking-horse, and little Helen smiling and crowing in her mother’s lap.

So Clive came down to us, careworn in appearance, but very pleased and happy, he said, to stay for a while with the friends of his youth. We showed him our modest rural lions; we got him such sport and company as our quiet neighbourhood afforded, we gave him fishing in the Brawl, and Laura in her pony-chaise drove him to Baymouth, and to Clavering Park and town, and visit the famous cathedral at Chatteris, where she was pleased to recount certain incidents of her husband’s youth.

Clive laughed at my wife’s stories; he pleased himself in our home; he played with our children, with whom he had become a great favourite; he was happier, he told me with a sigh, than he had been for many a day. His gentle hostess echoed the sigh of the poor young fellow. She was sure that his pleasure was only transitory, and was convinced that many deep cares weighed upon his mind.

Ere long my old schoolfellow made me sundry confessions, which showed that Laura’s surmises were correct. About his domestic affairs he did not treat much; the little boy was said to be a very fine little boy; the ladies had taken entire possession of him. “I can’t stand Mrs. Mackenzie any longer, I own,” says Clive; “but how resist a wife at such a moment? Rosa was sure she would die, unless her mother came to her, and of course we invited Mrs. Mack. This time she is all

smiles and politeness with the Colonel: the last quarrel is laid upon me, and in so far I am easy, as the old folks get on pretty well together." To me, considering these things, it was clear that Mr. Clive Newcome was but a very secondary personage indeed in his father's new fine house which he inhabited, and in which the poor Colonel had hoped they were to live such a happy family.

But it was about Clive Newcome's pecuniary affairs that I felt the most disquiet when he came to explain these to me. The Colonel's capital and that considerable sum which Mrs. Clive had inherited from her good old uncle, were all involved in a common stock, of which Colonel Newcome took the management. "The governor understands business so well, you see," says Clive; "is a most remarkable head for accounts: he must have inherited that from my grandfather, you know, who made his own fortune: all the Newcomes are good at accounts, except me, a poor useless devil who knows nothing but to paint a picture, and who can't even do that." He cuts off the head of a thistle as he speaks, bites his tawny mustachios, plunges his hands into his pockets and his soul into reverie.

"You don't mean to say," asks Mr. Pendennis, "that your wife's fortune has not been settled upon herself?"

"Of course it has been settled upon herself; that is, it is entirely her own — you know the Colonel has managed all the business, he understands it better than we do."

"Do you say that your wife's money is not vested in the hands of trustees, and for her benefit?"

"My father is one of the trustees. I tell you he manages the whole thing. What is his property is mine and ever has been; and I might draw upon him as much as I liked: and you know it's five times as great as my wife's. What is his is ours, and what is ours is his, of course; for instance, the India Stock, which poor Uncle James left, that now stands in the Colonel's name. He wants to be a Director: he will be at the next election — he must have a certain quantity of India Stock, don't you see?"

"My dear fellow, is there then no settlement made upon your wife at all?"

"You needn't look so frightened," says Clive. "I made a settlement on her: with all my worldly goods I did her endow three thousand three hundred and thirty-three pounds six and eightpence, which my father sent over from India to my uncle, years ago, when I came home."

I might well indeed be aghast at this news, and had yet further intelligence from Clive, which by no means contributed to lessen my anxiety. This worthy old Colonel, who fancied himself to be so clever a man of business, chose to conduct it in utter ignorance and defiance of law. If anything happened to the Bundelcund Bank, it was clear that not only every shilling of his own property, but every farthing bequeathed to Rosa Mackenzie would be lost; only his retiring pension, which was luckily considerable, and the hundred pounds a year which Clive had settled on his wife, would be saved out of the ruin.

And now Clive confided to me his own serious doubts and misgivings regarding the prosperity of the Bank itself. He did not know why, but he could not help fancying that things were going wrong. Those partners who had come home, having sold out of the Bank, and living in England so splendidly, why had they quitted it? The Colonel said it was a proof of the prosperity of the company, that so many gentlemen were enriched who had taken shares in it. "But when I asked my father," Clive continued, "why he did not himself withdraw, the dear old Colonel's countenance fell: he told me such things were not to be done every day; and ended, as usual, by saying that I do not understand anything about business. No more I do: that is the truth. I hate the whole concern, Pen! I hate that great tawdry house in which we live; and those fearfully stupid parties:— Oh, how I wish we were back in Fitzroy Square! But who can recall by-gones, Arthur; or wrong steps in life? We must make the best of today, and tomorrow must take care of itself. 'Poor little child!' I could not help thinking, as I took it crying in my arms the other day, 'what has life in store for you, my poor weeping baby?' My mother-in-law cried out that I should drop the baby, and that only the Colonel knew how to hold it. My wife called from her bed; the nurse dashed up and scolded me; and they drove me out of the room amongst them. By Jove, Pen, I laugh when some of my friends congratulate me on my good fortune! I am not quite the father of my own child, nor the husband of my own wife, nor even the master of my own easel. I am managed for, don't you see? boarded, lodged, and done for. And here is the man they call happy. Happy! Oh!!! Why had I not your strength of mind; and why did I ever leave my art, my mistress?"

And herewith the poor lad fell to chopping thistles again; and quitted Fair Oaks shortly, leaving his friends there very much disquieted about his prospects, actual and future.

The expected dissolution of Parliament came at length. All the country papers in England teemed with electioneering addresses; and the country was in a flutter with particoloured ribbons. Colonel Thomas Newcome, pursuant to his

promise, offered himself to the independent electors of Newcome in the Liberal journal of the family town, whilst Sir Barnes Newcome, Bart., addressed himself to his old and tried friends, and called upon the friends of the constitution to rally round him, in the Conservative print. The addresses of our friend were sent to us at Fair Oaks by the Colonel's indefatigable aide-de-camp, Mr. Frederick Bayham. During the period which had elapsed since the Colonel's last canvassing visit and the issuing of the writs now daily expected for the new Parliament, many things of great importance had occurred in Thomas Newcome's family — events which were kept secret from his biographer, who was, at this period also, pretty entirely occupied with his own affairs. These, however, are not the present subject of this history, which has Newcome for its business, and the parties engaged in the family quarrel there.

There were four candidates in the field for the representation of that borough. That old and tried member of Parliament, Mr. Bunce, was considered to be secure; and the Baronet's seat was thought to be pretty safe on account of his influence in the place. Nevertheless, Thomas Newcome's supporters were confident for their champion, and that when the parties came to the poll, the extreme Liberals of the borough would divide their votes between him and the fourth candidate, the uncompromising Radical, Mr. Barker.

In due time the Colonel and his staff arrived at Newcome, and resumed the active canvass which they had commenced some months previously. Clive was not in his father's suite this time, nor Mr. Warrington, whose engagements took him elsewhere. The lawyer, the editor of the Independent, and F. B., were the Colonel's chief men. His headquarters (which F. B. liked very well) were at the hotel where we last saw him, and whence issuing with his aide-de-camp at his heels, the Colonel went round to canvass personally, according to his promise, every free and independent elector of the borough. Barnes too was canvassing eagerly on his side, and was most affable and active; the two parties would often meet nose to nose in the same street, and their retainers exchange looks of defiance. With Mr. Potts of the Independent, a big man, on his left; with Mr. Frederick, a still bigger man, on his right; his own trusty bamboo cane in his hand, before which poor Barnes had shrunk abashed ere now, Colonel Newcome had commonly the best of these street encounters, and frowned his nephew Barnes, and Barnes's staff, off the pavement. With the non-electors the Colonel was a decided favourite; the boys invariably hurried him; whereas they jeered and uttered ironical cries after poor Barnes, asking, "Who beat his wife? Who drove his children to the workhouse?" and other unkind personal questions. The man upon whom the libertine Barnes had inflicted so cruel an injury in his early days, was now the Baronet's bitterest enemy. He assailed him with curses and threats when they met, and leagued his brother-workmen against him. The wretched Sir Barnes owned with contrition that the sins of his youth pursued him; his enemy scoffed at the idea of Barnes's repentance; he was not moved at the grief, the punishment in his own family, the humiliation and remorse which the repentant prodigal piteously pleaded. No man was louder in his cries of *mea culpa* than Barnes: no man professed a more edifying repentance. He was hat in hand to every black-coat, established or dissenting. Repentance was to his interest, to be sure, but yet let us hope it was sincere. There is some hypocrisy, of which one does not like even to entertain the thought; especially that awful falsehood which trades with divine truth, and takes the name of Heaven in vain.

The Roebuck Inn at Newcome stands in the market-place, directly facing the King's Arms, where, as we know, Colonel Newcome and uncompromising toleration held their headquarters. Immense banners of blue and yellow floated from every window of the King's Arms, and decorated the balcony from which the Colonel and the assistants were in the habit of addressing the multitude. Fiddlers and trumpeters, arrayed in his colours, paraded the town and enlivened it with their melodious strains. Other trumpeters and fiddlers, bearing the true-blue cockades and colours of Sir Barnes Newcome, Bart., would encounter the Colonel's musicians, on which occasions of meeting, it is to be feared, small harmony was produced. They banged each other with their brazen instruments. The warlike drummers thumped each other's heads in lieu of the professional sheepskin. The townboys and street-blackguards rejoiced in these combats, and exhibited their valour on one side or the other. The Colonel had to pay a long bill for broken brass when he settled the little accounts of the election.

In after times, F. B. was pleased to describe the circumstances of a contest in which he bore a most distinguished part. It was F. B.'s opinion that his private eloquence brought over many waverers to the Colonel's side, and converted numbers of the benighted followers of Sir Barnes Newcome. Bayham's voice was indeed magnificent, and could be heard from the King's Arm's balcony above the shout and roar of the multitude, the gongs and bugles of the opposition bands. He was untiring in his oratory — undaunted in the presence of the crowds below. He was immensely popular, F. B. Whether he laid his hand upon his broad chest, took off his hat and waved it, or pressed his blue and yellow ribbons to his bosom, the

crowd shouted, "Hurra: silence! bravo! Bayham for ever!" "They would have carried me in triumph," said F. B.; "if I had but the necessary qualification I might be member for Newcome this day or any other I chose."

I am afraid in this conduct of the Colonel's election Mr. Bayham resorted to acts of which his principal certainly would disapprove, and engaged auxiliaries whose alliance was scarcely creditable. Whose was the hand which flung the potato which struck Sir Barnes Newcome, Bart., on the nose as he was haranguing the people from the Roebuck? How came it that whenever Sir Barnes and his friends essayed to speak, such an awful yelling and groaning took place in the crowd below, that the words of those feeble orators were inaudible? Who smashed all the front windows of the Roebuck? Colonel Newcome had not words to express his indignation at proceedings so unfair. When Sir Barnes and staff were hustled in the market-place and most outrageously shoved, jeered, and jolted, the Colonel from the King's Arms organised a rapid sally, which he himself headed with his bamboo cane; cut out Sir Barnes and his followers from the hands of the mob, and addressed those ruffians in a noble speech, of which bamboo-cane — Englishman — shame — fair-play, were the most emphatic expressions. The mob cheered Old Tom as they called him — they made way for Sir Barnes, who shrunk pale and shuddering back into his hotel again — who always persisted in saying that that old villain of a dragoon had planned both the assault and the rescue.

"When the dregs of the people — the scum of the rabble, sir, banded together by the myrmidons of Sir Barnes Newcome, attacked us at the King's Arms, and smashed ninety-six pounds' worth of glass at one volley, besides knocking off the gold unicorn head and the tail of the British lion; it was fine, sir," F. B. said, "to see how the Colonel came forward, and the coolness of the old boy in the midst of the action. He stood there in front, sir, with his old hat off, never so much as once bobbing his old head, and I think he spoke rather better under fire than he did when there was no danger. Between ourselves, he ain't much of a speaker, the old Colonel; he hems and haws, and repeats himself a good deal. He hasn't the gift of natural eloquence which some men have, Pendennis. You should have heard my speech, sir, on the Thursday in the Town Hall — that was something like a speech. Potts was jealous of it, and always reported me most shamefully."

In spite of his respectful behaviour to the gentlemen in black coats, his soup-tickets and his flannel-tickets, his own pathetic lectures and his sedulous attendance at other folk's sermons, poor Barnes could not keep up his credit with the serious interest at Newcome, and the meeting-houses and their respective pastors and frequenters turned their backs upon him. The case against him was too flagrant: his enemy, the factory-man, worked it with an extraordinary skill, malice, and pertinacity. Not a single man, woman, or child in Newcome but was made acquainted with Sir Barnes's early peccadillo. Ribald ballads were howled through the streets describing his sin, and his deserved punishment. For very shame, the reverend dissenting gentlemen were obliged to refrain from voting for him; such as ventured, believing in the sincerity of his repentance, to give him their voices, were yelled away from the polling-places. A very great number who would have been his friends, were compelled to bow to decency and public opinion, and supported the Colonel.

Hooted away from the hustings, and the public places whence the rival candidates addressed the free and independent electors, this wretched and persecuted Sir Barnes invited his friends and supporters to meet him at the Athenaeum Room — scene of his previous eloquent performances. But, though this apartment was defended by tickets, the people burst into it; and Nemesis, in the shape of the persevering factory-man, appeared before the scared Sir Barnes and his puzzled committee. The man stood up and bearded the pale Baronet. He had a good cause, and was in truth a far better master of debate than our banking friend, being a great speaker amongst his brother-operatives, by whom political questions are discussed, and the conduct of political men examined, with a ceaseless interest and with an ardour and eloquence which are often unknown in what is called superior society. This man and his friends round about him fiercely silenced the clamour of "Turn him out," with which his first appearance was assailed by Sir Barnes's hangers-on. He said, in the name of justice he would speak up; if they were fathers of families and loved their wives and daughters he dared them to refuse him a hearing. Did they love their wives and their children? it was a shame that they should take such a man as that yonder for their representative in Parliament. But the greatest sensation he made was when, in the middle of his speech, after inveighing against Barnes's cruelty and parental ingratitude, he asked, "Where were Barnes's children?" and actually thrust forward two, to the amazement of the committee and the ghastly astonishment of the guilty Baronet himself.

"Look at them," says the man: "they are almost in rags, they have to put up with scanty and hard food; contrast them with his other children, whom you see lording in gilt carriages, robed in purple and fine linen, and scattering mud from their wheels over us humble people as we walk the streets; ignorance and starvation is good enough for these, for those others nothing can be too fine or too dear. What can a factory-girl expect from such a fine, high-bred, white-handed,

aristocratic gentleman as Sir Barnes Newcome, Baronet, but to be cajoled, and seduced, and deserted, and left to starve! When she has served my lord's pleasure, her natural fate is to be turned into the street; let her go and rot there and her children beg in the gutter.

"This is the most shameful imposture," gasps out Sir Barnes, "these children are not — are not —"

The man interrupted him with a bitter laugh. "No," he says; "they are not his; that's true enough, friends. Its Tom Martin's girl and boy, a precious pair of lazy little scamps. But, at least he thought they were his children. See how much he knows about them! He hasn't seen his children for years; he would have left them and their mother to starve, and did, but for shame and fear. The old man, his father, pensioned them, and he hasn't the heart to stop their wages now. Men of Newcome, will you have this man to represent you in Parliament?" And the crowd roared "No;" and Barnes and his shamefaced committee slunk out of the place, and no wonder the dissenting clerical gentlemen were shy of voting for him.

A brilliant and picturesque diversion in Colonel Newcome's favour was due to the inventive genius of his faithful aide-de-camp, F. B. On the polling-day, as the carriages full of voters came up to the market-place, there appeared nigh to the booths an open barouche, covered all over with ribbon, and containing Frederick Bayham, Esq., profusely decorated with the Colonel's colours, and a very old woman and her female attendant, who were similarly ornamented. It was good old Mrs. Mason, who was pleased with the drive and the sunshine, though she scarcely understood the meaning of the turmoil, with her maid by her side, delighted to wear such ribbons, and sit in such a post of honour. Rising up in the carriage, F. B. took off his hat, bade his men of brass be silent, who were accustomed to bray "See the Conquering Hero come," whenever the Colonel, or Mr. Bayham, his brilliant aide-de-camp, made their appearance; — bidding, we say, the musicians and the universe to be silent, F. B. rose, and made the citizens of Newcome a splendid speech. Good old unconscious Mrs. Mason was the theme of it, and the Colonel's virtues and faithful gratitude in tending her. "She was his father's old friend. She was Sir Barnes Newcome's grandfather's old friend. She had lived for more than forty years at Sir Barnes Newcome's door, and how often had he been to see her? Did he go every week? No. Every month? No. Every year? No. Never in the whole course of his life had he set his foot into her doors!" (Loud yells, and cries of 'Shame!') "Never had he done her one single act of kindness. Whereas for years and years past, when he was away in India, heroically fighting the battles of his country, when he was distinguishing himself at Assaye, and — and — Mulligatawny, and Seringapatam, in the hottest of the fight and the fiercest of the danger, in the most terrible moment of the conflict, and the crowning glory of the victory, the good, the brave, the kind old Colonel — why should he say Colonel? why should he not say Old Tom at once?" (immense roars of applause) "always remembered his dear old nurse and friend. Look at that shawl, boys, which she has got on! My belief is that Colonel Newcome took that shawl in single combat, and on horseback, from the prime minister of Tippoo Sahib." (Immense cheers and cries of 'Bravo, Bayham!') "Look at that brooch the dear old thing wears!" (he kissed her hand whilst so apostrophising her). "Tom Newcome never brags about his military achievements, he is the most modest as well as the bravest man in the world. What if I were to tell you that he cut that brooch from the throat of an Indian rajah? He's man enough to do it." ('He is! he is!' from all parts of the crowd.) "What, you want to take the horses out, do you?" (to the crowd, who were removing those quadrupeds). "I ain't agoing to prevent you; I expected as much of you. Men of Newcome, I expected as much of you, for I know you! Sit still, old lady; don't be frightened, ma'am: they are only going to pull you to the King's Arms, and show you to the Colonel."

This, indeed, was the direction in which the mob (whether inflamed by spontaneous enthusiasm, or excited by cunning agents placed amongst the populace by F. B., I cannot say), now took the barouche and its three occupants. With a myriad roar and shout the carriage was dragged up in front of the King's Arms, from the balconies of which a most satisfactory account of the polling was already placarded. The extra noise and shouting brought out the Colonel, who looked at first with curiosity at the advancing procession, and then, as he caught sight of Sarah Mason, with a blush and a bow of his kind old head.

"Look at him, boys!" cried the enraptured F. B., pointing up to the old man. "Look at him; the dear old boy! Isn't he an old trump? which will you have for your Member, Barnes Newcome or Old Tom?"

And as might be supposed, an immense shout of "Old Tom!" arose from the multitude; in the midst of which, blushing and bowing still, the Colonel went back to his committee-room: and the bands played "See the Conquering Hero" louder than ever; and poor Barnes in the course of his duty having to come out upon his balcony at the Roebuck opposite, was saluted with a yell as vociferous as the cheer for the Colonel had been; and old Mrs. Mason asked what the noise was about; and after making several vain efforts, in dumb show, to the crowd, Barnes slunk back into his hole again as pale as the

turnip which was flung at his head: and the horses were brought, and Mrs. Mason driven home; and the day of election came to an end.

Reasons of personal gratitude, as we have stated already, prevented His Highness the Prince de Moncontour from taking a part in this family contest. His brethren of the House of Higg, however, very much to Florac's gratification, gave their second votes to Colonel Newcome, carrying with them a very great number of electors: we know that in the present Parliament, Mr. Higg and Mr. Bunce sit for the borough of Newcome. Having had monetary transactions with Sir Barnes Newcome, and entered largely into railway speculations with him, the Messrs. Higg had found reason to quarrel with the Baronet; accuse him of sharp practices to the present day, and have long stories to tell which do not concern us about Sir Barnes's stratagems, grasping, and extortion. They their following, deserting Sir Barnes, whom they had supported in previous elections, voted for the Colonel, although some of the opinions of that gentleman were rather too extreme for such sober persons.

Not exactly knowing what his politics were when he commenced the canvass, I can't say to what opinions the poor Colonel did not find himself committed by the time when the election was over. The worthy gentleman felt himself not a little humiliated by what he had to say and to unsay, by having to answer questions, and submit to familiarities, to shake hands which, to say truth, he did not care for grasping at all. His habits were aristocratic; his education had been military; the kindest and simplest soul alive, he yet disliked all familiarity, and expected from common people the sort of deference which he had received from his men in the regiment. The contest saddened and mortified him; he felt that he was using wrong means to obtain an end that perhaps was not right (for so his secret conscience must have told him); he was derogating from his own honour in tampering with political opinions, submitting to familiarities, condescending to stand by whilst his agents solicited vulgar suffrages or uttered claptraps about retrenchment and reform. "I felt I was wrong," he said to me, in after days, "though I was too proud to own my error in those times, and you and your good wife and my boy were right in protesting against that mad election." Indeed, though we little knew what events were speedily to happen, Laura and I felt very little satisfaction when the result of the Newcome election was made known to us, and we found Sir Barnes Newcome third, and Col. Thomas Newcome second upon the poll.

Ethel was absent with her children at Brighton. She was glad, she wrote, not to have been at home during the election. Mr. and Mrs. C. were at Brighton, too. Ethel had seen Mrs. C. and her child once or twice. It was a very fine child. "My brother came down to us," she wrote, "after all was over. He is furious against M. de Moncontour, who, he says, persuaded the Whigs to vote against him, and turned the election."



CHAPTER LXX

CHILTERN HUNDREDS

We shall say no more regarding Thomas Newcome's political doings; his speeches against Barnes, and the Baronet's replies. The nephew was beaten by his stout old uncle.

In due time the Gazette announced that Thomas Newcome, Esq., was returned as one of the Members of Parliament for the borough of Newcome; and after triumphant dinners, speeches, and rejoicings, the Member came back to his family in London, and to his affairs in that city.

The good Colonel appeared to be by no means elated by his victory. He would not allow that he was wrong in engaging in that family war, of which we have just seen the issue; though it may be that his secret remorse on this account in part occasioned his disquiet. But there were other reasons, which his family not long afterwards came to understand, for the gloom and low spirits which now oppressed the head of their home.

It was observed (that is, if simple little Rosey took the trouble to observe) that the entertainments at the Colonel's mansion were more frequent and splendid even than before; the silver cocoa-nut tree was constantly in requisition, and around it were assembled many new guests, who had not formerly been used to sit under those branches. Mr. Sherrick and his wife appeared at those parties, at which the proprietor of Lady Whittlesea's Chapel made himself perfectly familiar. Sherrick cut jokes with the master of the house, which the latter received with a very grave acquiescence; he ordered the servants about, addressing the butler as "Old Corkscrew," and bidding the footman, whom he loved to call by his Christian name, to "look alive." He called the Colonel "Newcome" sometimes, and facetiously speculated upon the degree of relationship subsisting between them now that his daughter was married to Clive's uncle, the Colonel's brother-in-law. Though I dare say Clive did not much relish receiving news of his aunt, Sherrick was sure to bring such intelligence when it reached him; and announced, in due time, the birth of a little cousin at Boggley Wollah, whom the fond parents designed to name "Thomas Newcome Honeyman."

A dreadful panic and ghastly terror seized poor Clive on occasion which he described to me afterwards. Going out from home one day with his father, he beheld a wine-merchant's cart, from which hampers were carried down the area gate into the lower regions of Colonel Newcome's house. "Sherrick and Co., Wine Merchants, Walpole Street," was painted upon the vehicle.

"Good heavens! sir, do you get your wine from him?" Clive cried out to his father, remembering Honeyman's provisions in early times. The Colonel, looking very gloomy and turning red, said, "Yes, he bought wine from Sherrick, who had been very good-natured and serviceable; and who — and who, you know, is our connexion now." When informed of the circumstance by Clive, I too, as I confess, thought the incident alarming.

Then Clive, with a laugh, told me of a grand battle which had taken place in consequence of Mrs. Mackenzie's behaviour to the wine-merchant's wife. The Campaigner had treated this very kind and harmless, but vulgar woman, with extreme hauteur — had talked loud during her singing — the beauty of which, to say truth, time had considerably impaired — had made contemptuous observations regarding her upon more than one occasion. At length the Colonel broke out in great wrath against Mrs. Mackenzie — bade her to respect that lady as one of his guests — and, if she did not like the company which assembled at his house, hinted to her that there were many thousand other houses in London where she could find a lodging. For the sake of her grandchild, and her adored child, the Campaigner took no notice of this hint; and declined to remove from the quarter which she had occupied ever since she had become a grandmamma.

I myself dined once or twice with my old friends, under the shadow of the pickle-bearing cocoa-nut tree; and could not but remark a change of personages in the society assembled. The manager of the City branch of the B. B. C. was always present — an ominous-looking man, whose whispers and compliments seemed to make poor Clive, at his end of the table, very melancholy. With the City manager came the City manager's friends, whose jokes passed gaily round, and who kept the conversation to themselves. Once I had the happiness to meet Mr. Ratray, who had returned, filled with rupees from the Indian Bank; who told us many anecdotes of the splendour of Rummun Loll at Calcutta, who complimented the Colonel on his fine house and grand dinners with sinister good-humour. Those compliments did not seem to please our

poor friend; that familiarity choked him. A brisk little chattering attorney, very intimate with Sherrick, with a wife of dubious gentility, was another constant guest. He enlivened the table by his jokes, and recounted choice stories about the aristocracy, with certain members of whom the little man seemed very familiar. He knew to a shilling how much this lord owed — and how much the creditors allowed to that marquis. He had been concerned with such and such a nobleman, who was now in the Queen's Bench. He spoke of their lordships affably and without their titles — calling upon "Louisa, my dear," his wife, to testify to the day when Viscount Tagrag dined with them, and Earl Bareacres sent them the pheasants. F. B., as sombre and downcast as his hosts now seemed to be, informed me demurely that the attorney was a member of one of the most eminent firms in the City — that he had been engaged in procuring the Colonel's parliamentary title for him — and in various important matters appertaining to the B. B. C.; but my knowledge of the world and the law was sufficient to make me aware that this gentleman belonged to a well-known firm of money-lending solicitors, and I trembled to see such a person in the home of our good Colonel. Where were the generals and the judges? Where were the fogies and their respectable ladies? Stupid they were, and dull their company; but better a stalled ox in their society, than Mr. Campion's jokes over Mr. Sherrick's wines.

After the little rebuke administered by Colonel Newcome, Mrs. Mackenzie abstained from overt hostilities against any guests of her daughter's father-in-law; and contented herself by assuming grand and princess-like airs in the company of the new ladies. They flattered her and poor little Rosa intensely. The latter liked their company, no doubt. To a man of the world looking on, who has seen the men and morals of many cities, it was curious, almost pathetic, to watch that poor little innocent creature fresh and smiling, attired in bright colours and a thousand gewgaws, simpering in the midst of these darkling people — practising her little arts and coquetries, with such a court round about her. An unconscious little maid, with rich and rare gems sparkling on all her fingers, and bright gold rings as many as belonged to the late Old Woman of Banbury Cross — still she smiled and prattled innocently before these banditti — I thought of Zerlina and the Brigands, in *Fra Diavolo*.

Walking away with F. B. from one of these parties of the Colonel's, and seriously alarmed at what I had observed there, I demanded of Bayham whether my conjectures were not correct, that some misfortune overhung our old friend's house? At first Bayham denied stoutly or pretended ignorance; but at length, having reached the Haunt together, which I had not visited since I was a married man, we entered that place of entertainment, and were greeted by its old landlady and waitress, and accommodated with a quiet parlour. And here F. B., after groaning and sighing — after solacing himself with a prodigious quantity of bitter beer — fairly burst out, and, with tears in his eyes, made a full and sad confession respecting this unlucky Bundelcund Banking Company. The shares had been going lower and lower, so that there was no sale now for them at all. To meet the liabilities, the directors must have undergone the greatest sacrifices. He did know — he did not like to think what the Colonel's personal losses were. The respectable solicitors of the Company had retired, long since, after having secured payment of a most respectable bill; and had given place to the firm of dubious law-agents of whom I had that evening seen a partner. How the retiring partners from India had been allowed to withdraw, and to bring fortunes along with them, was a mystery to Mr. Frederick Bayham. The great Indian millionaire was in his, F. B.'s eyes, "a confounded mahogany-coloured heathen humbug." These fine parties which the Colonel was giving, and that fine carriage which was always flaunting about the Park with poor Mrs. Clive and the Campaigner, and the nurse and the baby, were, in F. B.'s opinion, all decoys and shams. He did not mean to say that the meals were not paid, and that the Colonel had to plunder for his horses' corn; but he knew that Sherrick, and the attorney, and the manager, insisted upon the necessity of giving these parties, and keeping up this state and grandeur, and opined that it was at the special instance of these advisers that the Colonel had contested the borough for which he was now returned. "Do you know how much that contest cost?" asks F. B. "The sum, sir, was awful! and we have ever so much of it to pay. I came up twice myself from Newcome to Campion and Sherrick about it. I betray no secrets — F. B., sir, would die a thousand deaths before he would tell the secrets of his benefactor! — But, Pendennis, you understand a thing or two. You know what o'clock it is, and so does yours truly, F. B., who drinks your health. I know the taste of Sherrick's wine well enough. F. B., sir, fears the Greeks and all the gifts they bring. Confound his Amontillado! I had rather drink this honest malt and hops all my life than ever see a drop of his abominable sherry. Golden? F. B. believes it is golden — and a precious deal dearer than gold too" — and herewith, ringing the bell, my friend asked for a second pint of the just-named and cheaper fluid.

I have of late had to recount portions of my dear old friend's history which must needs be told, and over which the writer does not like to dwell. If Thomas Newcome's opulence was unpleasant to describe, and to contrast with the bright

goodness and simplicity I remembered in former days, how much more painful is that part of his story to which we are now come perforce, and which the acute reader of novels has, no doubt, long foreseen? Yes, sir or madam, you are quite right in the opinion which you have held all along regarding that Bundelcund Banking Company, in which our Colonel has invested every rupee he possesses, Solvuntur rupees, etc. I disdain, for the most part, the tricks and surprises of the novelist's art. Knowing, from the very beginning of our story, what was the issue of this Bundelcund Banking concern, I have scarce had patience to keep my counsel about it; and whenever I have had occasion to mention the Company, have scarcely been able to refrain from breaking out into fierce diatribes against that complicated, enormous, outrageous swindle. It was one of many similar cheats which have been successfully practised upon the simple folks, civilian and military, who toil and struggle — who fight with sun and enemy — who pass years of long exile and gallant endurance in the service of our empire in India. Agency houses after agency houses have been established, and have flourished in splendour and magnificence, and have paid fabulous dividends — and have enormously enriched two or three wary speculators — and then have burst in bankruptcy, involving widows, orphans, and countless simple people who trusted their all to the keeping of these unworthy treasurers.

The failure of the Bundelcund Bank which we now have to record, was one only of many similar schemes ending in ruin. About the time when Thomas Newcome was chaired as Member of Parliament for the borough of which he bore the name, the great Indian merchant who was at the head of the Bundelcund Banking Company's affairs at Calcutta, suddenly died of cholera at his palace at Barackpore. He had been giving of late a series of the most splendid banquets with which Indian prince ever entertained a Calcutta society. The greatest and proudest personages of that aristocratic city had attended his feasts. The fairest Calcutta beauties had danced in his halls. Did not poor F. B. transfer from the columns of the Bengal Hurkaru to the Pall Mall Gazette the most astounding descriptions of those Asiatic Nights Entertainments, of which the very grandest was to come off on the night when cholera seized Rummun Loll in its grip? There was to have been a masquerade outvying all European masquerades in splendour. The two rival queens of the Calcutta society were to have appeared each with her court around her. Young civilians at the College, and young ensigns fresh landed, had gone into awful expenses and borrowed money at interest from the B. B. C. and other banking companies, in order to appear with befitting splendour as knights and noblemen of Henrietta Maria's Court (Henrietta Maria, wife of Hastings Hicks, Esq., Sudder Dewanee Adawlut), or as princes and warriors surrounding the palanquin of Lalla Rookh (the lovely wife of Hon. Cornwallis Bobus, Member of Council): all these splendours were there. As carriage after carriage drove up from Calcutta, they were met at Rummun Loll's gate by ghastly weeping servants, who announced their master's demise.

On the next day the Bank at Calcutta was closed, and the day after, when heavy bills were presented which must be paid, although by this time Rummun Loll was not only dead but buried, and his widows howling over his grave, it was announced throughout Calcutta that but 800 rupees were left in the treasury of the B. B. C. to meet engagements to the amount of four lakhs then immediately due, and sixty days afterwards the shutters were closed at No. 175 Lothbury, the London offices of the B. B. C. of India, and 35,000 pounds worth of their bills refused by their agents, Messrs. Baines, Jolly and Co., of Fog Court.

When the accounts of that ghastly bankruptcy arrived from Calcutta, it was found, of course, that the merchant-prince Rummun Loll owed the B. B. C. twenty-five lakhs of rupees, the value of which was scarcely even represented by his respectable signature. It was found that one of the auditors of the bank, the generally esteemed Charley Conder (a capital fellow, famous for his good dinners, and for playing low-comedy characters at the Chowringhee Theatre), was indebted to the bank in 90,000 pounds; and also it was discovered that the revered Baptist Bellman, Chief Registrar of the Calcutta Tape and Sealing-Wax Office (a most valuable and powerful amateur preacher who had converted two natives, and whose serious soirees were thronged at Calcutta), had helped himself to 73,000 pounds more, for which he settled in the Bankruptcy Court before he resumed his duties in his own. In justice to Mr. Bellman, it must be said that he could have had no idea of the catastrophe impending over the B. B. C. For, only three weeks before that great bank closed its doors, Mr. Bellman, as guardian of the children of his widowed sister Mrs. Green, had sold the whole of the late Colonel's property out of Company's paper and invested it in the bank, which gave a high interest, and with bills of which, drawn upon their London correspondents, he had accommodated Mrs. Colonel Green when she took her departure for Europe with her numerous little family on board the Burrumpooter.

And now you have the explanation of the title of this chapter, and know wherefore Thomas Newcome never sat in Parliament. Where are our dear old friends now? Where are Rosey's chariots and horses? Where her jewels and gewgaws?

Bills are up in the fine new house. Swarms of Hebrew gentlemen with their hats on are walking about the drawing-rooms, peering into the bedrooms, weighing and poising the poor old silver cocoa-nut tree, eyeing the plate and crystal, thumbing the damask of the curtains, and inspecting ottomans, mirrors, and a hundred articles of splendid trumpery. There is Rosey's boudoir which her father-inlaw loved to ornament — there is Clive's studio with a hundred sketches — there is the Colonel's bare room at the top of the house, with his little iron bedstead and ship's drawers, and a camel trunk or two which have accompanied him on many an Indian march, and his old regulation sword, and that one which the native officers of his regiment gave him when he bade them farewell. I can fancy the brokers' faces as they look over this camp wardrobe, and that the uniforms will not fetch much in Holywell Street. There is the old one still, and that new one which he ordered and wore when poor little Rosey was presented at court. I had not the heart to examine their plunder, and go amongst those wreckers. F. B. used to attend the sale regularly, and report its proceedings to us with eyes full of tears. "A fellow laughed at me," says F. B., "because when I came into the dear old drawing-room I took my hat off. I told him that if he dared say another word I would knock him down." I think F. B. may be pardoned in this instance for emulating the office of auctioneer. Where are you, pretty Rosey and poor little helpless baby? Where are you, dear Clive — gallant young friend of my youth? Ah! it is a sad story — a melancholy page to pen! Let us pass it over quickly — I love not to think of my friend in pain.



CHAPTER LXXI

IN WHICH MRS. CLIVE NEWCOME'S CARRIAGE IS ORDERED

All the friends of the Newcome family, of course, knew the disaster which had befallen the good Colonel, and I was aware, for my own part, that not only his own, but almost the whole of Rosa Newcome's property was involved in the common ruin. Some proposals of temporary relief were made to our friends from more quarters than one, but were thankfully rejected — and we were led to hope that the Colonel, having still his pension secured to him, which the law could not touch, might live comfortably enough the retirement to which, of course, he would betake himself, when the melancholy proceedings consequent on the bankruptcy were brought to an end. It was shown that he had been egregiously duped in the transaction — that his credulity had cost him and his family a large fortune — that he had given up every penny which belonged to him — that there could not be any sort of stain upon his honest reputation. The judge before whom he appeared spoke with feeling and regard of the unhappy gentleman — the lawyer who examined him respected the grief and fall of that simple old man. Thomas Newcome took a little room near the court where his affairs and the affairs of the company were adjudged — lived with a frugality which never was difficult to him — And once when perchance I met him in the City, avoided me, with a bow and courtesy that was quite humble, though proud and somehow inexpressibly touching to me. Fred Bayham was the only person whom he admitted. Fred always faithfully insisted upon attending him in and out of court. J. J. came to me immediately after he heard of the disaster, eager to place all his savings at the service of his friends. Laura and I came to London, and were urgent with similar offers. Our good friend declined to see any of us. F. B., again, with tears trickling on his rough cheeks, and a break in his voice, told me he feared that affairs must be very bad indeed, for the Colonel absolutely denied himself a cheroot to smoke. Laura drove to his lodgings and took him a box, which was held up to him as he came to open the door to my wife's knock by our smiling little boy. He patted the child on his golden head and kissed him. My wife wished he would have done as much for her — but he would not — though she owned she kissed his hand. He drew it across his eyes and thanked her in a very calm and stately manner — but he did not invite her within the threshold of his door, saying simply, that such a room was not a fit place to receive a lady, "as you ought to know very well, Mrs. Smith," he said to the landlady, who had accompanied my wife up the stairs. "He will eat scarcely anything," the woman told us, "his meals come down untouched; his candles are burning all night, almost, as he sits poring over his papers."

"He was bent — he who used to walk so uprightly," Laura said. He seemed to have grown many years older, and was, indeed, quite a decrepit old man.

"I am glad they have left Clive out of the bankruptcy," the Colonel said to Bayham; it was almost the only time when his voice exhibited any emotion. "It was very kind of them to leave out Clive, poor boy, and I have thanked the lawyers in court." Those gentlemen, and the judge himself, were very much moved at this act of gratitude. The judge made a very feeling speech to the Colonel when he came up for his certificate. He passed very different comments on the conduct of the Manager of the Bank, when that person appeared for examination. He wished that the law had power to deal with those gentlemen who had come home with large fortunes from India, realised but a few years before the bankruptcy. Those gentlemen had known how to take care of themselves very well; and as for the Manager, is not his wife giving elegant balls at her elegant house at Cheltenham at this very day?

What weighed most upon the Colonel's mind, F. B. imagined, was the thought that he had been the means of inducing many poor friends to embark their money in this luckless speculation. Take J. J.'s money after he had persuaded old Ridley to place 200 pounds in Indian shares! Good God, he and his family should rather perish than he would touch a farthing of it! Many fierce words were uttered to him by Mrs. Mackenzie, for instance — by her angry daughter at Musselburgh — Josey's husband, by Mr. Smee, R.A., and two or three Indian officers, friends of his own, who had entered into the speculation on his recommendation. These rebukes Thomas Newcome bore with an affecting meekness, as his faithful F. B. described to me, striving with many oaths and much loudness to carry off his own emotion. But what moved the Colonel most of all, was a letter which came at this time from Honeyman in India, saying that he was doing well — that of course he knew of his benefactor's misfortune, and that he sent a remittance which, D. V., should be annual, in payment of his debt to the Colonel, and his good sister at Brighton. "On receipt of this letter," said F. B., "the old man was fairly beaten — the

letter, with the bill in it, dropped out of his hands. He clasped them together, shaking in every limb, and his head dropped down on his breast as he said, 'I thank my God Almighty for this!' and he sent the cheque off to Mrs. Honeyman by the post that night, sir, every shilling of it; and he passed his old arm under mine — and we went out to Tom's Coffee-House, and he ate some dinner the first time for ever so long, and drank a couple of glasses of port wine, and F. B. stood it, sir, and would stand his heart's blood that dear old boy."

It was on a Monday morning that those melancholy shutters were seen over the offices of the Bundelcund Bank in Lothbury, which were not to come down until the rooms were handed over to some other, and, let us trust, more fortunate speculators. The Indian bills had arrived, and been protested in the City on the previous Saturday. The Campaigner and Mrs. Rosey had arranged a little party to the theatre that evening, and the gallant Captain Goby had agreed to quit the delights of the Flag Club, in order to accompany the ladies. Neither of them knew what was happening in the City, or could account otherwise than by the common domestic causes, for Clive's gloomy despondency and his father's sad reserve. Clive had not been in the City on this day. He had spent it, as usual, in his studio, boude by his wife, and not disturbed by the messroom raillery of the Campaigner. They had dined early, in order to be in time for the theatre. Goby entertained them with the latest jokes from the smoking-room at the Flag, and was in his turn amused by the brilliant plans for the season which Rosey and her mamma sketched out the entertainments which Mrs. Clive proposed to give, the ball — she was dying for a masked ball just such a one as that was described in the Pall Mall Gazette of last week, out of that paper with the droll title, the Bengal Hurkaru, which the merchant-prince, the head of the bank, you know, in India, had given at Calcutta. "We must have a ball, too," says Mrs. Mackenzie; "society demands it of you." "Of course it does," echoes Captain Goby, and he bethought him of a brilliant circle of young fellows from the Flag, whom he would bring in splendid uniform to dance with the pretty Mrs. Clive Newcome.

After the dinner — they little knew it was to be their last in that fine house — the ladies retired to give their parting kiss to baby — a parting look to the toilettes, with which they proposed to fascinate the inhabitants of the pit and the public boxes at the Olympic. Goby made vigorous play with the claret-bottle during the brief interval of potation allowed to him; he, too, little deeming that he should never drink bumper there again; Clive looking on with the melancholy and silent acquiescence which had, of late, been his part in the household. The carriage was announced — the ladies came down — pretty capotes on the lovely Campaigner, Goby vowed, looking as young and as handsome as her daughter, by Jove, and the ball door was opened to admit the two gentlemen and ladies to their carriage, when, as they were about to step in, a hansom cab drove up rapidly, in which was perceived Thomas Newcome's anxious face. He got out of the vehicle — his own carriage making way for him — the ladies still on the steps. "Oh, the play! I forgot," said the Colonel.

"Of course we are going to the play, papa," cries little Rosey, with a gay little tap of her hand.

"I think you had better not," Colonel Newcome said gravely.

"Indeed my darling child has set her heart upon it, and I would not have her disappointed for the world in her situation," cries the Campaigner, tossing up her head.

The Colonel for reply bade his coachman drive to the stables, and come for further orders; and, turning to his daughter's guest, expressed to Captain Goby his regret that the proposed party could not take place on that evening, as he had matter of very great importance to communicate to his family. On hearing these news, and understanding that his further company was not desirable, the Captain, a man of great presence of mind, arrested the hansom cabman, who was about to take his departure, and who blithely, knowing the Club and its inmates full well, carried off the jolly Captain to finish his evening at the Flag.

"Has it come, father?" said Clive with a sure prescience, looking in his father's face.

The father took and grasped the hand which his son held out. "Let us go back into the dining-room," he said. They entered it, and he filled himself a glass of wine out of the bottle still standing amidst the dessert. He bade the butler retire, who was lingering about the room and sideboard, and only wanted to know whether his master would have dinner, that was all. And, this gentleman having withdrawn, Colonel Newcome finished his glass of sherry and broke a biscuit; the Campaigner assuming an attitude of surprise and indignation, whilst Rosey had leisure to remark that papa looked very ill, and that something must have happened.

The Colonel took both her hands and drew her towards him and kissed her, whilst Rosey's mamma, flouncing down on a chair, beat a tattoo upon the tablecloth with her fan. "Something has happened, my love," the Colonel said very sadly;

“you must show all your strength of mind, for a great misfortune has befallen us.”

“Good heavens, Colonel, what is it? don’t frighten my beloved child,” cries the Campaigner, rushing towards her darling, and enveloping her in her robust arms. “What can have happened, don’t agitate this darling child, sir,” and she looked indignantly towards the poor Colonel.

“We have received the very worst news from Calcutta, a confirmation of the news by the last mail, Clivey, my boy.”

“It is no news to me. I have always been expecting it, father,” says Clive, holding down his head.

“Expecting what? What have you been keeping back from us? In what have you been deceiving us, Colonel Newcome?” shrieks the Campaigner; and Rosa, crying out, “Oh, mamma, mamma!” begins to whimper.

“The chief of the bank in India is dead,” the Colonel went on. “He has left its affairs in worse than disorder. We are, I fear, ruined, Mrs. Mackenzie.” And the Colonel went on to tell how the bank could not open on Monday morning, and its bills to a great amount had already been protested in the City that day.

Rosey did not understand half these news, or comprehend the calamity which was to follow; but Mrs. Mackenzie, rustling in great wrath, made a speech, of which the anger gathered as he proceeded; in which she vowed and protested that her money, which the Colonel, she did not know from what motives, had induced her to subscribe, should not be sacrificed, and that have it she would, the bank shut or not, the next Monday morning — that her daughter had a fortune of her own which her poor dear brother James should have divided and would have divided much more fairly, had he not been wrongly influenced — she would not say by whom, and she commanded Colonel Newcome upon that instant, if he was, as he always pretended to be, an honourable man, to give an account of her blessed darling’s property, and to pay back her own, every sixpence of it. She would not lend it for an hour longer, and to see that that dear blessed child now sleeping unconsciously upstairs, and his dear brothers and sisters who might follow, for Rosey was a young woman, a poor innocent creature, too young to be married, and never would have been married had she listened to her mamma’s advice. She demanded that the baby, and all succeeding babies, should have their rights, and should be looked to by their grandmother, if their father’s father was so unkind, and so wicked, and so unnatural, as to give their money to rogues, and deprive them of their just bread.

Rosey began to cry more loudly than ever during the utterance of mamma’s sermon, so loudly that Clive peevishly cried out, “Hold your tongue,” on which the Campaigner, clutching her daughter to her breast again, turned on her son-in-law, and abused him as she had abused his father before him, calling out that they were both in a conspiracy to defraud her child, and the little darling upstairs of its bread, and she would speak, yes, she would, and no power should prevent her, and her money she would have on Monday, as sure as her poor dear husband, Captain Mackenzie, was dead, and she never would have been cheated so, yes, cheated, if he had been alive.

At the word “cheated” Clive broke out with an execration — the poor Colonel with a groan of despair — the widow’s storm continued, and above that howling tempest of words rose Mrs. Clive’s piping scream, who went off into downright hysterics at last, in which she was encouraged by her mother, and in which she gasped out frantic ejaculations regarding baby; dear, darling, ruined baby, and so forth.

The sorrow-stricken Colonel had to quell the women’s tongues and shrill anger, and his son’s wrathful replies, who could not bear the weight of Mrs. Mackenzie upon him; and it was not until these three were allayed, that Thomas Newcome was able to continue his sad story, to explain what had happened, and what the actual state of the case was, and to oblige the terror-stricken women at length to hear something like reason.

He then had to tell them, to their dismay, that he would inevitably be declared a bankrupt in the ensuing week; that the whole of his property in that house, as elsewhere, would be seized and sold for the creditors’ benefit; and that his daughter had best immediately leave a home where she would be certainly subject to humiliation and annoyance. “I would have Clive, my boy, take you out of the country, and — and return to me when I have need of him, and shall send for him,” the father said fondly in reply to a rebellious look on his son’s face. “I would have you quit this house as soon as possible. Why not to-night? The law blood-hound may be upon us ere an hour is over — at this moment for what I know.”

At that moment the door-bell was heard to ring, and the women gave a scream apiece, as if the bailiffs were actually coming to take possession. Rosey went off in quite a series of screams, peevishly repressed by her husband, and always encouraged by mamma, who called her son-in-law an unfeeling wretch. It must be confessed that Mrs. Clive Newcome did not exhibit much strength of mind, or comfort her husband much at a moment when he needed consolation.

From angry rebellion and fierce remonstrance, this pair of women now passed to an extreme terror and desire for instantaneous flight. They would go that moment — they would wrap the blessed child up in its shawls — and nurse should take it anywhere — anywhere, poor neglected thing. “My trunks,” cries Mrs. Mackenzie, “you know are ready packed — I am sure it is not the treatment which I have received — it is nothing but my duty and my religion — and the protection which I owe to this blessed unprotected — yes, unprotected, and robbed, and cheated, darling child — which have made me stay a single day in this house. I never thought I should have been robbed in it, or my darlings with their fine fortunes flung naked on the world. If my Mac was here, you never had dared to have done this, Colonel Newcome — no, never. He had his faults — Mackenzie had — but he would never have robbed his own children! Come away, Rosey, my blessed love, come let us pack your things, and let us go and hide our heads in sorrow somewhere. Ah! didn’t I tell you to beware of all painters, and that Clarence was a true gentleman, and loved you with all his heart, and would never have cheated you out of your money, for which I will have justice as sure as there is justice in England.”

During this outburst the Colonel sat utterly scared and silent, supporting his poor head between his hands. When the harem had departed he turned sadly to his son. Clive did not believe that his father was a cheat and a rogue. No, thank God! The two men embraced with tender cordiality and almost happy emotion on the one side and the other. Never for one moment could Clive think his dear old father meant wrong — though the speculations were unfortunate in which he had engaged — though Clive had not liked them; it was a relief to his mind that they were now come to an end; they should all be happier now, thank God! those clouds of distrust being removed. Clive felt not one moment’s doubt but that they should be able to meet fortune with a brave face; and that happier, much happier days were in store for him than ever they had known since the period of this confounded prosperity.

“Here’s a good end to it,” says Clive, with flashing eyes and a flushed face, “and here’s a good health till tomorrow, father!” and he filled into two glasses the wine still remaining in the flask. “Good-bye to our fortune, and bad luck go with her — I puff the prostitute away — *Si celeres quatit pennas, you remember what we used to say at Grey Friars — resign quae dedit, et mea virtute me involve, probamque pauperiem sine dote quaero.*” And he pledged his father, who drank his wine, his hand shaking as he raised the glass to his lips, and his kind voice trembling as he uttered the well-known old school words, with an emotion that was as sacred as a prayer. Once more, and with hearts full of love, the two men embraced. Clive’s voice would tremble now if he told the story, as it did when he spoke it to me in happier times, one calm summer evening when we sat together and talked of dear old days.

Thomas Newcome explained to his son the plan, which, to his mind, as he came away from the City after the day’s misfortunes, he thought it was best to pursue. The women and the child were clearly best out of the way. “And you too, my boy, must be on duty with them until I send for you, which I will do if your presence can be of the least service to me, or is called for by — by — our honour,” said the old man with a drop in his voice. “You must obey me in this, dear Clive, as you have done in everything, and been a good and dear, and obedient son to me. God pardon me for having trusted to my own simple old brains too much, and not to you who know so much better. You will obey me this once more, my boy — you will promise me this?” and the old man as he spoke took Clive’s hand in both his, and fondly caressed it.

Then with a shaking hand he took out of his pocket his old purse with the steel rings, which he had worn for many and many a long year. Clive remembered it, and his father’s face how it would beam with delight, when he used to take that very purse out in Clive’s boyish days and tip him just after he left school. “Here are some notes and some gold,” he said. “It is Rosey’s, honestly, Clive dear, her half-year’s dividend, for which you will give an order, please, to Sherrick. He has been very kind and good, Sherrick. All the servants were providentially paid last week — there are only the outstanding week’s bills out — we shall manage to meet those, I dare say. And you will see that Rosey only takes away such clothes for herself and her baby as are actually necessary, won’t you, dear? the plain things, you know — none of the fineries — they may be packed in a petara or two, and you will take them with you — but the pomps and vanities, you know, we will leave behind — the pearls and bracelets, and the plate, and all that rubbish — and I will make an inventory of them tomorrow when you are gone, and give them up, every rupee’s worth, sir, every anna, by Jove, to the creditors.”

The darkness had fallen by this time, and the obsequious butler entered to light the dining-room lamps. “You have been a very good and kind servant to us, Martin,” says the Colonel, making him a low bow. “I should like to shake you by the hand. We must part company now, and I have no doubt you and your fellow servants will find good places, all of you, as you merit, Martin — as you merit. Great losses have fallen upon our family — we are ruined, sir — we are ruined! The great Bundelcund Banking Company has stopped payment in India, and our branch here must stop on Monday. Thank my

friends downstairs for their kindness to me and my family.” Martin bowed in silence with great respect. He and his comrades in the servants’-hall had been expecting this catastrophe, quite as long as the Colonel himself who thought he had kept his affairs so profoundly secret.

Clive went up into his women’s apartments, looking with but little regret, I dare say, round those cheerless nuptial chambers with all their gaudy fittings; the fine looking-glasses, in which poor Rosey’s little person had been reflected; the silken curtains under which he had lain by the poor child’s side, wakeful and lonely. Here he found his child’s nurse, and his wife, and wife’s mother, busily engaged with a multiplicity of boxes; with flounces, feathers, fal-lals, and finery, which they were stowing away in this trunk and that; while the baby lay on its little pink pillow breathing softly, a little pearly fist placed close to its mouth. The aspect of the tawdry vanities scattered here and there chafed and annoyed the young man. He kicked the robes over with his foot. When Mrs. Mackenzie interposed with loud ejaculations, he sternly bade her to be silent, and not wake the child. His words were not to be questioned when he spoke in that manner. “You will take nothing with you, Rosey, but what is strictly necessary — only two or three of your plainest dresses, and what is required for the boy. What is in this trunk?” Mrs. Mackenzie stepped forward and declared, and the nurse vowed upon her honour, and the lady’s-maid asserted really now upon honour too, that there was nothing but what was most strictly necessary in that trunk, to which affidavits, when Clive applied to his wife, she gave a rather timid assent.

“Where are the keys of that trunk?” Upon Mrs. Mackenzie’s exclamation of “What nonsense!” Clive, putting his foot upon the flimsy oil-covered box, vowed he would kick the lid off unless it was instantly opened. Obeying this grim summons, the fluttering women produced the keys, and the black box was opened before him.

The box was found to contain a number of objects which Clive pronounced to be by no means necessary to his wife’s and child’s existence. Trinket-boxes and favourite little gimcracks, chains, rings and pearl necklaces, the tiara poor Rosey had worn at court — the feathers and the gorgeous train which had decorated the little person — all these were found packed away in this one receptacle; and in another box, I am sorry to say, were the silver forks and spoons (the butler wisely judging that the rich and splendid electrotype ware might as well be left behind)— all the silver forks, spoons, and ladles, and our poor old friend the cocoa-nut tree, which these female robbers would have carried out of the premises.

Mr. Clive Newcome burst out into fierce laughter when he saw the cocoa-nut tree; he laughed so loud that baby woke, and his mother-in-law called him a brute, and the nurse ran to give its accustomed quietus to the little screaming infant. Rosey’s eyes poured forth a torrent of little protests, and she would have cried yet more loudly than the other baby, had not her husband, again fiercely checking her, sworn with a dreadful oath, that unless she told him the whole truth, “By heavens she should leave the house with nothing but what covered her.” Even the Campaigner could not make head against Clive’s stern resolution; and the incipient insurrection of the maids and the mistresses was quelled by his spirit. The lady’s-maid, a flighty creature, received her wages and took her leave: but the nurse could not find it in her heart to quit her little nursling so suddenly, and accompanied Clive’s household in the journey upon which those poor folks were bound. What stolen goods were finally discovered when the family reached foreign parts were found in Mrs. Mackenzie’s trunks, not in her daughter’s: a silver filigree basket, a few teaspoons, baby’s gold coral, and a costly crimson velvet-bound copy of the Hon. Miss Grimstone’s Church Service, to which articles, having thus appropriated them, Mrs. Mackenzie henceforward laid claim as her own.

So when the packing was done a cab was called to receive the modest trunks of this fugitive family — the coachman was bidden to put his horses to again, and for the last time poor Rosey Newcome sate in her own carriage, to which the Colonel conducted her with his courtly old bow, kissing the baby as it slept once more unconscious in its nurse’s embrace, and bestowing a very grave and polite parting salute upon the Campaigner.

Then Clive and his father entered a cab on which the trunks were borne, and they drove to the Tower Stairs, where the ship lay which was to convey them out of England; and, during that journey, no doubt, they talked over their altered prospects, and I am sure Clive’s father blessed his son fondly, and committed him and his family to a good God’s gracious keeping, and thought of him with sacred love when they had parted, and Thomas Newcome had returned to his lonely house to watch and to think of his ruined fortunes, and to pray that he might have courage under them; that he might bear his own fate honourably; and that a gentle one might be dealt to those beloved beings for whom his life had been sacrificed in vain.

CHAPTER LXXII

BELISARIUS

When the sale of Colonel Newcome's effects took place, a friend of the family bought in for a few shillings those two swords which had hung, as we have said, in the good man's chamber, and for which no single broker present had the heart to bid. The head of Clive's father, painted by himself, which had always kept its place in the young man's studio, together with a lot of his oil-sketchings, easels, and painting apparatus, were purchased by the faithful J. J., who kept them until his friend should return to London and reclaim them, and who showed the most generous solicitude in Clive's behalf. J. J. was elected of the Royal Academy this year, and Clive, it was evident, was working hard at the profession which he had always loved; for he sent over three pictures to the Academy, and I never knew man more mortified than the affectionate J. J., when two of these unlucky pieces were rejected by the committee for the year. One pretty little piece, called "The Stranded Boat," got a fair place on the Exhibition walls, and, you may be sure, was loudly praised by a certain critic in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. The picture was sold on the first day of the exhibition at the price of twenty-five pounds, which the artist demanded; and when the kind J. J. wrote to inform his friend of this satisfactory circumstance, and to say that he held the money at Clive's disposal, the latter replied with many expressions of sincere gratitude, at the same time begging him directly to forward the money, with our old friend Thomas Newcome's love, to Mrs. Sarah Mason, at Newcome. But J. J. never informed his friend that he himself was the purchaser of the picture; nor was Clive made acquainted with the fact until some time afterwards, when he found it hanging in Ridley's studio.

I have said that we none of us were aware at this time what was the real state of Colonel Newcome's finances, and hoped that, after giving up every shilling of his property which was confiscated to the creditors of the Bank, he had still, from his retiring pension and military allowances, at least enough reputably to maintain him. On one occasion, having business in the City, I there met Mr. Sherrick. Affairs had been going ill with that gentleman — he had been let in terribly, he informed me, by Lord Levant's insolvency — having had large money transactions with his lordship. "There's none of them so good as old Newcome," Mr. Sherrick said with a sigh; "that was a good one — that was an honest man if ever I saw one — with no more guile, and no more idea of business than a baby. Why didn't he take my advice, poor old cove? — he might be comfortable now. Why did he sell away that annuity, Pendennis? I got it done for him when nobody else perhaps could have got it done for him — for the security ain't worth twopence if Newcome wasn't an honest man; — but I know he is, and would rather starve and eat the nails off his fingers than not keep his word, the old trump. And when he came to me, a good two months before the smash of the Bank, which I knew it, sir, and saw that it must come — when he came and raised three thousand pounds to meet them d — d electioneering bills, having to pay lawyers, commission, premium, life-insurance — you know the whole game, Mr. P. — I as good as went down on my knees to him — I did — at the North and South American Coffee-house, where he was to meet the party about the money, and said, 'Colonel, don't raise it — I tell you, let it stand over — let it go in along with the bankruptcy that's a-coming,' — but he wouldn't — he went on like an old Bengal tiger, roaring about his honour; he paid the bills every shilling — infernal long bills they were, and it's my belief that, at this minute, he ain't got fifty pounds a year of his own to spend. I would send him back my commission — I would by Jove — only times is so bad, and that rascal Levant let me in. It went to my heart to take the old cock's money — but it's gone — that and ever so much more — and Lady Whittlesea's Chapel too, Mr. P. Hang that young Levant."

Squeezing my hand after this speech, Sherrick ran across the street after some other capitalist who was entering the Diddlesex Insurance Office, and left me very much grieved and dismayed at finding that my worst fears in regard to Thomas Newcome were confirmed. Should we confer with his wealthy family respecting the Colonel's impoverished condition? Was his brother Hobson Newcome aware of it? As for Sir Barnes, the quarrel between him and his uncle had been too fierce to admit of hopes of relief from that quarter. Barnes had been put to very heavy expenses in the first contested election; had come forward again immediately on his uncle's resignation, but again had been beaten by a more liberal candidate, his quondam former friend, Mr. Higg — who formally declared against Sir Barnes, and who drove him finally out of the representation of Newcome. From this gentleman it was vain of course for Colonel Newcome's friends to expect relief.

How to aid him? He was proud — past work — nearly seventy years old. “Oh, why did those cruel Academicians refuse Clive’s pictures?” cries Laura. “I have no patience with them — had the pictures been exhibited I know who might have bought them — but that is vain now. He would suspect at once, and send her money away. Oh, Pen! why, why didn’t he come when I wrote that letter to Brussels?”

From persons so poorly endowed with money as ourselves, any help, but of the merest temporary nature, was out of the question. We knew our friends too well not to know that they would disdain to receive it. It was agreed between me and Laura that at any rate I should go and see Clive. Our friends indeed were at a very short distance from us, and, having exiled themselves from England, could yet see its coasts from their windows upon any clear day. Boulogne was their present abiding-place — refuge of how many thousands of other unfortunate Britons — and to this friendly port I betook myself speedily, having the address of Colonel Newcome. His quarters were in a quiet grass-grown old street of the Old Town. None of the family were at home when I called. There was indeed no servant to answer the bell, but the good-natured French domestic of a neighbouring lodger told me that the young monsieur went out every day to make his designs, and that I should probably find the elder gentleman upon the rampart, where he was in the custom of going every day. I strolled along by those pretty old walks and bastions, under the pleasant trees which shadow them, and the grey old gabled houses from which you look down upon the gay new city, and the busy port, and the piers stretching into the shining sea, dotted with a hundred white sails or black smoking steamers, and bounded by the friendly lines of the bright English shore. There are few prospects more charming than the familiar view from those old French walls — few places where young children may play, and ruminating old age repose more pleasantly than on those peaceful rampart gardens.

I found our dear old friend seated on one of the benches, a newspaper on his knees, and by his side a red-cheeked little French lass, upon whose lap Thomas Newcome the younger lay sleeping. The Colonel’s face flushed up when he saw me. As he advanced a step or two towards me I could see that he trembled in his walk. His hair had grown almost quite white. He looked now to be more than his age — he whose carriage last year had been so erect, whose figure had been so straight and manly. I was very much moved at meeting him, and at seeing the sad traces which pain and grief had left in the countenance of the dear old man.

“So you are come to see me, my good young friend,” cried the Colonel, with a trembling voice. “It is very, very kind of you. Is not this a pretty drawing-room to receive our friends in? We have not many of them now; Boy and I come and sit here for hours every day. Hasn’t he grown a fine boy? He can say several words now, sir, and can walk surprisingly well. Soon he will be able to walk with his grandfather, and then Marie will not have the trouble to wait upon either of us.” He repeated this sentiment in his pretty old French, and turning with a bow to Marie. The girl said monsieur knew very well that she did not desire better than to come out with baby; that it was better than staying at home, *pardieu*; and, the clock striking at this moment, she rose up with her child, crying out that it was time to return or madame would scold.

“Mrs. Mackenzie has rather a short temper,” the Colonel said with a gentle smile. “Poor thing, she has had a great deal to bear in consequence, Pen, of my imprudence. I am glad you never took shares in our bank. I should not be so glad to see you as I am now, if I had brought losses upon you as I have upon so many of my friends.” I, for my part, trembled to hear the good old man was under the domination of the Campaigner.

“Bayham sends me the paper regularly; he is a very kind faithful creature. How glad I am that he has got a snug berth in the City! His company really prospers, I am happy to think, unlike some companies you know of, Pen. I have read your two speeches, sir, and Clive and I liked them very much. The poor boy works all day at his pictures. You know he has sold one at the exhibition, which has given us a great deal of heart — and he has completed two or three more — and I am sitting to him now for — what do you think, sir? for Belisarius. Will you give Belisarius and the Obolus kind word?”

“My dear, dear old friend,” I said in great emotion, “if you will do me the kindness to take my Obolus or to use my services in any way, you will give me more pleasure than ever I had from your generous bounties in old days. Look, sir, I wear the watch which you gave me when you went to India. Did you not tell me then to look over Clive and serve him if I could? Can’t I serve him now?” and I went on further in this strain, asseverating with great warmth and truth that my wife’s affection and my own were most sincere for both of them, and that our pride would be to be able to help such dear friends.

The Colonel said I had a good heart, and my wife had, though — though — he did not finish this sentence, but I could interpret it without need of its completion. My wife and the two ladies of Colonel Newcome’s family never could be friends, however much my poor Laura tried to be intimate with these women. Her very efforts at intimacy caused a frigidity and

hauteur which Laura could not overcome. Little Rosey and her mother set us down as two aristocratic personages; nor for our parts were we very much disturbed at this opinion of the Campaigner and little Rosa.

I talked with the Colonel for half an hour or more about his affairs, which indeed were very gloomy, and Clive's prospects, of which he strove to present as cheering a view as possible. He was obliged to confirm the news which Sherrick had given me, and to own, in fact, that all his pension was swallowed up by a payment of interest and life insurance for sums which he had been compelled to borrow. How could he do otherwise than meet his engagements? Thank God, he had Clive's full approval for what he had done — had communicated the circumstance to his son almost immediately after it took place, and that was a comfort to him — an immense comfort. "For the women are very angry," said the poor Colonel; "you see they do not understand the laws of honour, at least as we understand them: and perhaps I was wrong in hiding the truth as I certainly did from Mrs. Mackenzie, but I acted for the best — I hoped against hope that some chance might turn in our favour. God knows, I had a hard task enough in wearing a cheerful face for months, and in following my little Rosa about to her parties and balls; but poor Mrs. Mackenzie has a right to be angry, only I wish my little girl did not side with her mother so entirely, for the loss of her affection gives me great pain."

So it was as I suspected. The Campaigner ruled over this family, and added to all their distresses by her intolerable presence and tyranny. "Why, sir," I ventured to ask, "if, as I gather from you — and I remember," I added with a laugh, "certain battles-royal which Clive described to me in old days — if you and the Campai — Mrs. Mackenzie do not agree, why should she continue to live with you, when you would all be so much happier apart?"

"She has a right to live in the house," says the Colonel; "It is I who have no right in it. I am a poor old pensioner, don't you see, subsisting on Rosey's bounty? We live on the hundred a year, secured to her at her marriage, and Mrs. Mackenzie has her forty pounds of pension which she adds to the common stock. It is I who have made away with every shilling of Rosey's 17,000 pounds, God help me, and with 1500 pounds of her mother's. They put their little means together, and they keep us — me and Clive. What can we do for a living? Great God! What can we do? Why, I am so useless that even when my poor boy earned 25 pounds for his picture, I felt we were bound to send it to Sarah Mason, and you may fancy when this came to Mrs. Mackenzie's ears, what a life my boy and I led. I have never spoken of these things to any mortal soul — I even don't speak of them with Clive — but seeing your kind and honest face has made me talk — you must pardon my garrulity — I am growing old, Arthur. This poverty and these quarrels have beaten my spirit down — there, I shall talk on this subject no more. I wish, sir, I could ask you to dine with us, but" — and here he smiled — "we must get the leave of the higher powers."

I was determined, in spite of prohibitions and Campaigners, to see my old friend Clive, and insisted on walking back with the Colonel to his lodgings, at the door of which we met Mrs. Mackenzie and her daughter. Rosa blushed up a little — looked at her mamma — and then greeted me with a hand and a curtsy. The Campaigner also saluted me in a majestic but amicable manner, made no objection even to my entering her apartments and seeing the condition to which they were reduced: this phrase was uttered with particular emphasis and a significant look towards the Colonel, who bowed his meek head and preceded me into the lodgings, which were in truth very homely, pretty, and comfortable. The Campaigner was an excellent manager — restless, bothering, brushing perpetually. Such fugitive gimcracks as they had brought away with them decorated the little salon. Mrs. Mackenzie, who took the entire command, even pressed me to dine and partake, if so fashionable a gentleman would condescend to partake, of a humble exile's fare. No fare was perhaps very pleasant to me in company with that woman, but I wanted to see my dear old Clive, and gladly accepted his voluble mother-in-law's not disinterested hospitality. She beckoned the Colonel aside; whispered to him, putting something into his hand; on which he took his hat and went away. Then Rosey was dismissed upon some other pretext, and I had the felicity to be left alone with Mrs. Captain Mackenzie.

She instantly improved the occasion; and with great eagerness and volubility entered into her statement of the present affairs and position of this unfortunate family. She described darling Rosey's delicate state, poor thing — nursed with tenderness and in the lap of luxury — brought up with every delicacy and the fondest mother — never knowing in the least how to take care of herself, and likely to fall down and perish unless the kind Campaigner were by to prop and protect her. She was in delicate health — very delicate — ordered cod-liver oil by the doctor. Heaven knows how he could be paid for those expensive medicines out of the pittance to which the imprudence — the most culpable and designing imprudence, and extravagance, and folly of Colonel Newcome had reduced them! Looking out from the window as she spoke I saw — we both saw — the dear old gentleman sadly advancing towards the house, a parcel in his hand. Seeing his near approach, and

that our interview was likely to come to an end, Mrs. Mackenzie rapidly whispered to me that she knew I had a good heart — that I had been blessed by Providence with a fine fortune, which I knew how to keep better than some folks — and that if, as no doubt was my intention — for with what other but a charitable view could I have come to see them? — and most generous and noble was it of you to come, and I always thought it of you, Mr. Pendennis, whatever other people said to the contrary. If I proposed to give them relief, which was most needful — and for which a mother's blessings would follow me — let it be to her, the Campaigner, that my loan should be confided — for as for the Colonel, he is not fit to be trusted with a shilling, and has already flung away immense sums upon some old woman he keeps in the country, leaving his darling Rosey without the actual necessities of life.

The woman's greed and rapacity — the flattery with which she chose to belabour me at dinner, so choked and disgusted me, that I could hardly swallow the meal, though my poor old friend had been sent out to purchase a pate from the pastrycook's for my especial refection. Clive was not at the dinner. He seldom returned till late at night on sketching days. Neither his wife nor his mother-in-law seemed much to miss him; and seeing that the Campaigner engrossed the entire share of the conversation, and proposed not to leave me for five minutes alone with the Colonel, I took leave rather speedily of my entertainers, leaving a message for Clive, and a prayer that he would come and see me at my hotel.



CHAPTER LXXIII

IN WHICH BELISARIUS RETURNS FROM EXILE

I was sitting in the dusk in my room at Hotel des Bains, when the visitor for whom I hoped made his appearance in the person of Clive, with his broad shoulders, and broad hat, and a shaggy beard, which he had thought fit in his quality of painter to assume. Our greeting it need not be said was warm; and our talk, which extended far into the night, very friendly and confidential. If I make my readers confidants in Mr. Clive's private affairs, I ask my friend's pardon for narrating his history in their behoof. The world had gone very ill with my poor Clive, and I do not think that the pecuniary losses which had visited him and his father afflicted him near so sorely as the state of his home. In a pique with the woman he loved, and from that generous weakness which formed part of his character, and which led him to acquiesce in most wishes of his good father, the young man had gratified the darling desire of the Colonel's heart, and taken the wife whom his two old friends brought to him. Rosey, who was also, as we have shown, of a very obedient and ductile nature, had acquiesced gladly enough in her mamma's opinion, that she was in love with the rich and handsome young Clive, and accepted him for better or worse. So undoubtedly would this good child have accepted Captain Hoby, her previous adorer, have smilingly promised fidelity to the Captain at church, and have made a very good, happy, and sufficient little wife for that officer — had not mamma commanded her to jilt him. What wonder that these elders should wish to see their two dear young ones united? They began with suitable age, money, good temper, and parents' blessings. It is not the first time that, with all these excellent helps to prosperity and happiness, a marriage has turned out unfortunately — a pretty, tight ship gone to wreck that set forth on its voyage with cheers from the shore, and every prospect of fair wind and fine weather.

We have before quoted poor Clive's simile of the shoes with which his good old father provided him — as pretty a little pair of shoes as need be — only they did not fit the wearer. If they pinched him at first, how they blistered and tortured him now! If Clive was gloomy and discontented even when the honeymoon had scarce waned, and he and his family sat at home in state and splendour under the boughs of the famous silver cocoa-nut tree, what was the young man's condition now in poverty, when they had no love along with a scant dinner of herbs; when his mother-in-law grudged each morsel which his poor old father ate — when a vulgar, coarse-minded woman pursued with brutal sarcasm and deadly rancour one of the tenderest and noblest gentlemen in the world — when an ailing wife, always under some one's domination, received him with helpless hysterical cries and reproaches — when a coarse female tyrant, stupid, obstinate, utterly unable to comprehend the son's kindly genius, or the father's gentle spirit, bullied over both, using the intolerable undeniable advantage which her actual wrongs gave her to tyrannise over these two wretched men! He had never heard the last of that money which they had sent to Mrs. Mason, Clive said. When the knowledge of the fact came to the Campaigner's ears, she raised such a storm as almost killed the poor Colonel, and drove his son half mad. She seized the howling infant, vowing that its unnatural father and grandfather were bent upon starving it — she consoled and sent Rosey into hysterics — she took the outlawed parson to whose church they went, and the choice society of bankrupt captains, captains' ladies, fugitive stockbrokers' wives, and dingy frequenters of billiard-rooms, and refugees from the Bench, into her councils; and in her daily visits amongst these personages, and her walks on the pier, whither she trudged with poor Rosey in her train, Mrs. Mackenzie made known her own wrongs and her daughter's — showed how the Colonel, having robbed and cheated them previously, was now living upon them; insomuch that Mrs. Bolter, the levantine auctioneer's wife, would not make the poor old man a bow when she met him — that Mrs. Captain Kitely, whose husband had lain for seven years past in Boulogne gaol ordered her son to cut Clive; and when, the child being sick, the poor old Colonel went for arrowroot to the chemist's, young Snooks, the apothecary's assistant, refused to allow him to take the powder away without previously depositing the money.

He had no money, Thomas Newcome. He gave up every farthing. After having impoverished all around him, he had no right, he said, to touch a sixpence of the wretched pittance remaining to them — he had even given up his cigar, the poor old man, the companion and comforter of forty years. He was "not fit to be trusted with money," Mrs. Mackenzie said, and the good man owned as he ate his scanty crust, and bowed his noble old head in silence under that cowardly persecution.

And this, at the end of threescore and seven or eight years, was to be the close of a life which had been spent in freedom and splendour, and kindness and honour; this the reward of the noblest heart that ever beat — the tomb and

prison of a gallant warrior who had ridden in twenty battles — whose course through life had been a bounty wherever it had passed — whose name had been followed by blessings, and whose career was to end here — here — in a mean room, in a mean alley of a foreign town — a low furious woman standing over him and stabbing the kind defenceless heart with killing insult and daily outrage!

As we sat together in the dark, Clive told me this wretched story, which was wrung from him with a passionate emotion that I could not but keenly share. He wondered the old man lived, Clive said. Some of the women's taunts and gibes, as he could see, struck his father so that he gasped and started back as if some one had lashed him with a whip. "He would make away with himself," said poor Clive, "but he deems this is his punishment, and that he must bear it as long as it pleases God. He does not care for his own losses, as far as they concern himself: but these reproaches of Mrs. Mackenzie, and some things which were said to him in the Bankruptcy Court, by one or two widows of old friends, who were induced through his representations, to take shares in that infernal bank, have affected him dreadfully. I hear him lying awake and groaning at night, God bless him. Great God! what can I do — what can I do?" burst out the young man in a dreadful paroxysm of grief. "I have tried to get lessons — I went to London on the deck of a steamer, and took a lot of drawings with me — tried picture-dealers — pawnbrokers — Jews — Moss, whom you may remember at Gandish's, and who gave me for forty-two drawings, eighteen pounds. I brought the money back to Boulogne. It was enough to pay the doctor, and bury our last poor little dead baby. Tenez, Pen, you must give me some supper: I have had nothing all day but a pain de deux sous; I can't stand it at home. My heart's almost broken — you must give me some money, Pen, old boy. I know you will. I thought of writing to you, but I wanted to support myself, you see. When I went to London with the drawings I tried George's chambers, but he was in the country, I saw Crackthorpe on the street in Oxford Street, but I could not face him, and bolted down Hanway Yard. I tried, and I could not ask him, and I got the eighteen pounds from Moss that day, and came home with it."

Give him money? of course I would give him money — my dear old friend! And, as an alternative and a wholesome shock to check that burst of passion and grief in which the poor fellow indulged, I thought fit to break into a very fierce and angry invective on my own part, which served to disguise the extreme feeling of pain and pity that I did not somehow choose to exhibit. I rated Clive soundly, and taxed him with unfriendliness and ingratitude for not having sooner applied to friends who would think shame of themselves whilst he was in need. Whatever he wanted was his as much as mine. I could not understand how the necessity of the family should, in truth, be so extreme as he described it, for after all many a poor family lived upon very much less; but I uttered none of these objections, checking them with the thought that Clive, on his first arrival at Boulogne, entirely ignorant of the practice of economy, might have imprudently engaged in expenses which had reduced him to this present destitution. (I did not know at the time that Mrs. Mackenzie had taken entire superintendence of the family treasury — and that this exemplary woman was putting away, as she had done previously, sundry little sums to meet rainy days.)

I took the liberty of asking about debts, and of these Clive gave me to understand there were none — at least none of his or his father's contracting. "If we were too proud to borrow, and I think we were wrong, Pen, my dear old boy — I think we were wrong now — at least, we were too proud to owe. My colourman takes his bill out in drawings, and I think owes me a trifle. He got me some lessons at fifty sous a ticket — a pound the ten — from an economical swell who has taken a chateau here, and has two flunkeys in livery. He has four daughters, who take advantage of the lessons, and screws ten per cent upon the poor colourman's pencils and drawing-paper. It's pleasant work to give the lessons to the children; and to be patronised by the swell; and not expensive to him, is it, Pen? But I don't mind that, if I could but get lessons enough: for, you see, besides our expenses here, we must have some more money, and the dear old governor would die outright if poor old Sarah Mason did not get her fifty pounds a year."

And now there arrived a plentiful supper, and a bottle of good wine, of which the giver was not sorry to partake after the meagre dinner at three o'clock, to which I had been invited by the Campaigner; and it was midnight when I walked back with my friend to his house in the upper town; and all the stars of heaven were shining cheerily; and my dear Clive's face wore an expression of happiness, such as I remembered in old days, as we shook hands and parted with a "God bless you."

To Clive's friend, revolving these things in his mind, as he lay in one of those most snug and comfortable beds at the excellent Hotel des Bains, it appeared that this town of Boulogne was a very bad market for the artist's talents; and that he had to bring them to London, where a score of old friends would assuredly be ready to help him. And if the Colonel, too,

could be got away from the domination of the Campaigner, I felt certain that the dear old gentleman could but profit by his leave of absence. My wife and I at this time inhabited a spacious old house in Queens Square, Westminster, where there was plenty of room for father and son. I knew that Laura would be delighted to welcome these guests — may the wife of every worthy gentleman who reads these pages be as ready to receive her husband's friends. It was the state of Rosa's health, and the Campaigner's authority and permission, about which I was in doubt, and whether this lady's two slaves would be allowed to go away.

These cogitations kept the present biographer long awake, and he did not breakfast next day until an hour before noon. I had the coffee-room to myself by chance, and my meal was not yet ended when the waiter announced a lady to visit Mr. Pendennis, and Mrs. Mackenzie made her appearance. No signs of care or poverty were visible in the attire or countenance of the buxom widow. A handsome bonnet, decorated within with a profusion of poppies, bluebells; and ears of corn; a jewel on her forehead, not costly, but splendid in appearance, and glittering artfully over that central spot from which her wavy chestnut hair parted to cluster in ringlets round her ample cheeks; a handsome India shawl, smart gloves, a rich silk dress, a neat parasol of blue with pale yellow lining, a multiplicity of glittering rinks, and a very splendid gold watch and chain, which I remembered in former days as hanging round poor Rosey's white neck; — all these adornments set off the widow's person, so that you might have thought her a wealthy capitalist's lady, and never could have supposed that she was a poor, cheated, ruined, robbed, unfortunate Campaigner.

Nothing could be more gracious than the accueil of this lady. She paid me many handsome compliments about my literary work — asked most affectionately for dear Mrs. Pendennis and the dear children — and then, as I expected, coming to business, contrasted the happiness and genteel position of my wife and family with the misery and wrongs of her own blessed child and grandson. She never could call that child by the odious name which he received at his baptism. I knew what bitter reasons she had to dislike the name of Thomas Newcome.

She again rapidly enumerated the wrongs she had received at the hands of that gentleman; mentioned the vast sums of money out of which she and her soul's darling had been tricked by that poor muddle-headed creature, to say no worse of him; and described finally their present pressing need. The doctors, the burial, Rosey's delicate condition, the cost of sweetbreads, calf's-foot jelly, and cod-liver oil, were again passed in a rapid calculation before me; and she ended her speech by expressing her gratification that I had attended to her advice of the previous day, and not given Clive Newcome a direct loan; that the family wanted it, the Campaigner called upon Heaven to witness; that Clive and his absurd poor father would fling guineas out of the window was a fact equally certain; the rest of the argument was obvious, namely, that Mr. Pendennis should administer a donation to herself.

I had brought but a small sum of money in my pocket-book, though Mrs. Mackenzie, intimate with bankers, and having, thank Heaven, in spite of all her misfortunes, the utmost confidence of all her tradesmen, hinted a perfect willingness on her part to accept an order upon her friends, Hobson Brothers of London.

This direct thrust I gently and smilingly parried by asking Mrs. Mackenzie whether she supposed a gentleman who had just paid an electioneering bill, and had, at the best of times, but a very small income, might sometimes not be in a condition to draw satisfactorily upon Messrs. Hobson or any other bankers? Her countenance fell at this remark, nor was her cheerfulness much improved by the tender of one of the two bank-notes which then happened to be in my possession. I said that I had a use for the remaining note, and that it would not be more than sufficient to pay my hotel bill, and the expenses of my party back to London.

My party? I had here to divulge, with some little trepidation, the plan which I had been making overnight; to explain how I thought that Clive's great talents were wasted at Boulogne, and could only find a proper market in London; how I was pretty certain, through my connection with booksellers, to find some advantageous employment for him, and would have done so months ago had I known the state of the case; but I had believed, until within a very few days since, that the Colonel, in spite of his bankruptcy, was still in the enjoyment of considerable military pensions.

This statement, of course, elicited from the widow a number of remarks not complimentary to my dear old Colonel. He might have kept his pensions had he not been a fool — he was a baby about money matters — misled himself and everybody — was a log in the house, etc. etc. etc.

I suggested that his annuities might possibly be put into some more satisfactory shape — that I had trustworthy lawyers with whom I would put him in communication — that he had best come to London to see to these matters — and

that my wife had a large house where she would most gladly entertain the two gentlemen.

This I said with some reasonable dread — fearing, in the first place, her refusal; in the second, her acceptance of the invitation, with a proposal, as our house was large, to come herself and inhabit it for a while. Had I not seen that Campaigner arrive for a month at poor James Binnie's house in Fitzroy Square, and stay there for many years? Was I not aware that when she once set her foot in a gentleman's establishment, terrific battles must ensue before she could be dislodged? Had she not once been routed by Clive? and was she not now in command and possession? Do I not, finally, know something of the world; and have I not a weak, easy temper? I protest it was with terror that I awaited the widow's possible answer to my proposal.

To my great relief, she expressed the utmost approval of both my plans. I was uncommonly kind, she was sure, to interest myself about the two gentlemen, and for her blessed Rosa's sake, a fond mother thanked me. It was most advisable that he should earn some money by that horrid profession which he had chosen to adopt — a trade, she called it. She was clearly anxious get rid both of father and son, and agreed that the sooner they went the better.

We walked back arm-in-arm to the Colonel's quarters in the Old Town, Mrs. Mackenzie, in the course of our walk, doing me the honour to introduce me by name to several dingy acquaintances, whom we met sauntering up the street, and imparting to me, as each moved away, the pecuniary cause of his temporary residence in Boulogne. Spite of Rosey's delicate state of health, Mrs. Mackenzie did not hesitate to break the news to her of the gentlemen's probable departure, abruptly and eagerly, as if the intelligence was likely to please her:— and it did, rather than otherwise. The young woman, being in the habit of letting mamma judge for her, continued it in this instance; and whether her husband stayed or went, seemed to be equally content or apathetic. "And is it not most kind and generous of dear Mr. and Mrs. Pendennis to propose to receive Mr. Newcome and the Colonel?" This opportunity for gratitude being pointed out to Rosey, she acquiesced in it straightway — it was very kind of me, Rosey was sure. "And don't you ask after dear Mrs. Pendennis and the dear children — you poor dear suffering darling child?" Rosey, who had neglected this inquiry, immediately hoped Mrs. Pendennis and the children were well. The overpowering mother had taken utter possession of this poor little thing. Rosey's eyes followed the Campaigner about, and appealed to her at all moments. She sat under Mrs. Mackenzie as a bird before a boa-constrictor, doomed — fluttering — fascinated — scared and fawning as a whipt spaniel before a keeper.

The Colonel was on his accustomed bench on the rampart at this sunny hour. I repaired thither, and found the old gentleman seated by his grandson, who lay, as yesterday, on the little bonne's lap, one of his little purple hands closed round the grandfather's finger. "Hush!" says the good man, lifting up his other finger to his moustache, as I approached, "Boy's asleep. Il est bien joli quand il dort — le Boy, n'est-ce pas, Marie?" The maid believed monsieur well — the boy was a little angel. "This maid is a most trustworthy, valuable person, Pendennis," the Colonel said, with much gravity.

The boa-constrictor had fascinated him, too — the lash of that woman at home had cowed that helpless, gentle, noble spirit. As I looked at the head so upright and manly, now so beautiful and resigned — the year of his past life seemed to pass before me somehow in a flash of thought. I could fancy the accursed tyranny — the dumb acquiescence — the brutal jeer — the helpless remorse — the sleepless nights of pain and recollection — the gentle heart lacerated with deadly stabs — and the impotent hope. I own I burst into a sob at the sight, and thought of the noble suffering creature, and hid my face, and turned away.

He sprang up, releasing his hand from the child's, and placing it, the kind shaking hand, on my shoulder. "What is it, Arthur — my dear boy?" he said, looking wistfully in my face. "No bad news from home, my dear? Laura and the children well?"

The emotion was mastered in a moment, I put his arm under mine, and as we slowly sauntered up and down the sunny walk of the old rampart, I told him how I had come with special commands from Laura to bring him for a while to stay with us, and to settle his business, which I was sure had been woefully mismanaged, and to see whether we could not find the means of getting some little out of the wreck of the property for the boy yonder.

At first Colonel Newcome would not hear of quitting Boulogne, where Rosey would miss him — he was sure she would want him — but before the ladies of his family, to whom we presently returned, Thomas Newcome's resolution was quickly recalled. He agreed to go, and Clive coming in at this time was put in possession of our plan and gladly acquiesced in it. On that very evening I came with a carriage to conduct my two friends to the steamboat. Their little packets were made and ready. There was no pretence of grief at parting on the women's side, but Marie, the little maid, with Boy in her arms, cried

sadly; and Clive heartily embraced the child; and the Colonel, going back to give it one more kiss, drew out of his neckcloth a little gold brooch which he wore, and which, trembling, he put into Marie's hand, bidding her take good care of Boy till his return.

"She is a good girl — a most faithful, attached girl, Arthur, do you see," the kind old gentleman said; "and I had no money to give her — no, not one single rupee."



CHAPTER LXXIV

IN WHICH CLIVE BEGINS THE WORLD

We are ending our history, and yet poor Clive is but beginning the world. He has to earn the bread which he eats henceforth; and, as I saw his labours, his trials, and his disappointments, I could not but compare his calling with my own.

The drawbacks and penalties attendant upon our profession are taken into full account, as we well know, by literary men, and their friends. Our poverty, hardships, and disappointments are set forth with great emphasis, and often with too great truth by those who speak of us; but there are advantages belonging to our trade which are passed over, I think, by some of those who exercise it and describe it, and for which, in striking the balance of our accounts, we are not always duly thankful. We have no patron, so to speak — we sit in ante-chambers no more, waiting the present of a few guineas from my lord, in return for a fulsome dedication. We sell our wares to the book-purveyor, between whom and us there is no greater obligation than between him and his paper-maker or printer. In the great towns in our country immense stores of books are provided for us, with librarians to class them, kind attendants to wait upon us, and comfortable appliances for study. We require scarce any capital wherewith to exercise our trade. What other so-called learned profession is equally fortunate? A doctor, for example, after carefully and expensively educating himself, must invest in house and furniture, horses, carriage, and menservants, before the public patient will think of calling him in. I am told that such gentlemen have to coax and wheedle dowagers, to humour hypochondriacs, to practise a score of little subsidiary arts in order to make that of healing profitable. How many many hundreds of pounds has a barrister to sink upon his stock-intrade before his returns are available? There are the costly charges of university education — the costly chambers in the Inn of Court — the clerk and his maintenance — the inevitable travels on circuit — certain expenses all to be defrayed before the possible client makes his appearance, and the chance of fame or competency arrives. The prizes are great, to be sure, in the law, but what a prodigious sum the lottery-ticket costs! If a man of letters cannot win, neither does he risk so much. Let us speak of our trade as we find it, and not be too eager in calling out for public compassion.

The artists, for the most part, do not cry out their woes as loudly as some gentlemen of the literary fraternity, and yet I think the life of many of them is harder; their chances even more precarious, and the conditions of their profession less independent and agreeable than ours. I have watched Smee, Esq., R.A., flattering and fawning, and at the same time boasting and swaggering, poor fellow, in order to secure a sitter. I have listened to a Manchester magnate talking about fine arts before one of J. J.'s pictures, assuming the airs of a painter, and laying down the most absurd laws respecting the art. I have seen poor Tomkins bowing a rich amateur through a private view, and noted the eager smiles on Tomkins' face at the amateur's slightest joke, the sickly twinkle of hope in his eyes as Amateur stopped before his own picture. I have been ushered by Chipstone's black servant through hall after hall peopled with plaster gods and heroes, into Chipstone's own magnificent studio, where he sat longing vainly for an order, and justly dreading his landlord's call for the rent. And, seeing how severely these gentlemen were taxed in their profession, I have been grateful for my own more fortunate one, which necessitates cringing to no patron; which calls for no keeping up of appearances; and which requires no stock-intrade save the workman's industry, his best ability, and a dozen sheets of paper.

Having to turn with all his might to his new profession, Clive Newcome, one of the proudest men alive, chose to revolt and to be restive at almost every stage of his training. He had a natural genius for his art, and had acquired in his desultory way a very considerable skill. His drawing was better than his painting (an opinion which, were my friend present, he of course would utterly contradict); his designs and sketches were far superior to his finished compositions. His friends, presuming to judge of this artist's qualifications, ventured to counsel him accordingly, and were thanked for their pains in the usual manner. We had in the first place to bully and browbeat Clive most fiercely, before he would take fitting lodgings for the execution of those designs which we had in view for him. "Why should I take expensive lodgings?" says Clive, slapping his fist on the table. "I am a pauper, and can scarcely afford to live in a garret. Why should you pay me for drawing your portrait and Laura's and the children? What the deuce does Warrington want with the effigy of his old mug? You don't want them a bit — you only want to give me money. — It would be much more honest of me to take the money at once and own that I am a beggar; and I tell you what, Pen, the only money which I feel I come honestly by, is that which is

paid me by a little printseller in Long Acre who buys my drawings, one with another, at fourteen shillings apiece, and out of whom I can earn pretty nearly two hundred a year. I am doing Coaches for him, sir, and Charges of Cavalry; the public like the Mail Coaches best — on a dark paper — the horses and miles picked out white — yellow dust — cobalt distance, and the guard and coachman of course in vermillion. That's what a gentleman can get his bread by — portraits, pooh! it's disguised beggary, Crackthorpe, and a half-dozen men of his regiment came, like good fellows as they are, and sent me five pounds apiece for their heads, but I tell you I am ashamed to take the money." Such used to be the tenor of Clive Newcome's conversation as he strode up and down our room after dinner, pulling his moustache, and dashing his long yellow hair off his gaunt face.

When Clive was inducted into the new lodgings at which his friends counselled him to hang up his ensign, the dear old Colonel accompanied his son, parting with a sincere regret from our little ones at home, to whom he became greatly endeared during his visit to us, and who always hailed him when he came to see us with smiles and caresses and sweet infantile welcome. On that day when he went away, Laura went up and kissed him with tears in her eyes. "You know how long I have been wanting to do it," this lady said to her husband. Indeed I cannot describe the behaviour of the old man during his stay with us, his gentle gratitude, his sweet simplicity and kindness, his thoughtful courtesy. There was not a servant in our little household but was eager to wait upon him. Laura's maid was as tender-hearted at his departure as her mistress. He was ailing for a short time, when our cook performed prodigies of puddings and jellies to suit his palate. The youth who held the offices of butler and valet in our establishment — a lazy and greedy youth whom Martha scolded in vain — would jump up and leave his supper to carry a message to our Colonel. My heart is full as I remember the kind words which he said to me at parting, and as I think that we were the means of giving a little comfort to that stricken and gentle soul.

Whilst the Colonel and his son stayed with us, letters of course passed between Clive and his family at Boulogne, but my wife remarked that the receipt of those letters appeared to give our friend but little pleasure. They were read in a minute, and he would toss them over to his father, or thrust them into his pocket with a gloomy face. "Don't you see," groans out Clive to me one evening, "that Rosa scarcely writes the letters, or if she does, that her mother is standing over her? That woman is the Nemesis of our life, Pen. How can I pay her off? Great God! how can I pay her off?" And so having spoken, his head fell between his hands, and as I watched him I saw a ghastly domestic picture before me of helpless pain, humiliating discord, stupid tyranny.

What, I say again, are the so-called great ills of life compared to these small ones?

The Colonel accompanied Clive to the lodgings which we had found for the young artist, in a quarter not far removed from the old house in Fitzroy Square, where some happy years of his youth had been spent. When sitters came to Clive — as at first they did in some numbers, many of his early friends being anxious to do him a service — the old gentleman was extraordinarily cheered and comforted. We could see by his face that affairs were going on well at the studio. He showed us the rooms which Rosey and the boy were to occupy. He prattled to our children and their mother, who was never tired of hearing him, about his grandson. He filled up the future nursery with a hundred little knick-knacks of his own contriving; and with wonderful cheap bargains, which he bought in his walks about Tottenham Court Road. He pasted a most elaborate book of prints and sketches for Boy. It was astonishing what notice Boy already took of pictures. He would have all the genius of his father. Would he had had a better grandfather than the foolish old man who had ruined all belonging to him!

However much they like each other, men in the London world see their friends but seldom. The place is so vast that even next door is distant; the calls of business, society, pleasure, so multifarious that mere friendship can get or give but an occasional shake of the hand in the hurried moments of passage. Men must live their lives; and are perforce selfish, but not unfriendly. At a great need you know where to look for your friend, and he that he is secure of you. So I went very little to Howland Street, where Clive now lived; very seldom to Lamb Court, where my dear old friend Warrington still sate in his old chambers, though our meetings were none the less cordial when they occurred, and our trust in one another always the same. Some folks say the world is heartless: he who says so either prates commonplaces (the most likely and charitable suggestion), or is heartless himself, or is most singular and unfortunate in having made no friends. Many such a reasonable mortal cannot have: our nature, I think, not sufficing for that sort of polygamy. How many persons would you have to deplore your death; or whose death would you wish to deplore? Could our hearts let in such a harem of dear friendships, the mere changes and recurrences of grief and mourning would be intolerable, and tax our lives beyond their value. In a

word, we carry our own burthen in the world; push and struggle along on our own affairs; are pinched by our own shoes — though Heaven forbid we should not stop and forget ourselves sometimes, when a friend cries out in his distress, or we can help a poor stricken wanderer in his way. As for good women — these, my worthy reader, are different from us — the nature of these is to love, and to do kind offices, and devise untiring charities:— so I would have you to know, that, though Mr. Pendennis was *parcus suorum cultor et infrequens*, Mrs. Laura found plenty of time to go from Westminster to Bloomsbury; and to pay visits to her Colonel and her Clive, both of whom she had got to love with all her heart again, now misfortune was on them; and both of whom returned her kindness with an affection blessing the bestower and the receiver; and making the husband proud and thankful whose wife had earned such a noble regard. What is the dearest praise of all to a man? his own — or that you should love those whom he loves? I see Laura Pendennis ever constant and tender and pure, ever ministering in her sacred office of kindness — bestowing love and followed by blessings. Which would I have, think you; that priceless crown hymeneal, or the glory of a Tenth Edition?

Clive and his father had found not only a model friend in the lady above mentioned, but a perfect prize landlady in their happy lodgings. In her house, besides those apartments which Mr. Newcome had originally engaged, were rooms just sufficient to accommodate his wife, child, and servant, when they should come to him, with a very snug little upper chamber for the Colonel, close by Boy's nursery, where he liked best to be. "And if there is not room for the Campaigner, as you call her," says Mrs. Laura, with a shrug of her shoulders, "why, I am very sorry, but Clive must try and bear her absence as well as possible. After all, my dear Pen, you know he is married to Rosa and not to her mamma; and so, and so I think it will be quite best that they shall have their menage as before."

The cheapness of the lodgings which the prize landlady let, the quantity of neat new furniture which she put in, the consultations which she had with my wife regarding these supplies, were quite singular to me. "Have you pawned your diamonds, you reckless little person, in order to supply all this upholstery?" "No, sir, I have not pawned my diamonds," Mrs. Laura answers; and I was left to think (if I thought on the matter at all) that the landlady's own benevolence had provided these good things for Clive. For the wife of Laura's husband was perforce poor; and she asked me for no more money at this time than at any other.

At first, in spite of his grumbling, Clive's affairs looked so prosperous, and so many sitters came to him from amongst his old friends, that I was half inclined to believe with the Colonel and my wife, that he was a prodigious genius, and that his good fortune would go on increasing. Laura was for having Rosey return to her husband. Every wife ought to be with her husband. J. J. shook his head about the prosperity. "Let us see whether the Academy will have his pictures this year, and what a place they will give him," said Ridley. To do him justice, Clive thought far more humbly of his compositions than Ridley did. Not a little touching was it to us, who had known the young men in former days, to see them in their changed positions. It was Ridley, whose genius and industry had put him in the rank of a patron — Ridley, the good industrious apprentice, who had won the prize of his art — and not one of his many admirers saluted his talent and success with such a hearty recognition as Clive, whose generous soul knew no envy, and who always fired and kindled at the success of his friends.

When Mr. Clive used to go over to Boulogne from time to time to pay his dutiful visits to his wife, the Colonel did not accompany his son, but, during the latter's absence, would dine with Mrs. Pendennis.

Though the preparations were complete in Howland Street, and Clive dutifully went over to Boulogne, Mrs. Pendennis remarked that he seemed still to hesitate about bringing his wife to London.

Upon this Mr. Pendennis observed that some gentlemen were not particularly anxious about the society of their wives, and that this pair were perhaps better apart. Upon which Mrs. Pendennis, drubbing on the ground with a little foot, said, "Nonsense, for shame, Arthur! How can you speak so flippantly? Did he not swear before Heaven to love and cherish her, never to leave her, sir? Is not his duty his duty, sir?" (a most emphatic stamp of the foot). "Is she not his for better, or for worse?"

"Including the Campaigner, my dear?" says Mr. P.

"Don't laugh, sir! She must come to him. There is no room in Howland Street for Mrs. Mackenzie."

"You artful scheming creature! We have some spare rooms. Suppose we ask Mrs. Mackenzie to come and live with us, my dear? and we could then have the benefit of the garrison anecdotes, and mess jocularities of your favourite, Captain Goby."

“I could never bear the horrid man!” cried Mrs. Pendennis. And how can I tell why she disliked him?

Everything being now ready for the reception of Clive’s little family, we counselled our friend to go over to Boulogne, and bring back his wife and child, and then to make some final stipulation with the Campaigner. He saw, as well as we, that the presence and tyranny of that fatal woman destroyed his father’s health and spirits — that the old man knew no peace or comfort in her neighbourhood, and was actually hastening to his grave under that dreadful and unrelenting persecution. Mrs. Mackenzie made Clive scarcely less wretched than his father — she governed his household — took away his weak wife’s allegiance and affection from him — and caused the wretchedness of every single person round about her. They ought to live apart. If she was too poor to subsist upon her widow’s pension, which, in truth, was but a very small pittance, let Clive give up to her, say, the half of his wife’s income of one hundred pounds a year. His prospects and present means of earning money were such that he might afford to do without that portion of his income; at any rate, he and his father would be cheaply ransomed at that price from their imprisonment to this intolerable person. “Go, Clive,” said his counsellors, “and bring back your wife and child, and let us all be happy together.” For, you see, those advisers opined that if we had written over to Mrs. Newcome — “Come” — she would have come with the Campaigner in her suite.

Vowing that he would behave like a man of courage — and we knew that Clive had shown himself to be such in two or three previous battles — Clive crossed the water to bring back his little Rosey. Our good Colonel agreed to dine at our house during the days of his son’s absence. I have said how beloved he was by young and old there — and he was kind enough to say afterwards, that no woman had made him so happy as Laura. We did not tell him — I know not from what reticence — that we had advised Clive to offer a bribe of fifty pounds a year to Mrs. Mackenzie; until about a fortnight after Clive’s absence, and a week after his return, when news came that poor old Mrs. Mason was dead at Newcome, whereupon we informed the Colonel that he had another pensioner now in the Campaigner.

Colonel Newcome was thankful that his dear old friend had gone out of the world in comfort and without pain. She had made a will long since, leaving all her goods and chattels to Thomas Newcome — but having no money to give, the Colonel handed over these to the old lady’s faithful attendant, Keziah.

Although many of the Colonel’s old friends had parted from him or quarrelled with him in consequence of the ill success of the B. B. C., there were two old ladies who yet remained faithful to him — Miss Cann, namely, and honest little Miss Honeyman of Brighton, who, when she heard of the return to London of her nephew and brother-in-law, made a railway journey to the metropolis (being the first time she ever engaged in that kind of travelling), rustled into Clive’s apartments in Howland Street in her neatest silks, and looking not a day older than on that when we last beheld her; and after briskly scolding the young man for permitting his father to enter into money affairs — of which the poor dear Colonel was as ignorant as a baby — she gave them both to understand that she had a little sum at her banker’s at their disposal — and besought the Colonel to remember that her house was his, and that she should be proud and happy to receive him as soon and as often and for as long a time as he would honour her with his company. “Is not my house full of your presents?” — cried the stout little old lady — “have I not reason to be grateful to all the Newcomes — yes, to all the Newcomes; — for Miss Ethel and her family have come to me every year for months, and I don’t quarrel with them, and I won’t, although you do, sir? Is not this shawl — are not these jewels that I wear,” she continued, pointing to those well-known ornaments, “my dear Colonel’s gift? Did you not relieve my brother Charles in this country and procure for him his place in India? Yes, my dear friend — and though you have been imprudent in money matters, my obligations towards you, and my gratitude, and my affection are always the same.” Thus Miss Honeyman spoke, with somewhat of a quivering voice at the end of her little oration, but with exceeding state and dignity — for she believed that her investment of two hundred pounds in that unlucky B. B. C., which failed for half a million, was a sum of considerable importance, and gave her a right to express her opinion to the Managers.

Clive came back from Boulogne in a week, as we have said — but he came back without his wife, much to our alarm, and looked so exceedingly fierce and glum when we demanded the reason of his return without his family, that we saw wars and battles had taken place, and thought that in this last continental campaign the Campaigner had been too much for her friend.

The Colonel, to whom Clive communicated, though with us the poor lad held his tongue, told my wife what had happened:— not all the battles; which no doubt raged at breakfast, dinner, supper, during the week of Clive’s visit to Boulogne — but the upshot of these engagements. Rosey, not unwilling in her first private talk with her husband to come to England with him and the boy, showed herself irresolute on the second day at breakfast, when the fire was opened on both

sides; cried at dinner when fierce assaults took place, in which Clive had the advantage; slept soundly, but besought him to be very firm, and met the enemy at breakfast with a quaking heart; cried all that day during which, pretty well without cease, the engagement lasted; and when Clive might have conquered and brought her off, but the weather was windy and the sea was rough, and he was pronounced a brute to venture on it with a wife in Rosey's situation.

Behind that "situation" the widow shielded herself. She clung to her adored child, and from that bulwark discharged abuse and satire at Clive and his father. He could not rout her out of her position. Having had the advantage on the first two or three days, on the four last he was beaten, and lost ground in each action. Rosey found that in her situation she could not part from her darling mamma. The Campaigner for her part averred that she might be reduced to beggary; that she might be robbed of her last farthing and swindled and cheated; that she might see her daughter's fortune flung away by unprincipled adventurers, and her blessed child left without even the comforts of life; but desert her in such a situation, she never would — no, never! Was not dear Rosa's health already impaired by the various shocks which she had undergone? Did she not require every comfort, every attendance? Monster! ask the doctor! She would stay with her darling child in spite of insult and rudeness and vulgarity. (Rosey's father was a King's officer, not a Company's officer, thank God!) She would stay as long at least as Rosey's situation continued, at Boulogne, if not in London, but with her child. They might refuse to send her money, having robbed her of all her own, but she would pawn her gown off her back for her child. Whimpers from Rosey — cries of "Mamma, mamma, compose yourself," — convulsive sobs — clenched knuckles — flashing eyes — embraces rapidly clutched — laughs — stamps — snorts — from the dishevelled Campaigner; grinding teeth — livid fury and repeated breakages of the third commandment by Clive — I can fancy the whole scene. He returned to London without his wife, and when she came she brought Mrs. Mackenzie with her.



CHAPTER LXXV

FOUNDER'S DAY AT THE GREY FRIARS

Rosey came, bringing discord and wretchedness with her to her husband, and the sentence of death or exile to his dear old father, all of which we foresaw — all of which Clive's friends would have longed to prevent — all of which were inevitable under the circumstances. Clive's domestic affairs were often talked over by our little set. Warrington and F. B. knew of his unhappiness. We three had strongly opined that the women being together at Boulogne, should stay there and live there, Clive sending them over pecuniary aid as his means permitted. "They must hate each other pretty well by this time," growls George Warrington. "Why on earth should they not part?" "What a woman that Mrs. Mackenzie is!" cries F. B. "What an infernal tartar and catamaran! She who was so uncommonly smiling and soft-spoken, and such a fine woman, by jingo! What puzzles all women are!" F. B. sighed, and drowned further reflection in beer.

On the other side, and most strongly advocating Rosey's return to Clive, was Mrs. Laura Pendennis; with certain arguments for which she had chapter and verse, and against which we of the separatist party had no appeal. "Did he marry her only for the days of her prosperity?" asked Laura. "Is it right, is it manly, that he should leave her now she is unhappy — poor little creature — no woman had ever more need of protection; and who should be her natural guardian save her husband? Surely, Arthur, you forget — have you forgotten them yourself, sir? — the solemn vows which Clive made at the altar. Is he not bound to his wife to keep only unto her so long as they both shall live, to love and comfort her, honour her, and keep her in sickness and health?"

"To keep her, yes — but not to keep the Campaigner," cries Mr. Pendennis. "It is a moral bigamy, Laura, which you advocate, you wicked, immoral young woman!"

But Laura, though she smiled at this notion, would not be put off from her first proposition. Turning to Clive, who was with us, talking over his doleful family circumstances, she took his hand, and pleaded the cause of right and religion with sweet artless fervour. She agreed with us that it was a hard lot for Clive to bear. So much the nobler the task, and the fulfilment of duty in enduring it. A few months too would put an end to his trials. When his child was born Mrs. Mackenzie would take her departure. It would even be Clive's duty to separate from her then, as it now was to humour his wife in her delicate condition, and to soothe the poor soul who had had a great deal of ill-health, of misfortune, of domestic calamity to wear and shatter her. Clive acquiesced with a groan, but — with a touching and generous resignation as we both thought. "She is right, Pen," he said, "I think your wife is always right. I will try, Laura, and bear my part, God help me! I will do my duty and strive my best to soothe and gratify my poor dear little woman. They will be making caps and things, and will not interrupt me in my studio. Of nights I can go to Clipstone Street and work at the Life. There's nothing like the Life, Pen. So you see I shan't be much at home except at meal-times, when by nature I shall have my mouth full, and no opportunity of quarrelling with poor Mrs. Mac." So he went home, followed and cheered by the love and pity of my dear wife, and determined stoutly to bear this heavy yoke which fate had put on him.

To do Mrs. Mackenzie justice, that lady backed up with all her might the statement which my wife had put forward, with a view of soothing poor Clive, viz., that the residence of his mother-in-law in his house was only to be temporary. "Temporary!" cries Mrs. Mac (who was kind enough to make a call on Mrs. Pendennis, and treat that lady to a piece of her mind). "Do you suppose, madam, that it could be otherwise? Do you suppose that worlds would induce me to stay in a house where I have received such treatment; where, after I and my daughter had been robbed of every shilling of our fortune, where we are daily insulted by Colonel Newcome and his son? Do you suppose, ma'am, that I do not know that Clive's friends hate me, and give themselves airs and look down upon my darling child, and try and make differences between my sweet Rosa and me — Rosa who might have been dead, or might have been starving, but that her dear mother came to her rescue? No, I would never stay. I loathe every day that I remain in the house — I would rather beg my bread — I would rather sweep the streets and starve — though, thank God, I have my pension as the widow of an officer in Her Majesty's Service, and I can live upon that — and of that Colonel Newcome cannot rob me; and when my darling love needs a mother's care no longer, I will leave her. I will shake the dust off my feet and leave that house. I will — And Mr. Newcome's friends may then sneer at me and abuse me, and blacken my darling child's heart towards me if they choose. And I thank you, Mrs. Pendennis, for all your kindness towards my daughter's family, and for the furniture which you have

sent into the house, and for the trouble you have taken about our family arrangements. It was for this I took the liberty of calling upon you, and I wish you a very good morning." So speaking, the Campaigner left my wife; and Mrs. Pendennis enacted the pleasing scene with great spirit to her husband afterwards, concluding the whole with a splendid curtsy and toss of the head, such as Mrs. Mackenzie performed as her parting salute.

Our dear Colonel had fled before. He had acquiesced humbly with the decree of fate; and, lonely, old and beaten, marched honestly on the path of duty. It was a great blessing, he wrote to us, to him to think that in happier days and during many years he had been enabled to benefit his kind and excellent relative, Miss Honeyman. He could thankfully receive her hospitality now, and claim the kindness and shelter which this old friend gave him. No one could be more anxious to make him comfortable. The air of Brighton did him the greatest good; he had found some old friends, some old Bengalees there, with whom he enjoyed himself greatly, etc. How much did we, who knew his noble spirit, believe of this story? To us Heaven had awarded health, happiness, competence, loving children, united hearts, and modest prosperity. To yonder good man, whose long life shone with benefactions, and whose career was but kindness and honour, fate decreed poverty, disappointment, separation, a lonely old age. We bowed our heads, humiliated at the contrast of his lot and ours; and prayed Heaven to enable us to bear our present good fortune meekly, and our evil days, if they should come, with such a resignation as this good Christian showed.

I forgot to say that our attempts to better Thomas Newcome's money affairs were quite in vain, the Colonel insisting upon paying over every shilling of his military allowances and retiring pension to the parties from whom he had borrowed money previous to his bankruptcy. "Ah! what a good man that is," says Mr. Sherrick with tears in his eyes, "what a noble fellow, sir! He would die rather than not pay every farthing over. He'd starve, sir, that he would. The money ain't mine, sir, or if it was do you think I'd take it from the poor old boy? No, sir; by Jove! I honour and reverence him more now he ain't got a shilling in his pocket, than ever I did when we thought he was a-rolling in money."

My wife made one or two efforts at Samaritan visits in Howland Street, but was received by Mrs. Clive with such a faint welcome, and by the Campaigner with so grim a countenance, so many sneers, innuendoes, insults almost, that Laura's charity was beaten back, and she ceased to press good offices thus thanklessly received. If Clive came to visit us, as he very rarely did, after an official question or two regarding the health of his wife and child, no further mention was made of his family affairs. His painting, he said, was getting on tolerably well; he had work, scantily paid it is true, but work sufficient. He was reserved, uncommunicative, unlike the frank Clive of former times, and oppressed by his circumstances, as it was easy to see. I did not press the confidence which he was unwilling to offer, and thought best to respect his silence. I had a thousand affairs of my own; who has not in London? If you die tomorrow, your dearest friend will feel for you a hearty pang of sorrow, and go to his business as usual. I could divine, but would not care to describe, the life which my poor Clive was now leading; the vulgar misery, the sordid home, the cheerless toil, and lack of friendly companionship which darkened his kind soul. I was glad Clive's father was away. The Colonel wrote to us twice or thrice; could it be three months ago? — bless me, how time flies! He was happy, he wrote, with Miss Honeyman, who took the best care of him.

Mention has been made once or twice in the course of this history of the Grey Friars school — where the Colonel and Clive and I had been brought up — an ancient foundation of the time of James I., still subsisting in the heart of London city. The death-day of the founder of the place is still kept solemnly by Cistercians. In their chapel, where assemble the boys of the school, and the fourscore old men of the Hospital, the founder's tomb stands, a huge edifice: emblazoned with heraldic decorations and clumsy carved allegories. There is an old Hall, a beautiful specimen of the architecture of James's time; an old Hall? many old halls; old staircases, passages, old chambers decorated with old portraits, walking in the midst of which we walk as it were in the early seventeenth century. To others than Cistercians, Grey Friars is a dreary place possibly. Nevertheless, the pupils educated there love to revisit it; and the oldest of us grow young again for an hour or two as we come back into those scenes of childhood.

The custom of the school is, that on the 12th of December, the Founder's Day, the head gown-boy shall recite a Latin oration, in praise of Fundatoris Nostri, and upon other subjects; and a goodly company of old Cistercians is generally brought together to attend this oration: after which we go to chapel and hear a sermon; after which we adjourn to a great dinner, where old condisciples meet, old toasts are given, and speeches are made. Before marching from the oration-hall to chapel, the stewards of the day's dinner, according to old-fashioned rite, have wands put into their hands, walk to church at the head of the procession, and sit there in places of honour. The boys are already in their seats, with smug fresh faces, and shining white collars; the old black-gowned pensioners are on their benches; the chapel is lighted, and Founder's Tomb,

with its grotesque carvings, monsters, heraldries, darkles and shines with the most wonderful shadows and lights. There he lies, Fundator Noster, in his ruff and gown, awaiting the great Examination Day. We oldsters, be we ever so old, become boys again as we look at that familiar old tomb, and think how the seats are altered since we were here, and how the doctor — not the present doctor, the doctor of our time — used to sit yonder, and his awful eye used to frighten us shuddering boys, on whom it lighted; and how the boy next us would kick our shins during service time, and how the monitor would cane us afterwards because our shins were kicked. Yonder sit forty cherry-cheeked boys, thinking about home and holidays tomorrow. Yonder sit some threescore old gentlemen pensioners of the hospital, listening to the prayers and the psalms. You hear them coughing feebly in the twilight — the old reverend blackgowns. Is Codd Ajax alive, you wonder? — the Cistercian lads called these old gentlemen Coddys, I know not wherefore — I know not wherefore — but is old Codd Ajax alive, I wonder? or Codd Soldier? or kind old Codd Gentleman, or has the grave closed over them? A plenty of candles lights up this chapel, and this scene of age and youth, and early memories, and pompous death. How solemn the well-remembered prayers are, here uttered again in the place wherein childhood we used to hear them! How beautiful and decorous the rite; how noble the ancient words of the supplications which the priest utters, and to which generations of fresh children and troops of bygone seniors have cried Amen! under those arches! The service for Founder's Day is a special one; one of the psalms selected being the thirty-seventh, and we hear —

23. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way.

24. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.

25. I have been young, and now am old: yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread.

As we came to this verse, I chanced to look up from my book towards the swarm of black-coated pensioners: and amongst them — amongst them — sate Thomas Newcome.

His dear old head was bent down over his prayer-book — there was no mistaking him. He wore the black gown of the pensioners of the Hospital of Grey Friars. His order of the Bath was on his breast. He stood there amongst the poor brethren, uttering the responses to the psalm. The steps of this good man had been ordered him hither by Heaven's decree: to this almshouse! Here it was ordained that a life all love, and kindness, and honour, should end! I heard no more of prayers, and psalms, and sermon, after that. How dared I to be in a place of mark, and he, he yonder among the poor? Oh, pardon, you noble soul! I ask forgiveness of you for being of a world that has so treated you — you my better, you the honest, and gentle, and good! I thought the service would never end, or the organist's voluntaries, or the preacher's homily.

The organ played us out of chapel at length, and I waited in the ante-chapel until the pensioners took their turn to quit it. My dear, dear old friend! I ran to him with a warmth and eagerness of recognition which no doubt showed themselves in my face and accents, as my heart was moved at the sight of him. His own face flushed up when he saw me, and his hand shook in mine. "I have found a home, Arthur," said he. "Don't you remember before I went to India, when we came to see the old Grey Friars, and visited Captain Scarsdale in his room? — a poor brother like me — an old Peninsular man. Scarsdale is gone now, sir, and is where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest; and I thought then, when we saw him — here would be a place for an old fellow when his career was over, to hang his sword up; to humble his soul, and to wait thankfully for the end. Arthur. My good friend, Lord H., who is a Cistercian like ourselves, and has just been appointed a governor, gave me his first nomination. Don't be agitated, Arthur my boy, I am very happy. I have good quarters, good food, good light and fire, and good friends; blessed be God! my dear kind young friend — my boy's friend; you have always been so, sir; and I take it uncommonly kind of you, and I thank God for you, sir. Why, sir, I am as happy as the day is long." He uttered words to this effect as he walked through the courts of the building towards his room, which in truth I found neat and comfortable, with a brisk fire crackling on the hearth; a little tea-table laid out, a Bible and spectacles by the side of it, and over the mantelpiece a drawing of his grandson by Clive.

"You may come and see me here, sir, whenever you like, and so may your dear wife and little ones, tell Laura, with my love; — but you must not stay now. You must go back to your dinner." In vain I pleaded that I had no stomach for it. He gave me a look, which seemed to say he desired to be alone, and I had to respect that order and leave him.

Of course I came to him on the very next day; though not with my wife and children, who were in truth absent in the country at Rosebury, where they were to pass the Christmas holidays; and where, this school-dinner over, I was to join them. On my second visit to Grey Friars my good friend entered more at length into the reasons why he had assumed the Poor Brother's gown; and I cannot say but that I acquiesced in his reasons, and admired that noble humility and

contentedness of which he gave me an example.

“That which had caused him most grief and pain,” he said, “in the issue of that unfortunate bank, was the thought that poor friends of his had been induced by his representations to invest their little capital in that speculation. Good Miss Honeyman, for instance, meaning no harm, and in all respects a most honest and kindly-disposed old lady, had nevertheless alluded more than once to the fact that her money had been thrown away; and these allusions, sir, made her hospitality somewhat hard to bear,” said the Colonel. “At home — at poor Clivey’s, I mean — it was even worse,” he continued; “Mrs. Mackenzie for months past, by her complaints, and — and her conduct, has made my son and me so miserable — that flight before her, and into any refuge, was the best course. She too does not mean ill, Pen. Do not waste any of your oaths upon that poor woman,” he added, holding up his finger, and smiling sadly. “She thinks I deceived her, though Heaven knows it was myself I deceived. She has great influence over Rosa. Very few persons can resist that violent and headstrong woman, sir. I could not bear her reproaches, or my poor sick daughter, whom her mother leads almost entirely now, and it was with all this grief on my mind, that, as I was walking one day upon Brighton cliff, I met my schoolfellow, my Lord H— — who has ever been a good friend of mine — and who told me how he had just been appointed a governor of Grey Friars. He asked me to dine with him on the next day, and would take no refusal. He knew of my pecuniary misfortunes, of course — and showed himself most noble and liberal in his offers of help. I was very much touched by his goodness, Pen — and made a clean breast of it to his lordship; who at first would not hear of my coming to this place — and offered me out of the purse of an old brother-schoolfellow and an old brother soldier as much — as much as should last me my time. Wasn’t it noble of him, Arthur? God bless him! There are good men in the world, sir, there are true friends, as I have found in these later days. Do you know, sir” — here the old man’s eyes twinkled — “that Fred Bayham fixed up that bookcase yonder — and brought me my little boy’s picture to hang up? Boy and Clive will come and see me soon.”

“Do you mean they do not come?” I cried.

“They don’t know I am here, sir,” said the Colonel, with a sweet, kind smile. “They think I am visiting his lordship in Scotland. Ah! they are good people! When we had had a talk downstairs over our bottle of claret — where my old commander-in-chief would not hear of my plan — we went upstairs to her ladyship, who saw that her husband was disturbed, and asked the reason. I dare say it was the good claret that made me speak, sir; for I told her that I and her husband had had a dispute and that I would take her ladyship for umpire. And then I told her the story over, that I had paid away every rupee to the creditors, and mortgaged my pensions and retiring allowances for the same end, that I was a burden upon Clivey, who had enough, poor boy, to keep his own family, and his wife’s mother, whom my imprudence had impoverished — that here was an honourable asylum which my friend could procure for me, and was not that better than to drain his purse? She was very much moved, sir — she is a very kind lady, though she passed for being very proud and haughty in India — so wrongly are people judged. And Lord H. said, in his rough way, ‘that, by Jove, if Tom Newcome took a thing into his obstinate old head no one could drive it out.’ And so,” said the Colonel, with his sad smile, “I had my own way. Lady H. was good enough to come and see me the very next day — and do you know, Pen, she invited me to go and live with them for the rest of my life — made me the most generous, the most delicate offers. But I knew I was right, and held my own. I am too old to work, Arthur: and better here whilst I am to stay, than elsewhere. Look! all this furniture came from H. House — and that wardrobe is full of linen, which she sent me. She has been twice to see me, and every officer in this hospital is as courteous to me as if I had my fine house.”

I thought of the psalm we had heard on the previous evening, and turned to it in the opened Bible, and pointed to the verse, “Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him.” Thomas Newcome seeing my occupation, laid a kind, trembling hand on my shoulder; and then, putting on his glasses, with a smile bent over the volume. And who that saw him then, and knew him and loved him as I did — who would not have humbled his own heart, and breathed his inward prayer, confessing and adoring the Divine Will, which ordains these trials, these triumphs, these humiliations, these blest griefs, this crowning Love?

I had the happiness of bringing Clive and his little boy to Thomas Newcome that evening; and heard the child’s cry of recognition and surprise, and the old man calling the boy’s name, as I closed the door upon that meeting; and by the night’s mail I went down to Newcome, to the friends with whom my own family was already staying.

Of course, my conscience-keeper at Rosebury was anxious to know about the school-dinner, and all the speeches made, and the guests assembled there; but she soon ceased to inquire about these when I came to give her the news of the

discovery of our dear old friend in the habit of a Poor Brother of Grey Friars. She was very glad to hear that Clive and his little son had been reunited to the Colonel; and appeared to imagine at first, that there was some wonderful merit upon my part in bringing the three together.

"Well — no great merit, Pen, as you will put it," says the Confessor; "but it was kindly thought, sir — and I like my husband when he is kind best; and don't wonder at your having made a stupid speech at the dinner, as you say you did, when you had this other subject to think of. That is a beautiful psalm, Pen, and those verses which you were reading when you saw him, especially beautiful."

"But in the presence of eighty old gentlemen, who have all come to decay, and have all had to beg their bread in a manner, don't you think the clergyman might choose some other psalm?" asks Mr. Pendennis.

"They were not forsaken utterly, Arthur," says Mrs. Laura, gravely: but rather declines to argue the point raised by me; namely, that the selection of that especial thirty-seventh psalm was not complimentary to those decayed old gentlemen.

"All the psalms are good, sir," she says, "and this one, of course, is included," and thus the discussion closed.

I then fell to a description of Howland Street, and poor Clive, whom I had found there over his work. A dubious maid scanned my appearance rather eagerly when I asked to see him. I found a picture-dealer chaffering with him over a bundle of sketches, and his little boy, already pencil in hand, lying in one corner of the room, the sun playing about his yellow hair. The child looked languid and pale, the father worn and ill. When the dealer at length took his bargains away, I gradually broke my errand to Clive, and told him from whence I had just come.

He had thought his father in Scotland with Lord H.: and was immensely moved with the news which I brought.

"I haven't written to him for a month. It's not pleasant the letters I have to write, Pen, and I can't make them pleasant. Up, Tommykin, and put on your cap." Tommykin jumps up. "Put on your cap, and tell them to take off your pinafore, tell grandmamma ——"

At that name Tommykin begins to cry.

"Look at that!" says Clive, commencing to speak in the French language, which the child interrupts by calling out in that tongue. "I speak also French, papa."

"Well, my child! You will like to come out with papa, and Betsy can dress you." He flings off his own paint-stained shooting-jacket as he talks, takes a frock-coat out of a carved wardrobe, and a hat from a helmet on the shelf. He is no longer the handsome splendid boy of old times. Can that be Clive, with that haggard face and slouched handkerchief? "I am not the dandy I was, Pen," he says bitterly.

A little voice is heard crying overhead — and giving a kind of gasp the wretched father stops in some indifferent speech he was trying to make. "I can't help myself," he groans out; "my wife is so ill, she can't attend to the child. Mrs. Mackenzie manages the house for me — and — here! Tommy, Tommy! papa is coming!"

Tommy has been crying again; and flinging open the studio door, Clive calls out, and dashes upstairs. I hear scuffling, stamping, loud voices, poor Tommy's scared little pipe — Clive's fierce objurgations, and the Campaigner's voice barking out — "Do, sir, do! with my child suffering in the next room. Behave like a brute to me, do. He shall not go! He shall not have the hat!" — "He shall" — "Ah — ah!" A scream is heard. It is Clive tearing a child's hat out of the Campaigner's hands, with which, and a flushed face, he presently rushes downstairs, bearing little Tommy on his shoulder. "You see what I am come to, Pen," he says with a heartbroken voice, trying, with hands all of a tremble, to tie the hat on the boy's head. He laughs bitterly at the ill success of his endeavours. "Oh, you silly papa!" laughs Tommy, too.

The door is flung open, and the red-faced Campaigner appears. Her face is mottled with wrath, her bandeaux of hair are disarranged upon her forehead, the ornaments of her cap, cheap, and dirty, and numerous, only give her a wilder appearance. She is in a large and dingy wrapper, very different from the lady who had presented herself a few months back to my wife — how different from the smiling Mrs. Mackenzie of old days!

"He shall not go out of a winter day, sir," she breaks out. "I have his mother's orders, whom you are killing. Mr. Pendennis!"

She starts, perceiving me for the first time, and her breast heaves, and she prepares for combat, and looks at me over her shoulder. "You and his father are the best judges upon this point, ma'am," said Mr. Pendennis, with a bow.

"The child is delicate, sir," cries Mrs. Mackenzie; "and this winter——"

"Enough of this," says Clive with a stamp, and passes through her guard with Tommy, and we descend the stairs, and at length are in the free street. Was it not best not to describe at full length this portion of poor Clive's history?

CHAPTER LXXVI

CHRISTMAS AT ROSEBURY

WE have known our friend Florac under two aristocratic names, and might now salute him by a third, to which he was entitled, although neither he nor his wife ever chose to assume it. His father was lately dead, and M. Paul de Florac might sign himself Duc d'Ivry if he chose, but he was indifferent as to the matter, and his wife's friends indignant at the idea that their kinswoman, after having been a Princess, should descend to the rank of a mere Duchess. So Prince and Princess these good folks remained, being exceptions to that order, inasmuch as their friends could certainly put their trust in them.

On his father's death Florac went to Paris, to settle the affairs of the paternal succession; and, having been for some time absent in his native country, returned to Rosebury for the winter, to resume that sport of which he was a distinguished amateur. He hunted in black during the ensuing season; and, indeed, henceforth laid aside his splendid attire and his allurements as a young man. His waist expanded, or was no longer confined by the cestus which had given it a shape. When he laid aside his black, his whiskers, too, went into a sort of half-mourning, and appeared in grey. "I make myself old, my friend," he said, pathetically; "I have no more neither twenty years nor forty." He went to Rosebury Church no more; but, with great order and sobriety, drove every Sunday to the neighbouring Catholic chapel at C—— Castle. We had an ecclesiastic or two to dine with us at Rosebury, one of whom I inclined to think was Florac's director.

A reason, perhaps, for Paul's altered demeanour, was the presence of his mother at Rosebury. No politeness or respect could be greater than Paul's towards the Countess. Had she been a sovereign princess, Madame de Florac could not have been treated with more profound courtesy than she now received from her son. I think the humble-minded lady could have dispensed with some of his attentions; but Paul was a personage who demonstrated all his sentiments, and performed his various parts in life with the greatest vigour. As a man of pleasure, for instance, what more active roue than he? As a jeune homme, who could be younger, and for a longer time? As a country gentleman, or an l'homme d'affaires, he insisted upon dressing each character with the most rigid accuracy, and an exactitude that reminded one somewhat of Bouffe, or Ferville, at the play. I wonder whether, when he is quite old, he will think proper to wear a pigtail, like his old father? At any rate, that was a good part which the kind fellow was now acting, of reverence towards his widowed mother, and affectionate respect for her declining days. He not only felt these amiable sentiments, but he imparted them to his friends most freely, as his wont was. He used to weep freely — quite unrestrained by the presence of the domestics, as English sentiment would be;— and when Madame de Florac quitted the room after dinner, would squeeze my hand and tell me with streaming eyes, that his mother was an angel. "Her life has been but a long trial, my friend," he would say. "Shall not I, who have caused her to shed so many tears, endeavour to dry some?" Of course the friends who liked him best encouraged him in an intention so pious.

The reader has already been made acquainted with this lady by the letters of hers, which came into my possession some time after the events which I am at present narrating: my wife, through our kind friend, Colonel Newcome, had also had the honour of an introduction to Madame de Florac at Paris; and, on coming to Rosebury for the Christmas holidays, I found Laura and the children greatly in favour with the good Countess. She treated her son's wife with a perfect though distant courtesy. She was thankful to Madame de Moncontour for the latter's great goodness to her son. Familiar with but very few persons, she could scarcely be intimate with her homely daughter-inlaw. Madame de Moncontour stood in the greatest awe of her; and, to do that good lady justice, admired and revered Paul's mother with all her simple heart. In truth, I think almost every one had a certain awe of Madame de Florac, except children, who came to her trustingly, and, as it were, by instinct. The habitual melancholy of her eyes vanished as they lighted upon young faces and infantile smiles. A sweet love beamed out of her countenance: an angelic smile shone over her face, as she bent towards them and caressed them. Her demeanour then, nay, her looks and ways at other times; — a certain gracious sadness, a sympathy with all grief, and pity for all pain; a gentle heart, yearning towards all children; and, for her own especially, feeling a love that was almost an anguish: in the affairs of the common world only a dignified acquiescence, as if her place was not in it, and her thoughts were in her Home elsewhere; — these qualities, which we had seen exemplified in another life, Laura and her husband watched in Madame de Florac, and we loved her because she was like our mother. I see in such women, the good

and pure, the patient and faithful, the tried and meek, the followers of Him whose earthly life was divinely sad and tender.

But, good as she was to us and to all, Ethel Newcome was the French lady's greatest favourite. A bond of extreme tenderness and affection united these two. The elder friend made constant visits to the younger at Newcome; and when Miss Newcome, as she frequently did, came to Rosebury, we used to see that they preferred to be alone; divining and respecting the sympathy which brought those two faithful hearts together. I can imagine now the two tall forms slowly pacing the garden walks, or turning, as they lighted on the young ones in their play. What was their talk! I never asked it. Perhaps Ethel never said what was in her heart, though, be sure, the other knew it. Though the grief of those they love is untold, women hear it; as they soothe it with unspoken consolations. To see the elder lady embrace her friend as they parted was something holy — a sort of saintlike salutation.

Consulting the person from whom I had no secrets, we had thought best at first not to mention to our friends the place and position in which we had found our dear Colonel; at least to wait for a fitting opportunity on which we might break the news to those who held him in such affection. I told how Clive was hard at work, and hoped the best for him. Good-natured Madame de Moncontour was easily satisfied with my replies to her questions concerning our friend. Ethel only asked if he and her uncle were well, and once or twice made inquiries respecting Rosa and her child. And now it was that my wife told me, what I need no longer keep secret, of Ethel's extreme anxiety to serve her distressed relatives, and how she, Laura, had already acted as Miss Newcome's almoner in furnishing and hiring those apartments, which Ethel believed were occupied by Clive and his father, and wife and child. And my wife further informed me with what deep grief Ethel had heard of her uncle's misfortune, and how, but that she feared to offend his pride, she longed to give him assistance. She had even ventured to offer to send him pecuniary help; but the Colonel (who never mentioned the circumstance to me any other of his friends), in a kind but very cold letter, had declined to be beholden to his niece for help.

So I may have remained some days at Rosebury, and the real position of the two Newcomes was unknown to our friends there. Christmas Eve was come, and, according to a long-standing promise, Ethel Newcome and her two children had arrived from the Park, which dreary mansion, since his double defeat, Sir Barnes scarcely ever visited. Christmas was come, and Rosebury hall was decorated with holly. Florac did his best to welcome his friends, and strove to make the meeting gay, though in truth it was rather melancholy. The children, however, were happy: and they had pleasure enough, in the school festival, in the distribution of cloaks and blankets to the poor, and in Madame de Moncontour's gardens, delightful and beautiful though the winter was there.

It was only a family meeting, Madame de Florac's widowhood not permitting her presence in large companies. Paul sate at his table between his mother and Mrs. Pendennis; Mr. Pendennis opposite to him, with Ethel and Madame de Moncontour on each side. The four children were placed between these personages, on whom Madame de Florac looked with her tender glances, and to whose little wants the kindest of hosts ministered with uncommon good-nature and affection. He was very soft-hearted about children. "Pourquoi n'en avons-nous pas, Jeanne? He! quoi n'en avons-nous pas?" he said, addressing his wife by her Christian name. The poor little lady looked kindly at her husband, and then gave a sigh, and turned and heaped cake upon the plate of the child next to her. No mamma or Aunt Ethel could interpose. It was a very light wholesome cake. Brown made it on purpose for the children, "the little darlings!" cries the Princess.

The children were very happy at being allowed to sit up so late to dinner, at all the kindly amusements of the day, at the holly and mistletoe clustering round the lamps — the mistletoe, under which the gallant Florac, skilled in all British usages, vowed he would have his privilege. But the mistletoe was clustered round the lamp, the lamp was over the centre of the great round table — the innocent gratification which he proposed to himself was denied to M. Paul.

In the greatest excitement and good-humour, our host at the dessert made us des speech. He carried a toast to the charming Ethel, another to the charming Mistriss Laura, another to his good fren', his brave frren', his 'appy fren', Pendennis — 'appy as possessor of such a wife, 'appy as writer of works destined to the immortality, etc. etc. The little children round about clapped their happy little hands, and laughed and crowed in chorus. And now the nursery and its guardians were about to retreat, when Florac said he had yet a speech, yet a toast — and he bade the butler pour wine into every one's glass — yet a toast — and he carried it to the health of our dear friends, of Clive and his father — the good, the brave Colonel! "We who are happy," says he, "shall we not think of those who are good? We who love each other, shall we not remember those whom we all love?" He spoke with very great tenderness and feeling. "Ma bonne mere, thou too shalt drink this toast!" he said, taking his mother's hand, and kissing it. She returned his caress gently, and tasted the wine with her pale lips. Ethel's head bent in silence over her glass; and, as for Laura, need I say what happened to her! When the

ladies went away my heart was opened to my friend Florac, and I told him where and how I had left my dear Clive's father.

The Frenchman's emotion on hearing this tale was such that I have loved him ever since. Clive in want! Why had he not sent to his friend? Grands Dieux! Clive who had helped him in his greatest distress! Clive's father, ce preux chevalier, ce parfait gentilhomme! In a hundred rapid exclamations Florac exhibited his sympathy, asking of Fate, why such men as he and I were sitting surrounded by splendours — before golden vases crowned with flowers — with valets to kiss our feet — (those were merely figures of speech in which Paul expressed his prosperity) — whilst our friend the Colonel, so much better than we, spent his last days in poverty, and alone.

I liked Florac none the less, I own, because that one of the conditions of the Colonel's present life, which appeared the hardest to most people, affected Florac but little. To be a Pensioner of an Ancient Institution? Why not? Might not a man retire without shame to the Invalides at the close of his campaigns, and, had not Fortune conquered our old friend, and age and disaster overcome him? It never once entered Thomas Newcome's head; nor Clive's, nor Florac's, nor his mother's, that the Colonel demeaned himself at all by accepting that bounty; and I recollect Warrington sharing our sentiment and trowing out those noble lines of the old poet:—

"His golden locks time hath to silver turned;
O time too swift, O swiftness never ceasing!
His youth 'gainst time and age hath ever spurned,
But spurned in vain; youth waneth by encreasing.
Beauty, strength, youth, are flowers but fading seen.
Duty, faith, love, are roots, and ever green.

His helmet now shall make a hive for bees,
And lovers' songs be turned to holy psalms;
A man at arms must now serve on his knees,
And feed on prayers, which are old age's alms."

These, I say, respected our friend, whatever was the coat he wore; whereas, among the Colonel's own kinsfolk, dire was the dismay, and indignation even, which they expressed when they came to hear of this, what they were pleased to call degradation to their family. Clive's dear mother-in-law made outcries over the good old man as over a pauper, and inquired of Heaven, what she had done that her blessed child should have a mendicant for a father? And Mrs. Hobson, in subsequent confidential communication with the writer of these memoirs, improved the occasion religiously as her wont was; referred the matter to Heaven too, and thought fit to assume that the celestial powers had decreed this humiliation, this dreadful trial for the Newcome family, as a warning to them all that they should not be too much puffed up with prosperity, nor set their affections too much upon things of this earth. Had they not already received one chastisement in Barnes's punishment, and Lady Clara's awful falling away? They had taught her a lesson, which the Colonel's lamentable errors had confirmed — the vanity of trusting in all earthly grandeurs! Thus it was this worthy woman plumed herself, as it were, on her relative's misfortunes; and was pleased to think the latter were designed for the special warning and advantage of her private family. But Mrs. Hobson's philosophy is only mentioned by the way. Our story, which is drawing to its close, has to busy itself with other members of the house of The Newcomes.

My talk with Florac lasted for some time: at its close, when we went to join the ladies in the drawing-room, we found Ethel cloaked and shawled, and prepared for her departure with her young ones, who were already asleep. The little festival was over, and had ended in melancholy — even in weeping. Our hostess sate in her accustomed seat by her lamp and her worktable; but, neglecting her needle, she was having perpetual recourse to her pocket-handkerchief, and uttering ejaculations of pity between the intervals of her gushes of tears. Madame de Florac was in her usual place, her head cast downwards, and her hands folded. My wife was at her side, a grave commiseration showing itself in Laura's countenance, whilst I read a yet deeper sadness in Ethel's pale face. Miss Newcome's carriage had been announced; the attendants had already carried the young ones asleep to the vehicle; and she was in the act of taking leave. We looked round at this disturbed party, guessing very likely what the subject of their talk had been, to which, however, Miss Ethel did not allude: but, announcing that she had intended to depart without disturbing the two gentlemen, she bade us farewell and good night. "I wish I could say a merry Christmas," she added gravely, "but none of us, I fear, can hope for that." It was evident that Laura had told the last chapter of the Colonel's story.

Madame de Floras rose up and embraced Miss Newcome, and, that farewell over, she sank back on the sofa exhausted, and with such an expression of affliction in her countenance, that my wife ran eagerly towards her. "It is nothing, my dear," she said, giving a cold hand to the younger lady, and sate silent for a few moments, during which we heard Florac's voice

without crying Adieu! and the wheels of Miss Newcome's carriage when it drove away.

Our host entered a moment afterwards; and remarking, as Laura had done, his mother's pallor and look of anguish, went up and spoke to her with the utmost tenderness and anxiety.

She gave her hand to her son, and a faint blush rose up out of the past as it were, and trembled upon her wan cheek. "He was the first friend I ever had in the world, Paul," she said "the first and the best. He shall not want, shall he, my son?"

No signs of that emotion in which her daughter-inlaw had been indulging were as yet visible in Madame de Florac's eyes, but, as she spoke, holding her son's hand in hers, the tears at length overflowed, and with a sob, her head fell forwards. The impetuous Frenchman flung himself on his knees before his mother, uttered a hundred words of love and respect for her, and with tears and sobs of his own called God to witness that their friend should never want. And so this mother and son embraced each other, and clung together in a sacred union of love, before which we who had been admitted as spectators of that scene, stood hushed and respectful.

That night Laura told me, how, when the ladies left us, the talk had been entirely about the Colonel and Clive. Madame de Florac had spoken especially, and much more freely than was her wont. She had told many reminiscences of Thomas Newcome, and his early days; how her father taught him mathematics when they were quite poor, and living in their dear little cottage at Blackheath; how handsome he was then, with bright eyes, and long black hair flowing over his shoulders; how military glory was his boyish passion, and he was for ever talking of India, and the famous deeds of Clive and Lawrence. His favourite book was a history of India — the history of Orme. "He read it, and I read it also, my daughter," the French lady said, turning to Ethel; "ah! I may say so after so many years."

Ethel remembered the book as belonging to her grandmother, and now in the library at Newcome. Doubtless the same sympathy which caused me to speak about Thomas Newcome that evening, impelled my wife likewise. She told her friends, as I had told Florac, all the Colonel's story; and it was while these good women were under the impression of the melancholy history, that Florac and his guest found them.

Retired to our rooms, Laura and I talked on the same subject until the clock tolled Christmas, and the neighbouring church bells rang out a jubilation. And, looking out into the quiet night, where the stars were keenly shining, we committed ourselves to rest with humbled hearts; praying, for all those we loved, a blessing of peace and goodwill.



CHAPTER LXXVII

THE SHORTEST AND HAPPIEST IN THE WHOLE HISTORY

In the ensuing Christmas morning I chanced to rise betimes, and entering my dressing-room, opened the windows and looked out on the soft landscape, over which mists were still lying; whilst the serene sky above, and the lawns and leafless woods in the foreground near, were still pink with sunrise. The grey had not even left the west yet, and I could see a star or two twinkling there, to vanish with that twilight.

As I looked out, I saw the not very distant lodge-gate open after a brief parley, and a lady on horseback, followed by a servant, rode rapidly up to the house. This early visitor was no other than Miss Ethel Newcome. The young lady espied me immediately. "Come down; come down to me this moment, Mr. Pendennis," she cried out. I hastened down to her, supposing rightly that news of importance had brought her to Rosebury so early.

The news were of importance indeed. "Look here!" she said, "read this;" and she took a paper from the pocket of her habit. "When I went home last night, after Madame de Florac had been talking to us about Orme's India, I took the volumes from the bookcase and found this paper. It is in my grandmother's — Mrs. Newcome's — handwriting; I know it quite well, it is dated on the very day of her death. She had been writing and reading in her study on that very night; I have often heard papa speak of the circumstance. Look and read. You are a lawyer, Mr. Pendennis; tell me about this paper."

I seized it eagerly, and cast my eyes over it; but having read it, my countenance fell.

"My dear Miss Newcome, it is not worth a penny," I was obliged to own.

"Yes, it is, sir, to honest people!" she cried out. "My brother and uncle will respect it as Mrs. Newcome's dying wish. They must respect it."

The paper in question was a letter in ink that had grown yellow from time, and was addressed by the late Mrs. Newcome, to "my dear Mr. Luce."

"That was her solicitor, my solicitor still," interposes Miss Ethel.

"THE HERMITAGE, March 14, 182-.

"My Dear Mr. Luce" (the defunct lady wrote)—"My late husband's grandson has been staying with me lately, and is a most pleasing, handsome, and engaging little boy. He bears a strong likeness to his grandfather, I think; and though he has no claims upon me, and I know is sufficiently provided for by his father Lieutenant-Colonel Newcome, C.B., of the East India Company's Service, I am sure my late dear husband will be pleased that I should leave his grandson, Clive Newcome, a token of peace and goodwill; and I can do so with the more readiness, as it has pleased Heaven greatly to increase my means since my husband was called away hence.

"I desire to bequeath a sum equal to that which Mr Newcome willed to my eldest son, Brian Newcome, Esq., to Mr. Newcome's grandson, Clive Newcome; and furthermore, that a token of my esteem and affection, a ring, or a piece of plate, of the value of one hundred pounds, be given to Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Newcome, my stepson, whose excellent conduct for many years, and whose repeated acts of gallantry in the service of his sovereign, have long obliterated the just feelings of displeasure with which I could not but view his early disobedience and misbehaviour, before he quitted England against my will, and entered the military service.

"I beg you to prepare immediately a codicil to my will providing for the above bequests; and desire that the amount of these legacies should be taken from the property bequeathed to my eldest son. You will be so good as to prepare the necessary document, and bring it with you when you come on Saturday, to yours very truly,

Sophia Alethea Newcome.

"Tuesday night."

I gave back the paper with a sigh to the finder. "It is but a wish of Mrs. Newcome, my dear Miss Ethel," I said. "Pardon me, if I say, I think I know your elder brother too well to suppose that he will fulfil it."

"He will fulfil it, sir, I am sure he will," Miss Newcome said, in a haughty manner. "He would do as much without being asked, I am certain he would, did he know the depth of my dear uncle's misfortune. Barnes is in London now, and

—”

“And you will write to him? I know what the answer will be.”

“I will go to him this very day, Mr. Pendennis! I will go to my dear, dear uncle. I cannot bear to think of him in that place,” cried the young lady, the tears starting into her honest eyes. “It was the will of Heaven. Oh, God be thanked for it! Had we found my grandmamma’s letter earlier, Barnes would have paid the legacy immediately, and the money would have gone in that dreadful bankruptcy. I will go to Barnes today. Will you come with me? Won’t you come to your old friends? We may be at his — at Clive’s house this evening; and oh, praise be to God! there need be no more want in his family.”

“My dear friend, I will go with you round the world on such an errand,” I said, kissing her hand. How beautiful she looked; the generous colour rose in her face, her voice thrilled with happiness. The music of Christmas church bells leaped up at this moment with joyful gratulations; the face of the old house, before which we stood talking, shone out in the morning sun.

“You will come I thank you! I must run and tell Madame de Florac,” cried the happy young lady, and we entered the house together. “How came you to be kissing Ethel’s hand, sir; and what is the meaning of this early visit?” asks Mrs. Laura, as soon as I had returned to my own apartments.

“Martha, get me a carpet-bag! I am going to London in an hour,” cries Mr. Pendennis. If I had kissed Ethel’s hand just now, delighted at the news which she brought to me, was not one a thousand times dearer to me, as happy as her friend? I know who prayed with a thankful heart that day as we sped, in the almost solitary train, towards London.



CHAPTER LXXVIII

IN WHICH THE AUTHOR GOES ON A PLEASANT ERRAND

Before I parted with Miss Newcome at the station, she made me promise to see her on the morrow at an early hour at her brother's house; and having bidden her farewell and repaired to my own solitary residence, which presented but a dreary aspect on that festive day, I thought I would pay Howland Street a visit; and, if invited, eat my Christmas dinner with Clive.

I found my friend at home, and at work still, in spite of the day. He had promised a pair of pictures to a dealer for the morrow. "He pays me pretty well, and I want all the money he will give me, Pen," the painter said, rubbing on at his canvas. "I am pretty easy in my mind since I have become acquainted with a virtuous dealer. I sell myself to him, body and soul, for some half-dozen pounds a week. I know I can get my money, and he is regularly supplied with his pictures. But for Rosey's illness we might carry on well enough."

Rosey's illness? I was sorry to hear of that: and poor Clive, entering into particulars, told me how he had spent upon doctors rather more than a fourth of his year's earnings. "There is a solemn fellow, to whom the women have taken a fancy, who lives but a few doors off in Gower Street; and who, for his last sixteen visits, has taken sixteen pounds sixteen shillings out of my pocket, and as if guineas grew there, with the most admirable gravity. He talks the fashions to my mother-in-law. My poor wife hangs on every word he says. Look! There is his carriage coming up now! and there is his fee, confound him!" says Clive, casting a rueful look towards a little packet lying upon the mantelpiece, by the side of that skinned figure in plaster of Paris which we have seen in most studios.

I looked out of window and saw a certain Fashionable Doctor tripping out of his chariot; that Ladies' Delight, who has subsequently migrated from Bloomsbury to Belgravia; and who has his polite foot now in a thousand nurseries and boudoirs. What Confessors were in old times, Quackenboss and his like are in our Protestant country. What secrets they know! into what mystic chambers do they not enter! I suppose the Campaigner made a special toilette to receive her fashionable friend, for that lady attired in considerable splendour, and with the precious jewel on her head, which I remembered at Boulogne, came into the studio two minutes after the Doctor's visit was announced, and made him a low curtsy. I cannot describe the overpowering civilities of that woman.

Clive was very gracious and humble to her. He adopted a lively air in addressing her — "Must work, you know, Christmas Day and all — for the owner of the pictures will call for them in the morning. Bring me a good report about Rosey, Mrs. Mackenzie, please — and if you will have the kindness to look by the ecorche there, you will see that little packet which I have left for you." Mrs. Mack, advancing, took the money. "I thought that plaster of Paris figure was not the only ecorche in the room."

"I want you to stay to dinner. You must stay, Pen, please," cried Clive; "and be civil to her, will you? My dear old father is coming to dine here. They fancy that he has lodgings at the other end of the town, and that his brothers do something for him. Not a word about Grey Friars. It might agitate Rosa, you know. Ah! isn't he noble, the dear old boy! and isn't it fine to see him in that place?" Clive worked on as he talked, using up the last remnant of the light of Christmas Day, and was cleaning his palette and brushes, when Mrs. Mackenzie returned to us.

Darling Rosey was very delicate, but Doctor Quackenboss was going to give her the very same medicine which had done the charming young Duchess of Clackmannanshire so much good, and he was not in the least disquiet.

On this I cut into the conversation with anecdotes concerning the family of the Duchess of Clackmannanshire, remembering early days, when it used to be my sport to entertain the Campaigner with anecdotes of the aristocracy, about whose proceedings she still maintained a laudable curiosity. Indeed, one of few the books escaped out of the wreck of Tyburn Gardens was a Peerage, now a well-worn volume, much read by Rosa and her mother.

The anecdotes were very politely received — perhaps it was the season which made Mrs. Mack and her son-inlaw on more than ordinarily good terms. When, turning to the Campaigner, Clive said he wished that she could persuade me to stay to dinner, she acquiesced graciously and at once in that proposal, and vowed that her daughter would be delighted if I could condescend to eat their humble fare. "It is not such a dinner as you have seen at her house, with six side-dishes, two

flanks, that splendid epergne, and the silver dishes top and bottom; but such as my Rosa has she offers with a willing heart," cries the Campaigner.

"And Tom may sit to dinner, mayn't he, grandmamma?" asks Clive, in a humble voice.

"Oh, if you wish it, sir."

"His grandfather will like to sit by him," said Clive. "I will go out and meet him; he comes through Guildford Street and Russell Square," says Clive. "Will you walk, Pen?"

"Oh, pray don't let us detain you," says Mrs. Mackenzie, with a toss of her head: and when she retreated Clive whispered that she would not want me; for she looked to the roasting of the beef and the making of the pudding and the mince-pie.

"I thought she might have a finger in it," I said; and we set forth to meet the dear old father, who presently came, walking very slowly, along the line by which we expected him. His stick trembled as it fell on the pavement: so did his voice, as he called out Clive's name: so did his hand, as he stretched it to me. His body was bent, and feeble. Twenty years had not weakened him so much as the last score of months. I walked by the side of my two friends as they went onwards, linked lovingly together. How I longed for the morrow, and hoped they might be united once more! Thomas Newcome's voice, once so grave, went up to a treble, and became almost childish, as he asked after Boy. His white hair hung over his collar. I could see it by the gas under which we walked — and Clive's great back and arm, as his father leaned on it, and his brave face turned towards the old man. Oh, Barnes Newcome, Barnes Newcome! Be an honest man for once, and help your kinsfolk! thought I.

The Christmas meal went off in a friendly manner enough. The Campaigner's eyes were everywhere: it was evident that the little maid who served the dinner, and had cooked a portion of it under their keen supervision, cowered under them, as well as other folks. Mrs. Mack did not make more than ten allusions to former splendours during the entertainment, or half as many apologies to me for sitting down to a table very different from that to which I was accustomed. Good, faithful F. Bayham was the only other guest. He complimented the mince-pies, so that Mrs. Mackenzie owned she had made them. The Colonel was very silent, but he tried to feed Boy, and was only once or twice sternly corrected by the Campaigner. Boy, in the best little words he could muster, asked why grandpapa wore a black cloak? Clive nudged my foot under the table. The secret of the Poor Brotherhood was very nearly out. The Colonel blushed, and with great presence of mind said he wore a cloak to keep him warm in winter.

Rosey did not say much. She had grown lean and languid: the light of her eyes had gone out: all her pretty freshness had faded. She ate scarce anything, though her mother pressed her eagerly, and whispered loudly that a woman in her situation ought to strengthen herself. Poor Rosey was always in a situation.

When the cloth was withdrawn, the Colonel bending his head said, "Thank God for what we have received," so reverently, and with an accent so touching, that Fred Bayham's big eyes as he turned towards the old man filled up with tears. When his mother and grandmother rose to go away, poor little Boy cried to stay longer, and the Colonel would have meekly interposed, but the domineering Campaigner cried, "Nonsense, let him go to bed!" and flounced him out of the room: and nobody appealed against that sentence. Then we three remained, and strove to talk as cheerfully as we might, speaking now of old times, and presently of new. Without the slightest affectation, Thomas Newcome told us that his life was comfortable, and that he was happy in it. He wished that many others of the old gentlemen, he said, were as contented as himself, but some of them grumbled sadly, he owned and quarrelled with their bread-and-butter. He, for his part, had everything he could desire: all the officers of the Establishment were most kind to him; an excellent physician came to him when wanted; a most attentive woman waited on him. "And if I wear a black gown," said he, "is not that uniform as good as another, and if we have to go to church every day, at which some of the Poor Brothers grumble, I think an old fellow can't do better; and I can say my prayers with a thankful heart, Clivey my boy, and should be quite happy but for my — for my past imprudence, God forgive me. Think of Bayham here coming to our chapel today! — he often comes — that was very right, sir — very right."

Clive, filling a glass of wine, looked at F. B. with eyes that said God bless you. F. B. gulped down another bumper. "It is almost a merry Christmas," said I; "and oh, I hope it will be a happy New Year!"

Shortly after nine o'clock the Colonel rose to depart, saying he must be "in barracks" by ten; and Clive and F. B. went a part of the way with him. I would have followed them, but he whispered me to stay and talk to Mrs. Mack, for Heaven's

sake, and that he would be back ere long. So I went and took tea with the two ladies; and as we drank it, Mrs. Mackenzie took occasion to tell me she did not know what amount of income the Colonel had from his wealthy brother, but that they never received any benefit from it; and again she computed to me all the sums, principal and interest, which ought at that moment to belong to her darling Rosey. Rosey now and again made a feeble remark. She did not seem pleased or sorry when her husband came in; and presently, dropping me a little curtsey, went to bed under charge of the Campaigner. So Bayham and I and Clive retired to the studio, where smoking was allowed, and where we brought that Christmas day to an end.

At the appointed time on the next forenoon I called upon Miss Newcome at her brother's house. Sir Barnes Newcome was quitting his own door as I entered it, and he eyed me with such a severe countenance, as made me augur but ill of the business upon which I came. The expression of Ethel's face was scarcely more cheering: she was standing at the window, sternly looking at Sir Barnes, who yet lingered at his own threshold, having some altercation with his cab-boy ere he mounted his vehicle to drive into the City.

Miss Newcome was very pale when she advanced and gave me her hand. I looked with some alarm into her face, and inquired what news?

"It is as you expected, Mr. Pendennis," she said — "not as I did. My brother is averse to making restitution. He just now parted from me in some anger. But it does not matter; the restitution must be made, if not by Barnes, by one of our family — must it not?"

"God bless you for a noble creature, my dear, dear Miss Newcome!" was all I could say.

"For doing what is right? Ought I not to do it? I am the eldest of our family after Barnes: I am the richest after him. Our father left all his younger children the very sum of money which Mrs. Newcome here devises to Clive; and you know, besides, I have all my grandmother's, Lady Kew's, property. Why, I don't think I could sleep if this act of justice were not done. Will you come with me to my lawyer's? He and my brother Barnes are trustees of my property; and I have been thinking, dear Mr. Pendennis — and you are very good to be so kind, and to express so kind an opinion of me, and you and Laura have always, always been the best friends to me" — (she says this, taking one of my hands and placing her other hand over it) — "I have been thinking, you know, that this transfer had better be made through Mr. Luce, you understand, and as coming from the family, and then I need not appear in it at all, you see; and — and my dear good uncle's pride need not be wounded." She fairly gave way to tears as she spoke — and for me, I longed to kiss the hem of her robe, or anything else she would let me embrace, I was so happy, and so touched by the simple demeanour and affection of the noble young lady.

"Dear Ethel," I said, "did I not say I would go to the end of the world with you — and won't I go to Lincoln's Inn?"

A cab was straightway sent for, and in another half-hour we were in the presence of the courtly little old Mr. Luce in his chambers in Lincoln's Inn Fields.

He knew the late Mrs. Newcome's handwriting at once. He remembered having seen the little boy at the Hermitage, had talked with Mr. Newcome regarding his son in India, and had even encouraged Mrs. Newcome in her idea of leaving some token of goodwill to the latter. "I was to have dined with your grandmamma on the Saturday, with my poor wife. Why, bless my soul! I remember the circumstance perfectly well, my dear young lady. There can't be a doubt about the letter, but of course the bequest is no bequest at all, and Colonel Newcome has behaved so ill to your brother that I suppose Sir Barnes will not go out of his way to benefit the Colonel."

"What would you do, Mr. Luce?" asks the young lady.

"H'm! And pray why should I tell you what I should do under the circumstances?" replied the little lawyer. "Upon my word, Miss Newcome, I think I should leave matters as they stand. Sir Barnes and I, you are aware, are not the very best of friends — as your father's, your grandmother's old friend and adviser, your own too, my dear young lady, I and Sir Barnes Newcome remain on civil terms. But neither is over much pleased with the other, to say the truth; and, at any rate, I cannot be accused — nor can any one else that I know of — of being a very warm partisan of your brother's. But candidly, were his case mine — had I a relation who had called me unpleasant names, and threatened me I don't know with what, with sword and pistol — who had put me to five or six thousand pounds' expense in contesting an election which I had lost — I should give him, I think, no more than the law obliged me to give him; and that, my dear Miss Newcome, is not one farthing."

"I am very glad you say so," said Miss Newcome, rather to my astonishment.

"Of course, my dear young lady; and so you need not be alarmed at showing your brother this document. Is not that

the point about which you came to consult me? You wished that I should prepare him for the awful disclosure, did you not? You know, perhaps, that he does not like to part with his money, and thought the appearance of this note might agitate him? It has been a long time coming to its address, but nothing can be done, don't you see? and be sure Sir Barnes Newcome will not be the least agitated when I tell him its contents."

"I mean I am very glad you think my brother is not called upon to obey Mrs. Newcome's wishes, because I need not think so hardly of him as I was disposed to do," Miss Newcome said. "I showed him the paper this morning, and he repelled it with scorn; and not kind words passed between us, Mr. Luce, and unkind thoughts remained in my mind. But if he, you think, is justified, it is I who have been in the wrong for saying that he was self — for upbraiding him as I own I did."

"You called him selfish! — You had words with him! Such things have happened before, my dear Miss Newcome, in the best-regulated families."

"But if he is not wrong, sir, holding his opinions, surely I should be wrong, sir, with mine, not to do as my conscience tells me; and having found this paper only yesterday at Newcome, in the library there, in one of my grandmother's books, I consulted with this gentleman, the husband of my dearest friend, Mrs. Pendennis — the most intimate friend of my uncle and cousin Clive; and I wish, and I desire and insist, that my share of what my poor father left us girls should be given to my cousin, Mr. Clive Newcome, in accordance with my grandmother's dying wishes."

"My dear, you gave away your portion to your brothers and sisters ever so long ago!" cried the lawyer.

"I desire, sir, that six thousand pounds may be given to my cousin," Miss Newcome said, blushing deeply. "My dear uncle, the best man in the world, whom I love with all my heart, sir, is in the most dreadful poverty. Do you know where he is, sir? My dear, kind, generous uncle!" — and, kindling as she spoke, and with eyes beaming a bright kindness, and flushing cheeks, and a voice that thrilled to the heart of those two who heard her, Miss Newcome went on to tell of her uncle's and cousin's misfortunes, and of her wish, under God, to relieve them. I see before me now the figure of the noble girl as she speaks; the pleased little old lawyer, bobbing his white head, looking up at her with his twinkling eyes — patting his knees, patting his snuff-box — as he sits before his tapes and his deeds, surrounded by a great background of tin boxes.

"And I understand you want this money paid as coming from the family, and not from Miss Newcome?" says Mr. Luce.

"Coming from the family — exactly," answers Miss Newcome.

Mr. Luce rose up from his old chair — his worn-out old horsehair chair — where he had sat for half a century and listened to many a speaker, very different from this one. "Mr. Pendennis," he said, "I envy you your journey along with this young lady. I envy you the good news you are going to carry to your friends — and, Miss Newcome, as I am an old — old gentleman who have known your family these sixty years, and saw your father in his long-clothes, may I tell you how heartily and sincerely I — I love and respect you, my dear? When should you wish Mr. Clive Newcome to have his legacy?"

"I think I should like Mr. Pendennis to have it this instant, Mr. Luce, please," said the young lady — and her veil dropped over her face as she bent her head down, and clasped her hands together for a moment, as if she was praying.

Mr. Luce laughed at her impetuosity; but said that if she was bent upon having the money, it was at her instant service; and before we left the room, Mr. Luce prepared a letter, addressed to Clive Newcome, Esquire, in which he stated, that amongst the books of the late Mrs. Newcome a paper had only just been found, of which a copy was enclosed, and that the family of the late Sir Brian Newcome, desirous to do honour to the wishes of the late Mrs. Newcome, had placed the sum of 6000 pounds at the bank of Messrs. H. W — at the disposal of Mr. Clive Newcome, of whom Mr. Luce had the honour to sign himself the most obedient servant, etc. And, the letter approved and copied, Mr. Luce said Mr. Pendennis might be the postman thereof; if Miss Newcome so willed it; and, with this document in my pocket, I quitted the lawyer's chambers, with my good and beautiful young companion.

Our cab had been waiting several hours in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and I asked Miss Ethel whither I now should conduct her?

"Where is Grey Friars?" she said. "Mayn't I go to see my uncle?"



CHAPTER LXXIX

IN WHICH OLD FRIENDS COME TOGETHER

We made the descent of Snowhill, we passed by the miry pens of Smithfield; we travel through the street of St. John, and presently reach the ancient gateway, in Cistercian Square, where lies the old Hospital of Grey Friars. I passed through the gate, my fair young companion on my arm, and made my way to the rooms occupied by brother Newcome.

As we traversed the court the Poor Brothers were coming from dinner. A couple of score, or more, of old gentlemen in black gowns, issued from the door of their refectory, and separated over the court, betaking themselves to their chambers. Ethel's arm trembled under mine as she looked at one and another, expecting to behold her dear uncle's familiar features. But he was not among the brethren. We went to his chamber, of which the door was open: a female attendant was arranging the room; she told us Colonel Newcome was out for the day, and thus our journey had been made in vain.

Ethel went round the apartment and surveyed its simple decorations; she looked at the pictures of Clive and his boy; the two sabres crossed over the mantelpiece, the Bible laid on the table, by the old latticed window. She walked slowly up to the humble bed, and sat down on a chair near it. No doubt her heart prayed for him who slept there; she turned round where his black pensioner's cloak was hanging on the wall, and lifted up the homely garment, and kissed it. The servant looked on admiring, I should think, her melancholy and her gracious beauty. I whispered to the woman that the young lady was the Colonel's niece. "He has a son who comes here, and is very handsome, too," said the attendant.

The two women spoke together for a while. "Oh, miss!" cried the elder and humbler, evidently astonished at some gratuity which Miss Newcome bestowed upon her, "I didn't want this to be good to him. Everybody here loves him for himself; and I would sit up for him for weeks — that I would."

My companion took a pencil from her bag, and wrote "Ethel" on a piece of paper, and laid the paper on the Bible. Darkness had again fallen by this time, feeble lights were twinkling in the chamber windows of the Poor Brethren as we issued into the courts; — feeble lights illumining a dim, grey, melancholy old scene. Many a career, once bright, was flickering out here in the darkness; many a night was closing in. We went away silently from that quiet place; and in another minute were in the flare and din and tumult of London.

"The Colonel is most likely gone to Clive's," I said. Would not Miss Newcome follow him thither? We consulted whether she should go. She took heart and said yes. "Drive, cabman, to Howland Street!" The horse was, no doubt, tired, for the journey seemed extraordinarily long; I think neither of us spoke a word on the way.

I ran upstairs to prepare our friends for the visit. Clive, his wife, his father, and his mother-in-law were seated by a dim light in Mrs. Clive's sitting-room. Rosey on the sofa, as usual; the little boy on his grandfather's knees.

I hardly made a bow to the ladies, so eager was I to communicate with Colonel Newcome. "I have just been to your quarters at Grey Friars, sir," said I. "That is —"

"You have been to the Hospital, sir! You need not be ashamed to mention it, as Colonel Newcome is not ashamed to go there," cried out the Campaigner. "Pray speak in your own language, Clive, unless there is something not fit for ladies to hear." Clive was growling out to me in German that there had just been a terrible scene, his father having, a quarter of an hour previously, let slip the secret about Grey Friars.

"Say at once, Clive!" the Campaigner cried, rising in her might, and extending a great strong arm over her helpless child, "that Colonel Newcome owns that he has gone to live as a pauper in a hospital! He who has squandered his own money. He who has squandered my money. He who has squandered the money of that darling helpless child — compose yourself, Rosey my love! — has completed the disgrace of the family, by his present mean and unworthy — yes, I say, mean and unworthy and degraded conduct. Oh, my child, my blessed child! to think that your husband's father should have come to a workhouse!" Whilst this maternal agony bursts over her, Rosa, on the sofa, bleats and whimpers amongst the faded chintz cushions.

I took Clive's hand, which was cast up to his head striking his forehead with mad impotent rage, whilst this fiend of a woman lashed his good father. The veins of his great fist were swollen, his whole body was throbbing and trembling with

the helpless pain under which he writhed. "Colonel Newcome's friends, ma'am," I said, "think very differently from you; and that he is a better judge than you, or any one else, of his own honour. We, all, who loved him in his prosperity, love and respect him more than ever for the manner in which he bears his misfortune. Do you suppose that his noble friend, the Earl of H— — would have counselled him to a step unworthy of a gentleman; that the Prince de Moncontour would applaud his conduct as he does, if he did not think it admirable?" I can hardly say with what scorn I used this argument, or what depth of contempt I felt for the woman whom I knew it would influence. "And at this minute," I added, "I have come from visiting the Gray Friars with one of the Colonel's relatives, whose love and respect for him is boundless; who longs to be reconciled to him, and who is waiting below, eager to shake his hand, and embrace Clive's wife."

"Who is that?" says the Colonel, looking gently up, as he pats Boy's head.

"Who is it, Pen?" says Clive. I said in a low voice, "Ethel;" and starting up and crying "Ethel! Ethel!" he ran from the room.

Little Mrs. Rosa started up too on her sofa, clutching hold of the table-cover with her lean hand, and the two red spots on her cheeks burning more fiercely than ever. I could see what passion was beating in that poor little heart. Heaven help us! what a resting-place had friends and parents prepared for it! for shame!"

"Miss Newcome, is it? My darling Rosa, get on your shawl!" cried the Campaigner, a grim smile lighting her face.

"It is Ethel; Ethel is my niece. I used to love her when she was quite a little girl," says the Colonel, patting Boy on the head; "and she is a very good, beautiful little child — a very good child." The torture had been too much for that kind old heart: there were times when Thomas Newcome passed beyond it. What still maddened Clive, excited his father no more; the pain yonder woman inflicted, only felled and stupefied him.

As the door opened, the little white-headed child trotted forward towards the visitor, and Ethel entered on Clive's arm, who was as haggard and pale as death. Little Boy, looking up at the stately lady, still followed beside her, as she approached her uncle, who remained sitting, his head bent to the ground. His thoughts were elsewhere. Indeed he was following the child, and about to caress it again.

"Here is a friend, father!" says Clive, laying a hand on the old man's shoulder. "It is I, Ethel, uncle! "the young lady said, taking his hand; and kneeling down between his knees, she flung her arms round him, and kissed him, and wept on his shoulder.

His consciousness had quite returned ere an instant was over. He embraced her with the warmth of his old affection, uttering many brief words of love, kindness, and tenderness, such as men speak when strongly moved.

The little boy had come wondering up to the chair whilst this embrace took place, and Clive's tall figure bent over the three. Rosa's eyes were not good to look at, as she stared at the group with a ghastly smile. Mrs. Mackenzie surveyed the scene in haughty state, from behind the sofa cushions. She tried to take one of Rosa's lean hot hands. The poor child tore it away, leaving her rings behind her; lifted her hands to her face: and cried, cried as if her little heart would break. Ah me! what a story was there! what an outburst of pent-up feeling! what a passion of pain! The ring had fallen to the ground; the little boy crept towards it, and picked it up, and came towards his mother, fixing on her his large wondering eyes. "Mamma crying. Mamma's ring!" he said, holding up the circle of gold. With more feeling than I had ever seen her exhibit, she clasped the boy in her wasted arms. Great Heaven! what passion, jealousy, grief, despair, were tearing and trying all these hearts, that but for fate might have been happy?

Clive went round, and with the utmost sweetness and tenderness hanging round his child and wife, soothed her with words of consolation, that in truth I scarce heard, being ashamed almost of being present at this sudden scene. No one, however, took notice of the witnesses; and even Mrs. Mackenzie's voice was silent for the moment. I dare say Clive's words were incoherent; but women have more presence of mind; and now Ethel, with a noble grace which I cannot attempt to describe, going up to Rosa, seated herself by her, spoke of her long grief at the differences between her dearest uncle and herself; of her early days, when he had been as a father to her; of her wish, her hope that Rosa should love her as a sister; and of her belief that better days and happiness were in store for them all. And she spoke to the mother about her boy so beautiful and intelligent, and told her how she had brought up her brother's children, and hoped that this one too would call her Aunt Ethel. She would not stay now, might she come again? Would Rosa come to her with her little boy? Would he kiss her? He did so with a very good grace; but when Ethel at parting embraced the child's mother, Rosa's face wore a smile ghastly to look at, and the lips that touched Ethel's cheeks, were quite white.

"I shall come and see you again tomorrow, uncle, may I not? I saw your room today, sir, and your housekeeper; such a nice old lady, and your black gown. And you shall put it on tomorrow, and walk with me, and show me the beautiful old buildings of that old hospital. And I shall come and make tea for you, the housekeeper says I may. Will you come down with me to my carriage? No, Mr. Pendennis must come;" and she quitted the room, beckoning me after her. "You will speak to Clive now, won't you?" she said, "and come to me this evening, and tell me all before you go to bed?" I went back, anxious in truth to the messenger of good tidings to my dear old friends.

Brief as my absence had been, Mrs. Mackenzie had taken advantage of that moment again to outrage Clive and his father, and to announce that Rosa might go to see this Miss Newcome, whom people respected because she was rich, but whom she would never visit; no, never! "An insolent, proud, impertinent thing! Does she take me for a housemaid?" Mrs. Mackenzie had inquired.

"Am I dust to be trampled beneath her feet? Am I a dog that she can't throw me a word?" Her arms were stretched out, and she was making this inquiry as to her own canine qualities as I re-entered the room, and remembered that Ethel had never once addressed a single word to Mrs. Mackenzie in the course of her visit.

I affected not to perceive the incident, and presently said that I wanted to speak to Clive in his studio. Knowing that I had brought my friend one or two commissions for drawings, Mrs. Mackenzie was civil to me, and did not object to our colloquies.

"Will you come too, and smoke a pipe, father?" says Clive.

"Of course your father intends to stay to dinner?" says the Campaigner, with a scornful toss of her head. Clive groaned out as we were on the stair, "that he could not bear this much longer, by heavens he could not."

"Give the Colonel his pipe, Clive," said I. "Now, sir, down with you in the sitter's chair, and smoke the sweetest cheroot you ever smoked in your life! My dear, dear old Clive! you need not bear with the Campaigner any longer; you may go to bed without this nightmare to-night if you like; you may have your father back under your roof again."

"My dear Arthur! I must be back at ten, sir, back at ten, military time; drum beats; no — bell tolls at ten, and gates close;" and he laughed and shook his old head. "Besides, I am to see a young lady, sir; and she is coming to make tea for me, and I must speak to Mrs. Jones to have all things ready — all things ready;" and again the old man laughed as he spoke.

His son looked at him and then at me with eyes full of sad meaning. "How do you mean, Arthur," Clive said, "that he can come and stay with me, and that that woman can go?"

Then feeling in my pocket for Mr. Luce's letter, I grasped my dear Clive by the hand and bade him prepare for good news. I told him how providentially, two days since, Ethel, in the library at Newcome, looking into Orme's History of India, a book which old Mrs. Newcome had been reading on the night of her death, had discovered a paper, of which the accompanying letter enclosed a copy, and I gave my friend the letter.

He opened it, and read it through. I cannot say that I saw any particular expression of wonder in his countenance, for somehow, all the while Clive perused this document, I was looking at the Colonel's sweet kind face. "It — it is Ethel's doing," said Clive, in a hurried voice. "There was no such letter."

"Upon my honour," I answered, "there was. We came up to London with it last night, a few hours after she had found it. We showed it to Sir Barnes Newcome, who — who could not disown it. We took it to Mr. Luce, who recognised it at once, who was old Mrs. Newcome's man of business, and continues to be the family lawyer, and the family recognises the legacy and has paid it, and you may draw for it tomorrow, as you see. What a piece of good luck it is that it did not come before the B. B. C. time! That confounded Bundelcund Bank would have swallowed up this like all the rest."

"Father! father! do you remember Orme's History of India?" cries Clive.

"Orme's History! of course I do, I could repeat whole pages of it when I was a boy," says the old man, and began forthwith. "The two battalions advanced against each other cannonading, until the French, coming to a hollow way, imagined that the English would not venture to pass it. But Major Lawrence ordered the sepoy and artillery — the sepoy and artillery to halt and defend the convoy against the Morattoes" — Morattoes Orme calls 'em. Ho! ho! I could repeat whole pages, sir."

"It is the best book that ever was written," calls out Clive. The Colonel said he had not read it, but he was informed Mr. Mill's was a very learned history; he intended to read it. "Eh! there is plenty of time now," said the good Colonel. "I have all

day long at Grey Friars — after chapel, you know. Do you know, sir, when I was a boy I used what they call to tib out and run down to a public-house in Cistercian Lane — the Red Cowl sir — and buy rum there? I was a terrible wild boy, Clivy. You weren't so, sir, thank Heaven! A terrible wild boy, and my poor father flogged me, though I think it was very hard on me. It wasn't the pain, you know: it wasn't the pain, but ——" Here tears came into his eyes and he dropped his head on his hand, and the cigar from it fell on to the floor, burnt almost out, and scattering white ashes.

Clive looked sadly at me. "He was often so at Boulogne, Arthur," he whispered; "after a scene with that — that woman yonder, his head would go: he never replied to her taunts; he bore her infernal cruelty without an unkind word — Oh! I pay her back, thank God I can pay her! But who shall pay her," he said, trembling in every limb, "for what she has made that good man suffer?"

He turned to his father, who still sate lost in his meditations. "You need never go back to Grey Friars, father!" he cried out."

"Not go back, Clivy? Must go back, boy, to say Adsum, when my name is called. Newcome! Adsum! Hey! that is what we used to say — we used to say!"

"You need not go back, except to pack your things, and return and live with me and Boy," Clive continued, and he told Colonel Newcome rapidly the story of the legacy. The old man seemed hardly to comprehend it. When he did, the news scarcely elated him; when Clive said "they could now pay Mrs. Mackenzie," the Colonel replied, "Quite right, quite right," and added up the sum, principal and interest, in which they were indebted to her — he knew it well enough, the good old man. "Of course we shall pay her, Clivy, when we can!" But in spite of what Clive had said he did not appear to understand the fact that the debt to Mrs. Mackenzie was now actually to be paid.

As we were talking, a knock came to the studio door, and that summons was followed by the entrance of the maid, who said to Clive, "If you please, sir, Mrs. Mackenzie says, how long are you a-going to keep the dinner waiting?"

"Come, father, come to dinner!" cries Clive; "and, Pen, you will come too, won't you?" he added; "it may be the last time you dine in such pleasant company. Come along," he whispered hurriedly. "I should like you to be there, it will keep her tongue quiet." As we proceeded to the dining-room, I gave the Colonel my arm; and the good man prattled to me something about Mrs. Mackenzie having taken shares in the Bundelcund Banking Company, and about her not being a woman of business, and fancying we had spent her money. "And I have always felt a wish that Clivy should pay her, and he will pay her, I know he will," says the Colonel; "and then we shall lead a quiet life, Arthur; for, between ourselves, some women are the deuce when they are angry, sir." And again he laughed, as he told me this sly news, and he bowed meekly his gentle old head as we entered the dining-room.

That apartment was occupied by little Boy already seated in his high chair, and by the Campaigner only, who stood at the mantelpiece in a majestic attitude. On parting with her, before we adjourned to Clive's studio, I had made my bow and taken my leave in form, not supposing that I was about to enjoy her hospitality yet once again. My return did not seem to please her. "Does Mr. Pendennis favour us with his company to dinner again, Clive?" she said, turning to her son-in-law. Clive curtly said, Yes, he had asked Mr. Pendennis to stay.

"You might at least have been so kind as to give me notice," says the Campaigner, still majestic, but ironical. "You will have but a poor meal, Mr. Pendennis; and one such as I'm not accustomed to give my guests."

"Cold beef! what the deuce does it matter;" says Clive, beginning to carve the joint, which, hot, had served our yesterday's Christmas table.

"It does matter, sir! I am not accustomed to treat my guests in this way Maria! who had been cutting that beef? Three pounds of that beef have been cut away since one o'clock today," and with flashing eyes, and a finger twinkling all over with rings, she pointed towards the guilty joint.

Whether Maria had been dispensing secret charities, or kept company with an occult policeman partial to roast-beef, I do not know; but she looked very much alarmed, and said, Indeed, and indeed, mum, she had not touched a morsel of it! — not she.

"Confound the beef!" says Clive, carving on.

"She has been cutting it!" cries the Campaigner, bringing her fist down with a thump upon the table. "Mr. Pendennis! you saw the beef yesterday; eighteen pounds it weighed, and this is what comes up of it! As if there was not already ruin enough in the house!"

"D— n the beef!" cries out Clive.

"No! no! Thank God for our good dinner! Benedicti benedicamus, Clivy my boy," says the Colonel, in a tremulous voice.

"Swear on, sir! let the child hear your oaths! Let my blessed child, who is too ill to sit at table and picks her bite! sweetbread on her sofa — which her poor mother prepares for her, Mr. Pendennis — which I cooked it, and gave it to her with these hands — let her hear your curses and blasphemies, Clive Newcome! They are loud enough."

"Do let us have a quiet life," groans out Clive; and for me, I must confess, I kept my eyes steadily down upon my plate, nor dared to lift them until my portion of cold beef had vanished.

No further outbreak took place until the appearance of the second course, which consisted, as the ingenious reader may suppose, of the plum-pudding, now in a grilled state, and the remanent of mince-pies from yesterday's meal. Maria, I thought, looked particularly guilty as these delicacies were placed on the table: she set them down hastily, and was for operating an instant retreat.

But the Campaigner shrieked after her, "Who has eaten that pudding? I insist upon knowing who has eaten it. I saw it at two o'clock when I went down to the kitchen and fried a bit for my darling child, and there's pounds of it gone since then! There were five mince-pies! Mr. Pendennis! you saw yourself there were five that went away from table yesterday — where's the other two Maria? You leave the house this night, you thieving, wicked wretch — and I'll thank you to come back to me afterwards for a character. Thirteen servants have we had in nine months, Mr. Pendennis, and this girl is the worst of them all, and the greatest liar and the greatest thief."

At this charge the outraged Maria stood up in arms, and as the phrase is, gave the Campaigner as good as she got. Go! wouldn't she go? Pay her her wages, and let her go out of that ell upon hearth, was Maria's prayer. "It isn't you, sir," she said, turning to Clive. "You are good enough, and works hard enough to git the guineas which you give out to pay that doctor; and she don't pay him — and I see five of them in her purse wrapped up in paper, myself I did, and she abuses you to him — and I heard her, and Jane Black, who was here before, told me she heard her. Go! won't I just go, I dispises your puddens and pies!" and with a laugh of scorn this rude Maria snapped her black fingers in the immediate vicinity of the Campaigner's nose.

"I will pay her her wages, and she shall go this instant!" says Mrs. Mackenzie, taking her purse out.

"Pay me with them suvverings that you have got in it, wrapped up in paper. See if she haven't, Mr. Newcome," the refractory waiting-woman cried out, and again she laughed a strident laugh.

Mrs. Mackenzie briskly shut her portemonnaie, and rose up from table, quivering with indignant virtue. "Go!" she exclaimed, "go and pack your trunks this instant! you quit the house this night, and a policeman shall see to your boxes before you leave it!"

Whilst uttering this sentence against the guilty Maria, the Campaigner had intended, no doubt, to replace her purse in her pocket — a handsome filagree gimcrack of poor Ross's, one of the relics of former splendours — but, agitated by Maria's insolence, the trembling hand missed the mark, and the purse fell to the ground.

Maria dashed at the purse in a moment, with a scream of laughter shook its contents upon the table, and sure enough, five little packets wrapped in paper rolled out upon the cloth, besides bank-notes and silver and golden coin. "I'm to go, am I? I'm a thief, am I?" screamed the girl, clapping her hands. "I sor 'em yesterday when I was a-lacing of her; and thought of that pore young man working night and day to get the money; — me a thief, indeed! — I despise you, and I give you warning."

"Do you wish to see me any longer insulted by this woman, Clive? Mr. Pendennis, I am shocked that you should witness such horrible vulgarity," cries the Campaigner, turning to her guest. "Does the wretched creature suppose that I, I who have given thousands, I who have denied myself everything, I who have spent my all in support of this house; and Colonel Newcome knows whether I have given thousands or not, and who has spent them, and who has been robbed, I say, and —"

"Here! you! Maria! go about your business," shouted out Clive Newcome, starting up; "go and pack your trunks if you like, and pack this woman's trunks too. Mrs. Mackenzie, I can bear you no more; go in peace, and if you wish to see your daughter she shall come to you; but I will never, so help me God! sleep under the same roof with you; or break the same crust with you; or bear your infernal cruelty; or sit to hear my father insulted; or listen to your wicked pride and folly more."

There has not been a day since you thrust your cursed foot into our wretched house, but you have tortured one and all of us. Look here, at the best gentleman, and the kindest heart in all the world, you fiend! and see to what a condition you have brought him! Dearest father! she is going, do you hear? She leaves us, and you will come back to me, won't you? Great God, woman," he gasped out, "do you know what you have made me suffer — what you have done to this good man? Pardon, father, pardon!" — and he sank down by his father's side, sobbing with passionate emotion. The old man even now did not seem to comprehend the scene. When he heard that woman's voice in anger, a sort of stupor came over him.

"I am a fiend, am I?" cries the lady. "You hear, Mr. Pendennis, this is the language to which I am accustomed; I am a widow, and I trusted my child and my all to that old man; he robbed me and my darling of almost every farthing we had; and what has been my return for such baseness? I have lived in this house and toiled like a slave; I have acted as servant to my blessed child; night after night I have sat with her; and month after month, when her husband has been away, I have nursed that poor innocent; and the father having robbed me, the son turns me out of doors!"

A sad thing it was to witness, and a painful proof how frequent were these battles, that, as this one raged, the poor little boy sat almost careless, whilst his bewildered grandfather stroked his golden head. "It is quite clear to me, madam," I said, turning to Mrs. Mackenzie, "that you and your son-in-law are better apart; and I came to tell him today of a most fortunate legacy, which has been left to him, and which will enable him to pay you tomorrow morning every shilling, every shilling which he does NOT owe you?"

"I will not leave this house until I am paid every shilling of which I have been robbed," hissed out Mrs. Mackenzie; and she sat down, folding her arms across her chest.

"I am sorry," groaned out Clive, wiping the sweat off his brow, I used a harsh word; I will never sleep under the same roof with you. To-morrow I will pay you what you claim; and the best chance I have of forgiving you the evil which you have done me, is that we never should meet again. Will you give me a bed at your house, Arthur? Father, will you come out and walk? Good night, Mrs. Mackenzie; Pendennis will settle with you in the morning. You will not be here, if you please, when I return; and so God forgive you, and farewell."

Mrs. Mackenzie in a tragic manner dashed aside the hand which poor Clive held out to her, and disappeared from the scene of this dismal dinner. Boy presently fell a-crying; in spite of all the battle and fury, there was sleep in his eyes.

"Maria is too busy, I suppose, to put him to bed," said Clive, with a sad smile; "shall we do it, father? Come, Tommy, my son!" and he folded his arms round the child, and walked with him to the upper regions. The old man's eyes lighted up; his seared thoughts returned to him; he followed his two children up the stairs, and saw his grandson in his little bed; and, as we walked home with him, he told me how sweetly Boy said "Our Father," and prayed God bless all those who loved him, as they laid him to rest.

So these three generations had joined in that supplication: the strong man, humbled by trial and grief, whose loyal heart was yet full of love; — the child, of the sweet age of those little ones whom the Blessed Speaker of the prayer first bade to come unto Him; — and the old man, whose heart was well-nigh as tender and as innocent; and whose day was approaching, when he should be drawn to the bosom of the Eternal Pity.



CHAPTER LXXX

IN WHICH THE COLONEL SAYS "ADSUM" WHEN HIS NAME IS CALLED

The vow which Clive had uttered, never to share bread with his mother-inlaw, or sleep under the same roof with her, was broken on the very next day. A stronger will than the young man's intervened, and he had to confess the impotence of his wrath before that superior power. In the forenoon of the day following that unlucky dinner, I went with my friend to the banking-house whither Mr. Luce's letter directed us, and carried away with me the principal sum, in which the Campaigner said Colonel Newcome was indebted to her, with the interest accurately computed and reimbursed. Clive went off with a pocketful of money to the dear old Poor Brother of Grey Friars; and he promised to return with his father, and dine with my wife in Queen Square. I had received a letter from Laura by the morning's post, announcing her return by the express train from Newcome, and desiring that a spare bedroom should be got ready for a friend who accompanied her.

On reaching Howland Street, Clive's door was opened, rather to my surprise, by the rebellious maid-servant who had received her dismissal on the previous night; and the doctor's carriage drove up as she was still speaking to me. The polite practitioner sped upstairs to Mrs. Newcome's apartment. Mrs. Mackenzie, in a robe-de-chambre and cap very different from yesterday's, came out eagerly to meet the physician on the landing. Ere they had been a quarter of an hour together, arrived a cab, which discharged an elderly person with her handbox and bundles; I had no difficulty in recognising a professional nurse in the new-comer. She too disappeared into the sick-room, and left me sitting in the neighbouring chamber, the scene of the last night's quarrel.

Hither presently came to me Maria, the maid. She said she had not the heart to go away now she was wanted; that they had passed a sad night, and that no one had been to bed. Master Tommy was below, and the landlady taking care of him: the landlord had gone out for the nurse. Mrs. Clive had been taken bad after Mr. Clive went away the night before. Mrs. Mackenzie had gone to the poor young thing, and there she went on, crying, and screaming, and stamping, as she used to do in her tantrums, which was most cruel of her, and made Mrs. Clive so ill. And presently the young lady began: my informant told me. She came screaming into the sitting-room, her hair over her shoulders, calling out she was deserted, deserted, and would like to die. She was like a mad woman for some time. She had fit after fit of hysterics: and there was her mother, kneeling, and crying, and calling out to her darling child to calm herself; — which it was all her own doing, and she had much better have held her own tongue, remarked the resolute Maria. I understood only too well from the girl's account what had happened, and that Clive, if resolved to part with his mother-inlaw, should not have left her, even for twelve hours, in possession of his house. The wretched woman, whose Self was always predominant, and who, though she loved her daughter after her own fashion, never forgot her own vanity or passion, had improved the occasion of Clive's absence: worked upon her child's weakness, jealousy, ill-health, and driven her, no doubt, into the fever which yonder physician was called to quell.

The doctor presently enters to write a prescription, followed by Clive's mother-inlaw, who had cast Rosa's fine Cashmere shawl over her shoulders, to hide her disarray. "You here still, Mr. Pendennis!" she exclaims. She knew I was there. Had not she changed her dress in order to receive me?

"I have to speak to you for two minutes on important business, and then I shall go," I replied gravely.

"Oh, sir! to what a scene you have come! To what a state has Clive's conduct last night driven my darling child!"

As the odious woman spoke so, the doctor's keen eyes, looking up from the prescription, caught mine. "I declare before Heaven, madam," I said hotly, "I believe you yourself are the cause of your daughter's present illness, as you have been of the misery of my friends."

"Is this, sir," she was breaking out, "is this language to be used to —?"

"Madam, will you be silent?" I said. "I am come to bid you farewell on the part of those whom your temper has driven into infernal torture. I am come to pay you every halfpenny of the sum which my friends do not owe you, but which they restore. Here is the account, and here is the money to settle it. And I take this gentleman to witness, to whom, no doubt, you have imparted what you call your wrongs" (the doctor smiled, and shrugged his shoulders) "that now you are paid."

"A widow — a poor, lonely, insulted widow!" cries the Campaigner, with trembling hands taking possession of the notes.

"And I wish to know," I continued, "when my friend's house will be free to him, and he can return in peace."

Here Rosa's voice was heard from the inner apartment, screaming, "Mamma, mamma!"

"I go to my child, sir," she said. "If Captain Mackenzie had been alive, you would not have dared to insult me so." And carrying off her money, she left us.

"Cannot she be got out of the house?" I said to the doctor. "My friend will never return until she leaves it. It is my belief she is the cause of her daughter's present illness."

"Not altogether, my dear sir. Mrs. Newcome was in a very, very delicate state of health. Her mother is a lady of impetuous temper, who expresses herself very strongly — too strongly, I own. In consequence of unpleasant family discussions, which no physician can prevent, Mrs. Newcome has been wrought up to a state of — of agitation. Her fever is, in fact, at present very high. You know her condition. I am apprehensive of ulterior consequences. I have recommended an excellent and experienced nurse to her. Mr. Smith, the medical man at the corner, is a most able practitioner. I shall myself call again in a few hours, and I trust that, after the event which I apprehend, everything will go well.

"Cannot Mrs. Mackenzie leave the house, sir?" I asked.

"Her daughter cries out for her at every moment. Mrs. Mackenzie is certainly not a judicious nurse, but in Mrs. Newcome's present state I cannot take upon myself to separate them. Mr. Newcome may return, and I do think and believe that his presence may tend to impose silence and restore tranquillity."

I had to go back to Clive with these gloomy tidings. The poor fellow must put up a bed in his studio, and there await the issue of his wife's illness. I saw Thomas Newcome could not sleep under his son's roof that night. That dear meeting, which both so desired, was delayed, who could say for how long?

"The Colonel may come to us," I thought; "our old house is big enough." I guessed who was the friend coming in my wife's company; and pleased myself by thinking that two friends so dear should meet in our home. Bent upon these plans, I repaired to Grey Friars, and to Thomas Newcome's chamber there.

Bayham opened the door when I knocked, and came towards me with a finger on his lip, and a sad, sad countenance. He closed the door gently behind him, and led me into the court. "Clive is with him, and Miss Newcome. He is very ill. He does not know them," said Bayham with a sob. "He calls out for both of them: they are sitting there and he does not know them."

In a brief narrative, broken by more honest tears, Fred Bayham, as we paced up and down the court, told me what had happened. The old man must have passed a sleepless night, for on going to his chamber in the morning, his attendant found him dressed in his chair, and his bed undisturbed. He must have sat all through the bitter night without a fire: but his hands were burning hot, and he rambled in his talk. He spoke of some one coming to drink tea with him, pointed to the fire, and asked why it was not made; he would not go to bed, though the nurse pressed him. The bell began to ring for morning chapel; he got up and went towards his gown, groping towards it as though he could hardly see, and put it over his shoulders, and would go out, but he would have fallen in the court if the good nurse had not given him her arm; and the physician of the hospital, passing fortunately at this moment, who had always been a great friend of Colonel Newcome's, insisted upon leading him back to his room again, and got him to bed. "When the bell stopped, he wanted to rise once more; he fancied he was a boy at school again," said the nurse, "and that he was going in to Dr. Raine, who was schoolmaster here ever so many years ago." So it was, that when happier days seemed to be dawning for the good man, that reprieve came too late. Grief, and years, and humiliation, and care, and cruelty had been too strong for him, and Thomas Newcome was stricken down.

Bayham's story told, I entered the room, over which the twilight was falling, and saw the figures of Clive and Ethel seated at each end of the bed. The poor old man within it was calling incoherent sentences. I had to call Clive from the present grief before him, with intelligence of further sickness awaiting him at home. Our poor patient did not heed what I said to his son. "You must go home to Rosa," Ethel said. "She will be sure to ask for her husband, and forgiveness is best, dear Clive. I will stay with uncle. I will never leave him. Please God, he will be better in the morning when you come back." So Clive's duty called him to his own sad home; and, the bearer of dismal tidings, I returned to mine. The fires were lit there and the table spread; and kind hearts were waiting to welcome the friend who never more was to enter my door.

It may be imagined that the intelligence which I brought alarmed and afflicted my wife and Madame de Florac, our guest. Laura immediately went away to Rosa's house to offer her services if needed. The accounts which she brought thence were very bad: Clive came to her for a minute or two, but Mr. Mackenzie could not see her. Should she not bring the little boy home to her children? Laura asked; and Clive thankfully accepted that offer. The little man slept in our nursery that night, and was at play with our young ones on the morrow — happy and unconscious of the fate impending over his home.

* * * * *

Yet two more days passed, and I had to take two advertisements to The Times newspaper on the part of poor Clive. Among the announcements of Births was printed, "On the 28th, in Howland Street, Mrs. Clive Newcome of a son, still-born." And a little lower, in the third division of the same column, appeared the words, "On the 29th, in Howland Street, aged 26, Rosa, wife of Clive Newcome, Esq." So, one day, shall the names of all of us be written there; to be deplored by how many? — to be remembered how long? — to occasion what tears, praises, sympathy, censure? — yet for a day or two, while the busy world has time to recollect us who have passed beyond it. So this poor little flower had bloomed for its little day, and pined, and withered, and perished. There was only one friend by Clive's side following the humble procession which laid poor Rosa and her child out of sight of a world that had been but unkind to her. Not many tears were there to water her lonely little grave. A grief that was akin to shame and remorse humbled him as he knelt over her. Poor little harmless lady! no more childish triumphs and vanities, no more hidden griefs are you to enjoy or suffer; and earth closes over your simple pleasures and tears! The snow was falling and whitening the coffin as they lowered it into the ground. It was at the same cemetery in which Lady Kew was buried. I dare say the same clergyman read the same service over the two graves, as he will read it for you or any of us tomorrow, and until his own turn comes. Come away from the place, poor Clive! Come sit with your orphan little boy; and bear him on your knee, and hug him to your heart. He seems yours now, and all a father's love may pour out upon him. Until this hour, Fate uncontrollable and homely tyranny had separated him from you.

It was touching to see the eagerness and tenderness with which the great strong man now assumed the guardianship of the child, and endowed him with his entire wealth of affection. The little boy now ran to Clive whenever he came in, and sat for hours prattling to him. He would take the boy out to walk, and from our windows we could see Clive's black figure striding over the snow in St. James's Park, the little man trotting beside him, or perched on his father's shoulder. My wife and I looked at them one morning as they were making their way towards the City.

"He has inherited that loving heart from his father," Laura said; "and he is paying over the whole property to his son."

Clive, and the boy sometimes with him, used to go daily to Grey Friars, where the Colonel still lay ill. After some days the fever which had attacked him left him, but left him so weak and enfeebled that he could only go from his bed to the chair by his fireside. The season was exceedingly bitter, the chamber which he inhabited was warm and spacious; it was considered unadvisable to move him until he had attained greater strength, and till warmer weather. The medical men of the House hoped he might rally in spring. My friend, Dr. Goodenough, came to him; he hoped too: but not with a hopeful face. A chamber, luckily vacant, hard by the Colonel's, was assigned to his friends, where we sate when we were too many for him. Besides his customary attendant, he had two dear and watchful nurses, who were almost always with him — Ethel and Madame de Florac, who had passed many a faithful year by an old man's bedside; who would have come, as to a work of religion, to any sick couch, much more to this one, where he lay for whose life she would once gladly have given her own.

But our Colonel, we all were obliged to acknowledge, was no more our friend of old days. He knew us again, and was good to every one round him, as his wont was; especially when Boy came, his old eyes lighted up with simple happiness, and, with eager trembling hands, he would seek under his bedclothes, or the pockets of his dressing-gown, for toys or cakes, which he had caused to be purchased for his grandson. There was a little laughing, red-cheeked, white-headed gown-boy of the school, to whom the old man had taken a great fancy. One of the symptoms of his returning consciousness and recovery, as we hoped, was his calling for this child, who pleased our friend by his archness and merry ways; and who, to the old gentleman's unfailing delight, used to call him, "Codd Colonel." "Tell little F— — that Codd Colonel wants to see him;" and the little gown-boy was brought to him; and the Colonel would listen to him for hours; and hear all about his lessons and his play; and prattle almost as childishly about Dr. Raine, and his own early school-days. The boys of the school, it must be said, had heard the noble old gentleman's touching history, and had all got to know and love him. They

came every day to hear news of him; sent him in books and papers to amuse him; and some benevolent young souls — God's blessing on all honest boys, say I — painted theatrical characters, and sent them in to Codd Colonel's grandson. The little fellow was made free of gown-boys, and once came thence to his grandfather in a little gown, which delighted the old man hugely. Boy said he would like to be a little gown-boy; and I make no doubt, when he is old enough, his father will get him that post, and put him under the tuition of my friend Dr. Senior.

So, weeks passed away, during which our dear old friend still remained with us. His mind was gone at intervals, but would rally feebly; and with his consciousness returned his love, his simplicity, his sweetness. He would talk French with Madame de Florac, at which time, his memory appeared to awaken with surprising vividness, his cheek flushed, and he was a youth again — a youth all love and hope — a stricken old man, with a beard as white as snow covering the noble careworn face. At such times he called her by her Christian name of Leonore; he addressed courtly old words of regard and kindness to the aged lady; anon he wandered in his talk, and spoke to her as if they still were young. Now, as in those early days, his heart was pure; no anger remained in it; no guile tainted it; only peace and goodwill dwelt in it.

Rosa's death had seemed to shock him for a while when the unconscious little boy spoke of it. Before that circumstance, Clive had even forbore to wear mourning, lest the news should agitate his father. The Colonel remained silent and was very much disturbed all that day, but he never appeared to comprehend the fact quite; and, once or twice afterwards, asked, why she did not come to see him? She was prevented, he supposed — she was prevented, he said, with a look of terror: he never once otherwise alluded to that unlucky tyrant of his household, who had made his last years so unhappy.

The circumstance of Clive's legacy he never understood: but more than once spoke of Barnes to Ethel, and sent his compliments to him, and said he should like to shake him by the hand. Barnes Newcome never once offered to touch that honoured hand, though his sister bore her uncle's message to him. They came often from Bryanstone Square; Mrs. Hobson even offered to sit with the Colonel, and read to him, and brought him books for his improvement. But her presence disturbed him; he cared not for her books; the two nurses whom he loved faithfully watched him; and my wife and I were admitted to him sometimes, both of whom he honoured with regard and recognition. As for F. B., in order to be near his Colonel, did not that good fellow take up his lodging in Cistercian Lane, at the Red Cow? He is one whose errors, let us hope, shall be pardoned, quia multum amavit. I am sure he felt ten times more joy at hearing of Clive's legacy, than if thousands had been bequeathed to himself. May good health and good fortune speed him!

The days went on, and our hopes, raised sometimes, began to flicker and fail. One evening the Colonel left his chair for his bed in pretty good spirits, but passed a disturbed night, and the next morning was too weak to rise. Then he remained in his bed, and his friends visited him there. One afternoon he asked for his little gown-boy, and the child was brought to him, and sate by the bed with a very awestricken face; and then gathered courage, and tried to amuse him by telling him how it was a half-holiday, and they were having a cricket-match with the St. Peter's boys in the green, and Grey Friars was in and winning. The Colonel quite understood about it; he would like to see the game; he had played many a game on that green when he was a boy. He grew excited; Clive dismissed his father's little friend, and put a sovereign into his hand; and away he ran to say that Codd Colonel had come into a fortune, and to buy tarts, and to see the match out. I, curre, little white-haired gown-boy! Heaven speed you, little friend!

After the child had gone, Thomas Newcome began to wander more and more. He talked louder; he gave the word of command, spoke Hindustanee as if to his men. Then he spoke words in French rapidly, seizing a hand that was near him and crying, "Toujours, toujours!" But it was Ethel's hand which he took.

Ethel and Clive and the nurse were in the room with him; the latter came to us, who were sitting in the adjoining apartment; Madame de Florac was there, with my wife and Bayham.

At the look in the woman's countenance Madame de Florac started up. "He is very bad, he wanders a great deal," the nurse whispered. The French lady fell instantly on her knees, and remained rigid in prayer.

Some time afterwards Ethel came in with a scared face to our pale group. "He is calling for you again, dear lady," she said, going up to Madame de Florac, who was still kneeling; "and just now he said he wanted Pendennis to take care of his boy. He will not know you." She hid her tears as she spoke.

She went into the room, where Clive was at the bed's foot; the old man within it talked on rapidly for a while: then again he would sigh and be still: once more I heard him say hurriedly, "Take care of him while I'm in India;" and then with

a heart-rending voice he called out, "Leonore, Leonore!" She was kneeling by his side now. The patient's voice sank into faint murmurs; only a moan now and then announced that he was not asleep.

At the usual evening hour the chapel bell began to toll, and Thomas Newcome's hands outside the bed feebly beat a time. And just as the last bell struck, a peculiar sweet smile shone over his face, and he lifted up his head a little, and quickly said, "Adsum!" and fell back. It was the word we used at school, when names were called; and lo, he, whose heart was as that of a little child, had answered to his name, and stood in the presence of The Master.

* * * * *

Two years ago, walking with my children in some pleasant fields, near to Berne in Switzerland, I strayed from them into a little wood; and, coming out of it presently, told them how the story had been revealed to me somehow, which for three-and-twenty months the reader has been pleased to follow. As I write the last line with a rather sad heart, Pendennis and Laura, and Ethel and Clive, fade away into Fable-land. I hardly know whether they are not true: whether they do not live near us somewhere. They were alive, and I heard their voices, but five minutes since was touched by their grief. And have we parted with them here on a sudden, and without so much as a shake of the hand? Is yonder line (—) which I drew with my own pen, a barrier between me and Hades as it were, across which I can see those figures retreating and only dimly glimmering? Before taking leave of Mr. Arthur Pendennis, might he not have told us whether Miss Ethel married anybody finally? It was provoking that he should retire to the shades without answering that sentimental question. But though he has disappeared as irrevocably as Eurydice, these minor questions may settle the major one above mentioned. How could Pendennis have got all that information about Ethel's goings-on at Baden, and with Lord Kew, unless she had told somebody — her husband, for instance, who, having made Pendennis an early confidant in his amour, gave him the whole story? Clive, Pendennis writes expressly, is travelling abroad with his wife. Who is that wife? By a most monstrous blunder, Mr. Pendennis killed Lord Farintosh's mother at one page and brought her to life again at another; but Rosey, who is so lately consigned to Kensal Green, it is not surely with her that Clive is travelling, for then Mrs. Mackenzie would probably be with them to a live certainty, and the tour would be by no means pleasant. How could Pendennis have got all those private letters, etc., but that the Colonel kept them in a teak box, which Clive inherited and made over to his friend? My belief then is, that in Fable-land somewhere Ethel and Clive are living most comfortably together: that she is immensely fond of his little boy, and a great deal happier now than they would have been had they married at first, when they took a liking to each other as young people. That picture of J. J.'s of Mrs. Clive Newcome (in the Crystal Palace Exhibition in Fable-land), is certainly not in the least like Rosey, who we read was fair; but it represents a tall, handsome, dark lady, who must be Mrs. Ethel. Again, why did Pendennis introduce J. J. with such a flourish, giving us, as it were, an overture, and no piece to follow it? J. J.'s history, let me confidentially state, has been revealed to me too, and may be told some of these fine summer months, or Christmas evenings, when the kind reader has leisure to hear. What about Sir Barnes Newcome ultimately? My impression is that he is married again, and it is my fervent hope that his present wife bullies him. Mrs. Mackenzie cannot have the face to keep that money which Clive paid over to her, beyond her lifetime; and will certainly leave it and her savings to little Tommy. I should not be surprised if Madame de Moncontour left a smart legacy to the Pendennis children; and Lord Kew stood godfather in case — in case Mr. and Mrs. Clive wanted such an article. But have they any children? I, for my part, should like her best without, and entirely devoted to little Tommy. But for you, dear friend, it is as you like. You may settle your Fable-land in your own fashion. Anything you like happens in Fable-land. Wicked folks die a propos (for instance, that death of Lady Kew was most artful, for if she had not died, don't you see that Ethel would have married Lord Farintosh the next week?)— annoying folks are got out of the way; the poor are rewarded — the upstarts are set down in Fable-land — the frog bursts with wicked rage, the fox is caught in his trap, the lamb is rescued from the wolf, and so forth, just in the nick of time. And the poet of Fable-land rewards and punishes absolutely. He splendidly deals out bags of sovereigns, which won't buy anything; belabours wicked backs with awful blows, which do not hurt; endows heroines with preternatural beauty, and creates heroes, who, if ugly sometimes, yet possess a thousand good qualities, and usually end by being immensely rich; makes the hero and heroine happy at last, and happy ever after. Ah, happy, harmless Fable-land, where these things are! Friendly reader! may you and the author meet there on some future day. He hopes so; as he yet keeps a lingering hold of your hand, and bids you farewell with a kind heart.

Paris,

28 June 1855

A SHABBY & GENTEEL

CHAPTER I.

At that remarkable period when Louis XVIII. was restored for a second time to the throne of his fathers, and all the English who had money or leisure rushed over to the Continent, there lived in a certain boarding-house at Brussels a genteel young widow, who bore the elegant name of Mrs. Wellesley Macarty.

In the same house and room with the widow lived her mamma, a lady who was called Mrs. Crabb. Both professed to be rather fashionable people. The Crabbs were of a very old English stock; and the Macartys were, as the world knows, county Cork people, related to the Sheenys, Finnigans, Clancys, and other distinguished families in their part of Ireland. But Ensign Wellesley Mac, not having a shilling, ran off with Miss Crabb, who possessed the same independence; and after having been married about six months to the lady, was carried off suddenly, on the 18th of June, 1815, by a disease very prevalent in those glorious times the fatal cannot-shot morbus. He, and many hundred young fellows of his regiment, the Clonakilty Fencibles, were attacked by this epidemic on the same day, at a place about ten miles from Brussels, and there perished. The ensign's lady had accompanied her husband to the Continent, and about five months after his death brought into the world two remarkably fine female children.

Mrs. Wellesley's mother had been reconciled to her daughter by this time, for, in truth, Mrs. Crabb had no other child but her runaway Juliana, to whom she flew when she heard of her destitute condition. And, indeed, it was high time that some one should come to the young widow's aid; for as her husband did not leave money, nor any thing that represented money, except a number of tailors' and boot-makers' bills, neatly docketed in his writing-desk, Mrs. Wellesley was in danger of starvation, should no friendly person assist her.

Mrs. Crabb, then, came off to her daughter, whom the Sheeneys, Finnigans, and Clancys, refused, with one scornful voice, to assist. The fact is, that Mr. Crabb had once been butler to a lord, and his lady a lady's maid; and at Crabb's death, Mrs. Crabb disposed of the Ram hotel and posting-house, where her husband had made three thousand pounds, and was living in genteel ease in a country town, when Ensign Macarty came, saw, and run away with Juliana. Of such a connexion, it was impossible that the great Clancys and Finnigans could take notice; and so once more widow Crabb was compelled to share with her daughter her small income of a hundred and twenty a-year.

Upon this, at a boarding-house in Brussels, the two managed to live pretty smartly, and to maintain an honourable reputation. The

twins were put out, after the foreign fashion, to nurse, at a village in the neighbour-hood; for Mrs. Macarty had been too ill to nurse them; and Mrs. Crabb could not afford to purchase that most expensive article, a private wet-nurse.

There had been numberless tiffs and quarrels between mother and daughter when the latter was in her maiden state; and Mrs. Crabb was, to tell the truth, in nowise sorry when her Jooly disappeared with the ensign, for the old lady dearly loved a gentleman, and was not a little flattered at being the mother to Mrs. Ensign Macarty. Why the ensign should have run away with his lady at all, as he might have had her for the asking, is no business of ours; nor are we going to rake up old stories and village scandals, which insinuate that Miss Crabb ran away with him, for with these points the writer and the reader have nothing to do.

Well, then, the reconciled mother and daughter lived once more together, at Brussels. In the course of a year, Mrs. Macarty's sorrow had much abated; and having a great natural love of dress, and a tolerably handsome face and person, she was induced, without much reluctance, to throw her weeds aside, and to appear in the most becoming and varied costumes which her means and ingenuity could furnish. Considering, indeed, the smallness of the former, it was agreed on all hands that Mrs. Crabb and her daughter deserved wonderful credit, that is, they managed to keep up as respectable an appearance as if they had five hundred a-year; and at church, at tea-parties, and abroad in the streets, to be what is called quite the gentlewomen. If they starved at home, nobody saw it; if they patched and pieced, nobody (it was to be hoped) knew it; if they bragged about their relations and property, could any one say them nay? Thus they lived, hanging on with desperate energy to the skirts of genteel society; Mrs. Crabb, a sharp woman, rather respected her daughter's superior rank; and Mrs. Macarty did not quarrel so much as heretofore with her mamma, on whom herself and her two children were entirely dependent.

While affairs were at this juncture, it happened that a young Englishman, James Gann, Esq., of the great oil-house of Gann, Blubbery, and Gann (as he took care to tell you before you had been an hour in his company), it happened, I say, that James Gann, Esq. came to Brussels for a month, for the purpose of perfecting himself in the French language; and while in that capital went to lodge at the very boarding-house which contained Mrs. Crabb and her daughter. Gann was young, weak, inflammable; he saw and adored Mrs. Wellesley Macarty; and she, who was at this period all but engaged to a stout, old, wooden-legged Scotch regimental surgeon, pitilessly sent Dr. M'Lint about his business, and accepted the addresses of Mr. Gann. How the young man arranged matters with his papa, the senior partner, I don't know; but it is certain that there was a quarrel, and afterwards a reconciliation; and it is also known that James Gann fought a duel with the surgeon, receiving the ^seulapian fire, and discharging his own bullet into the azure skies. About nine thousand times, in the course of his after-years, did Mr. Gann narrate the history of the combat; it enabled him to go through life with the reputation of a man of courage, and won for him, as he said with pride, the hand of his Juliana: perhaps this was rather a questionable benefit.

One part of the tale, however, honest James never did dare to tell, except when peculiarly excited by wrath or liquor; it was this: that on the day after the wedding, and in the presence of many friends who had come to offer their congratulations, a stout nurse, bearing a brace of chubby little ones, made her appearance; and these rosy urchins, springing forward at the sight of Mr. James Gann, shouted, affectionately, "Maman! Maman!" at which the lady, blushing rosy red, said, "James, these two are yours;" and poor James well nigh fainted at this sudden paternity so put upon him. "Children!" screamed he, aghast; "whose children?" at which Mrs. Crabb, majestically checking him said, "These, my dear James, are the daughters of the gallant and good Ensign Macarty, whose widow you yesterday led to the altar. May you be happy with her, and may these blessed children (tears) find in you a father, who shall replace him that fell in the field of glory!"

Mrs. Crabb, Mrs. James Gann, Mrs. Major Lolly, Mrs. Piffer, and several ladies present, set up a sob immediately; and James Gann, a good-humoured, soft-hearted man, was quite taken aback. Kissing his lady hurriedly, he vowed that he would take care of the poor little things; and proposed to kiss them likewise; which caress the darlings refused with many roars. Gann's fate was sealed from that minute; and he was properly henpecked by his wife and mother-in-law during the life of the latter. Indeed, it was to Mrs. Crabb that the stratagem of the infant concealment was due; for when her daughter innocently proposed to have or to see the children, the old lady strongly pointed out the folly of such an arrangement, which might, perhaps, frighten away Mr. Gann from the delightful matrimonial trap into which (lucky rogue!) he was about to fall.

Soon after the marriage, the happy pair returned to England, occupying the house in Thames Street, city, until the death of Gann, senior; when his son, becoming head of the firm of Gann and Blubbery, quitted the dismal precincts of Billingsgate and colonised in the neighbourhood of Putney; where a neat box, a couple of spare bedrooms, a good cellar, and a smart gig to drive into and out from town, made a real gentleman of him. Mrs. Gann treated him with much scorn, to be sure, called him a sot, and abused hugely the male companions that he brought down with him to Putney. Honest James would listen meekly, would yield, and would bring down a brace more friends the next day, with whom he would discuss his accustomed number of bottles of port. About this period, a daughter was born to him, called Caroline Brandenburg Gann; so named after a large yellow mansion near Hammersmith, and an injured queen who lived there at the time of the little girl's birth, and who was greatly compassionated and patronised by Mrs. James Gann, and other ladies of distinction. Mrs. James was a lady in those days, and gave evening parties of the very first order.

At this period of time, Mrs. James Gann sent the twins, Rosalind Clancy and Isabella Finnigan Wellesley Macarty, to a boarding-school for young ladies, and grumbled much at the amount of the half-year's bill which her husband was called upon to pay for them; for though James discharged them with perfect good humour, his lady began to entertain a mean opinion indeed of her pretty young children. They could expect no fortune, she said, from Mr. Gann, and she wondered that he should think of bringing them up expensively, when he had a darling child of his own, for whom he was bound to save all the money that he could lay by.

Grandmamma, too, doted on the little Caroline Brandenburgh, and vowed that she would leave her three thousand pounds to this dear infant; for in this way does the world shew its respect for that most respectable thing prosperity. Who in this life get the smiles, and the acts of friendship, and the pleasing legacies? The rich. And I do, for my part, heartily wish that some one would leave me a trifle say twenty thousand pounds, being perfectly confident that some one else would leave me more; and that I should sink into my grave worth a plum at least.

Little Caroline then had her maid, her airy nursery, her little carriage to drive in, the promise of her grandmamma's consols, and that priceless treasure her mamma's undivided affection. Gann, too, loved her sincerely, in his careless, good-humoured way; but he determined, notwithstanding, that his step-daughters should have something handsome at his death, but but for a great But.

Gann and Blubbery were in the oil line, have we not said so? Their profits arose from contracts for lighting a great number of streets in London; and about this period Gas came into use. Gann and Blubbery appeared in the Gazette; and, I am sorry to say, so bad had been the management of Blubbery, so great the extravagance of both partners and their ladies, that they only paid their creditors fourteen pence halfpenny in the pound.

When Mrs. Crabb heard of this dreadful accident Mrs. Crabb, who dined thrice a-week with her son-in-law; who never would have been allowed to enter the house at all had not honest James interposed his good nature between her quarrelsome daughter and herself Mrs. Crabb, I say, proclaimed James Gann to be a swindler, a villain, a disreputable, tipsy, vulgar man, and and made over her money to the Misses Rosalind Clancy and Isabella Sheeny Macarty; leaving poor little Caroline without one single maravedi. Half of 1500 pounds allotted to each was to be paid at marriage, the other half on the death of Mrs. James Gann, who was to enjoy the interest thereof. Thus do we rise and fall in this world thus does Fortune shake her swift wings, and bid us abruptly to resign the gifts (or rather loans) which we have had from her.

How Gann and his family lived after their stroke of misfortune, I know not; but as the failing tradesman is going through the process of bankruptcy, and for some months afterwards, it may be remarked, that he has usually some mysterious means of subsistence stray spars of the wreck of his property, on which he manages to seize, and to float for a while. During his retirement, in an obscure lodging in Lambeth, where the poor fellow was so tormented by his wife as to be compelled to fly to the public-house for refuge, Mrs. Crabb died; a hundred a-year thus came into the possession of Mrs. Gann; and some of James's friends, who thought him a good fellow in his prosperity, came forward, and furnished a house, in which they placed him, and came to see and comfort him. Then they

came to see him not quite so often; then they found out that Mrs. Gann was a sad tyrant, and a silly woman; then the ladies declared her to be insupportable, and Gann to be a low, tipsy fellow; and the gentlemen could but shake their heads, and admit that the charge was true. Then they left off coming to see him altogether; for such is the way of the world, where many of us have good impulses, and are generous on an occasion, but are wearied by perpetual want, and begin to grow angry at its importunities being very properly vexed at the daily recurrence of hunger, and the impudent unreasonableness of starvation. Gann, then, had a genteel wife and children, a furnished house, and a hundred pounds a-year. How should he live? The wife of James Gann, Esq., would never allow him to demean himself by taking a clerk's place; and James himself, being as idle a fellow as ever was known, was fain to acquiesce in this determination of hers, and to wait for some more genteel employment. And a curious list of such genteel employments might be made out, were one inclined to follow this interesting subject far; shabby compromises with the world, into which poor fellows enter, and still fondly talk of their "position," and strive to imagine that they are really working for their bread.

Numberless lodging-houses are kept by the females of families who have met with reverses: are not "boarding-houses, with a select musical society, in the neighbourhood of the squares," maintained by such? Do not the gentlemen of the boarding-houses issue forth every morning to the city, or make-believe to go thither, on some mysterious business which they have? After a certain period, Mrs. James Gann kept a lodging-house (in her own words, received "two inmates into her family"), and Mr. Gann had his mysterious business.

In the year 1835, when this story begins, there stood in a certain back street in the town of Margate a house, on the door of which might be read in gleaming brass the name of Mr. Gann. It was the work of a single smutty servant-maid to clean this brass plate every morning, and to attend as far as possible to the wants of Mr. Gann, his family, and lodgers; and his house being not very far from the sea, and as you might, by climbing up to the roof, get a sight between two chimneys of that multitudinous element, Mrs. Gann set down her lodgings as fashionable; and declared on her cards that her house commanded "a fine view of the sea."

On the wire window-blind of the parlour was written, in large characters, the word Office; and here it was that Gann's services came into play. He was very much changed, poor fellow! and humbled; and from two cards that hung outside the blind, I am led to believe that he did not disdain to be agent to the "London and Jamaica Ginger-Beer Company," and also for a certain preparation called "Gaster's Infants' Farinacio, or Mothers' Invigorating Substitute," a damp, black, mouldy, half-pound packet of which stood in permanence at one end of the "office" mantelpiece; while a flyblown ginger-beer bottle occupied the other extremity. Nothing else indicated that this ground-floor chamber was an office, except a huge black inkstand, in which stood a stumpy pen, richly crusted with ink at the nib, and to all appearance for many months enjoying a sinecure.

To this room you saw every day, at two o'clock, the employe from the neighbouring hotel bring two quarts of beer; and if you called at that hour, a tremendous smoke, and smell of dinner, would gush out upon you from the "office," as you stumbled over sundry battered tin dish-covers, which lay gaping at the threshold. Thus had that great bulwark of gentility, the dining at six o'clock, been broken in; and the reader must therefore judge that the house of Gann was in a demoralised state.

Gann certainly was. After the ladies had retired to the back parlour (which, with yellow gauze round the frames, window-curtains, a red silk cabinet piano, and an album, was still tolerably genteel), Gann remained, to transact business in the office. This took place in the presence of friends, and usually consisted in the production of a bottle of gin from the corner-cupboard, or, mayhap, a litre of brandy, which was given by Gann with a knowing wink, and a fat finger placed on a twinkling red nose: when Mrs. G. was out, James would also produce a number of pipes, that gave this room a constant and agreeable odour of shag-tobacco.

In fact, Mr. Gann had nothing to do from morning till night. He was now a fat, bald-headed man, of fifty; a dirty dandy on week-days, with a shawl waistcoat, a tuft of hair to his great double chin, a snuffy shirt-frill, and enormous breast-pin and seals: he had a pilot-coat, with large mother-of-pearl buttons, and always wore a great rattling telescope, with which he might be seen for hours on the seashore or the pier, examining the ships, the bathing machines, the ladies' schools as they paraded up and down the Esplanade, and all other objects which the telescopic view might give him. He knew every person connected with every one of the Deal and Dover coaches, and was sure to be witness to the arrival or departure of several of them in the course of the day; he had a word for the hostler about "that grey mare," a nod for the "shooter" or guard, and a bow for the dragsman; he could send parcels for nothing up to town; had twice had Sir Rumble Tumble (the noble driver of the Flash-o'-lightning-light-four-inside-post-coach) "up at his place," and took care to tell you that some of the party were pretty considerably "sewn up," too. He did not frequent the large hotels; but in revenge he knew every person who entered or left them; and was a great man at the Bag of Nails and the Magpie and Punchbowl, where he was president of a club; he took the bass in "Mynheer Van Dunk," "the Wolf," and many other morsels of concerted song, and used to go backwards and forwards to London in the steamers as often as ever he liked, and have his "grub," too, on board. Such was James Gann. Many people, when they wrote to him, addressed him James Gann, Esq.

His reverses and former splendours afforded a never-failing theme of conversation to honest Gann and the whole of his family; and it may be remarked, that such pecuniary misfortunes, as they are called, are by no means misfortunes to people of certain dispositions, but actual pieces of good luck. Gann, for instance, used to drink liberally of port and claret, when the house of Gann and Blubbery was in existence, and was henceforth compelled to imbibe only brandy and gin. Now he loved these a thousand times more than the wine; and had the advantage of talking about the latter, and of his great merit in giving them up. In those prosperous days, too, being a gentleman, he could not frequent the public-house as he did at present; and the sanded tavern-parlour was Gann's supreme enjoyment. He was obliged to spend many hours daily in a dark unsavoury room in an alley off Thames Street; and Gann hated books and business, except of other people's. His tastes were low; he loved public-house jokes and company; and now being fallen, was voted at the Bag of Nails and the Magpie before-mentioned a tip-top fellow and real gentleman, whereas he had been considered an ordinary vulgar man by his fashionable associates at Putney. Many men are there who are made to fall, and to profit by the tumble.

As for Mrs. G., or Jooly as she was indifferently called by her husband, she, too, had gained by her losses. She bragged of her former acquaintances in the most extraordinary way, and to hear her you would fancy that she was known and connected to half the peerage. Her chief occupation was taking medicine, and mending and altering of her gowns. She had a huge taste for cheap finery, loved raffles, tea-parties, and walks on the pier, where she flaunted herself and daughters as gay as butterflies. She stood upon her rank, did not fail to tell her lodgers that she was "a gentlewoman," and was mighty sharp with Becky the maid, and poor Carry, her youngest

child.

For the tide of affection had turned now, and the "Misses Wellesley Macarty" were the darlings of their mother's heart, as Caroline had been in the early days of Putney prosperity. Mrs. Gann respected and loved her elder daughters, the stately heiresses of fifteen hundred pounds, and scorned poor Caroline, who was likewise scorned (like Cinderella in the sweetest of all stories) by her brace of haughty, thoughtless sisters. These young women were tall, well-grown, black-browed girls, little scrupulous, fond of fun, and having great health and spirits. Caroline was pale and thin, and had fair hair and meek grey eyes; nobody thought her a beauty in her moping cotton gown; whereas the sisters, in flaunting printed muslins, with pink scarfs, and artificial flowers, and brass ferronieres and other fallals, were voted very charming and genteel by the Ganns' circle of friends. They had pink cheeks, white shoulders, and many glossy curls stuck about their shining foreheads, as damp and as black as leeches. Such charms, madam, cannot fail of having their effect; and it was very lucky for Caroline that she did not possess them, for she might have been rendered as vain, frivolous, and vulgar, as these young ladies were.

While these enjoyed their pleasures and tea-parties abroad, it was Carry's usual fate to remain at home, and help the servant in the many duties which were required in Mrs. Gann's establishment. She dressed that lady and her sisters, brought her papa his tea in bed, kept the lodgers' bells, bore their scoldings, if they were ladies, and sometimes gave a hand in the kitchen if any extra pie-crust or cookery was required. At two she made a little toilet for dinner, and was employed on numberless household darnings and mending in the long evenings, while her sisters giggled over the jingling piano, mamma sprawled on the sofa, and Gann was over his glass at the club. A weary lot, in sooth, was yours, poor little Caroline! since the days of your infancy, not one hour of sunshine, no friendship, no cheery play-fellows, no mother's love; but that being dead, the affections which would have crept round it, withered and died too. Only James Gann, of all the household, had a good-natured look for her, and a coarse word of kindness; nor, indeed, did Caroline complain, nor shed many tears, nor call for death, as she would if she had been brought up in genteeler circles. The poor thing did not know her own situation; her misery was dumb and patient; it is such as thousands and thousands of women in our society bear, and pine, and die of; made up of sums of small tyrannies, and long indifference, and bitter wearisome injustice, more dreadful to bear than any tortures that we of the stronger sex are pleased to cry Ai! Ai! about. In our intercourse with the world (which is conducted with that kind of cordiality that we see in Sir Harry and my lady in a comedy a couple of painted, grinning fools, talking parts that they have learned out of a book); as we sit and look at the smiling actors, we get a glimpse behind the scenes, from time to time, and alas for the wretched nature that appears there! among women especially, who deceive even more than men, having more to hide, feeling more, living more than we who have our business, pleasure, ambition, which carries us abroad. Ours are the great strokes of misfortune, as they are called, and theirs the small miseries. While the male thinks, labours, and battles without, the domestic woes and wrongs are the lot of the women; and the little ills are so bad, so infinitely fiercer and bitter than the great, that I would not change my condition no, not to be Helen, Queen Elizabeth, Mrs. Coutts, or the luckiest she in history.

Well, then, in the manner we have described lived the Gann family. Mr. Gann all the better for his "misfortunes," Mrs. Gann little the worse; the two young ladies greatly improved by the circumstance, having been cast thereby into a society where their expected two thousand pounds made great heiresses of them; and poor Caroline, as luckless a being as any that the wide sun shone upon. Better to be alone in the world and utterly friendless, than to have sham friends and no sympathy; ties of kindred which bind one as it were to the corpse of relationship, and oblige one to bear through life the weight and the embraces of this lifeless, cold connexion.

I do not mean to say that Caroline would ever have made use of this metaphor, or suspected that her connexion with her mamma and sisters was any thing so loathsome. She only felt that she was ill-treated, and had no companion; but was not on that account envious, only humble and depressed, not desiring so much to resist as to bear injustice, and hardly venturing to think for herself. This tyranny and humility served her in place of education, and formed her manners, which were wonderfully gentle and calm. It was strange to see such a person growing up in such a family; the neighbours spoke of her with much scornful compassion. "A poor half-witted thing," they said, "who could not say bo to a goose;" and I think it is one good test of gentility to be thus looked down on by vulgar people.

It is not to be supposed that the elder girls had reached their present age without receiving a number of offers of marriage, and being warmly in love a great many times. But many unfortunate occurrences had compelled them to remain in their virgin condition. There was an attorney who had proposed to Rosalind; but finding that she would receive only 750*l.* down, instead of 1500*l.*, the monster had jilted her pitilessly, handsome as she was. An apothecary, too, had been smitten by her charms; but to live in a shop was beneath the dignity of a Wellesley-Macarty, and she waited for better things. Lieutenant Swabber of the coast-guard service, had lodged two months at Gann's; and if letters, long walks, and town-talk could settle a match, a match between him and Isabella must have taken place. Well, Isabella was not married; and the lieutenant, a colonel in Spain, seemed to have given up all thoughts of her. She meanwhile consoled herself with a gay young wine-merchant, who had lately established himself at Brighton, kept a gig, rode out with the hounds, and was voted perfectly genteel; and there was a certain French marquess, with the most elegant black mustachios, who had made a vast impression upon the heart of Rosalind, having met her first at the circulating library, and afterwards, by the most extraordinary series of chances, coming upon her and her sister daily in their walks upon the pier.

Meek little Caroline, meanwhile, trampled upon though she was, was springing up to womanhood; and though pale, freckled, thin, meanly dressed, had a certain charm about her which some people might prefer to the cheap splendours and rude red and white of the Misses Macarty. In fact we have now come to a period of her history when, to the amaze of her mamma and sisters, and not a little to the satisfaction of James Gann, Esquire, she actually inspired a passion in the breast of a very respectable young man.

CHAPTER II.

How Mrs. Gann received two lodgers.

It was the winter season when the events recorded in this history occurred; and as at that period not one out of a thousand lodging-houses in Margate are let, Mrs. Gann, who generally submitted to occupy her own first and second floors during this cheerless season, considered herself more than ordinarily lucky when circumstances occurred which brought no less than two lodgers to her establishment.

She had to thank her daughters for the first inmate; for, as these two young ladies were walking one day down their own street, talking of the joys of the last season, and the delight of the raffles and singing at the libraries, and the intoxicating pleasures of the Vauxhall balls, they were remarked and evidently admired by a young gentleman who was sauntering listlessly up the street.

He stared, and it must be confessed that the fascinating girls stared too, and put each other's head into each other's bonnet, and giggled and said, "Lor!" and then looked hard at the young gentleman again. Their eyes were black, their cheeks were very red. Fancy how Miss Bella's and Miss Linda's hearts beat when the gentleman, dropping his glass out of his eye, actually stepped across the street, and said, "Ladies, I am seeking for lodgings, and should be glad to look at those which I see are to let in your house."

"How did the conjurer know it was our house?" thought Bella and Linda (they always thought in couples), from the very simple fact that Miss Bella had just thrust into the door a latchkey.

Most bitterly did Mrs. James Gann regret that she had not on her best gown when a stranger a stranger in February actually called to look at the lodgings. She made up, however, for the slovenliness of her dress by the dignity of her demeanour; and asked the gentleman for references, informed him that she was a gentlewoman, and that he would have peculiar advantages in her establishment; and, finally, agreed to receive him at the rate of twenty shillings per week. The bright eyes of the young ladies had done the business; but to this day Mrs. James Gann is convinced that her peculiar dignity of manner, and great fluency of brag regarding her family, have been the means of bringing hundreds of lodgers to her house, who but for her would never have visited it.

"Gents," said Mr. James Gann at the Bag of Nails that very evening, "we have got a new lodger, and I'll stand glasses round to his jolly good health!"

The new lodger, who was remarkable for nothing except very black eyes, a sallow face, and a habit of smoking segars in bed until noon, gave his name George Brandon, Esquire. As to his temper and habits, when humbly requested by Mrs. Gann to pay in advance, he laughed and presented her with a bank-note, never quarrelled with a single item in her bills, walked much, and ate two mutton-chops per diem. The young ladies, who examined all the boxes and letters of the lodgers, as young ladies will, could not find one single document relative to their new inmate, except a tavern-bill of the Albion, to which the name of George Brandon, Esquire, was prefixed. Any other papers which might elucidate his history, were locked up in a Bramah box, likewise marked G. B.; and though these were but unsatisfactory points by which to judge a man's character, there was a something about Mr. Brandon which caused all the ladies at Mrs. Gann's to vote he was quite a gentleman.

When this was the case, I am happy to say it would not unfrequently happen that Miss Rosalind or Miss Isabella would appear in the lodger's apartments, bearing in the breakfast-cloth, or blushing appearing with the weekly bill, apologising for mamma's absence, "and hoping that every thing was to the gentleman's liking."

Both the Misses Wellesley Macarty took occasion to visit Mr. Brandon in this manner; and he received both with such a fascinating ease and gentlemanlike freedom of manner, scanning their points from head to foot, and fixing his great black eyes so earnestly in their faces, that the blushing creatures turned away abashed, and yet pleased, and had many conversations about him.

"Law, Bell," said Miss Rosalind, "what a chap that Brandon is! I don't half like him, I do declare!" Than which there can be no greater compliment from a woman to a man.

"No more do I neither," says Bell. "The man stares so, and says such things! Just now, when Becky brought his paper and sealing-wax the silly girl brought black and red too I took them up to ask which he would have, and what do you think he said?"

"Well, dear, what!" said Mrs. Gann.

"Miss Bell," says he, looking at me, and with such eyes! "I'll keep every thing: the red wax, because it's like your lips; the black wax, because it's like your hair; and the satin paper, because it's like your skin! Wasn't it genteel?"

"Law, now!" exclaimed Mrs. Gann.

"Upon my word, I think it's very rude!" said Miss Lindy; "and if he'd have said so to me, I'd have slapped his face for his impudence!" And, much to her credit, Miss Lindy went to his room ten minutes after to see if he would say any thing to her. What Mr. Brandon said, I never knew; but the little pang of envy which had caused Miss Lindy to retort sharply upon her sister, had given place to a pleased good-humour, and she allowed Bella to talk about the new lodger as much as ever she liked.

And now if the reader is anxious to know what was Mr. Brandon's character, he had better read the following letter from him. It was addressed to no less a person than a viscount; and given, perhaps, with some little ostentation to Becky, the maid, to carry to the post. Now Becky, before she executed such errands, always shewed the letters to her mistress or one of the young ladies (it must not be supposed that Miss Caroline was a whit less curious on these matters than her sisters); and when the family beheld the name of Lord Viscount Cinqbars upon the superscription, their respect for their lodger was greater than ever it had been:

"Margate, January 1835.

"My dear Viscount, For a reason I have, on coming down to Margate, I with much gravity informed the people of the White Hart that my name was Brandon, and intend to bear that honourable appellation during my stay. For the same reason (I am a modest man, dear Simon, and love to do good in secret), I left the public hotel immediately, and am now housed in private lodgings, humble, and at a humble price. I am here, thank Heaven, quite alone. Robinson Crusoe had as much society in his island, as I in this of Thanet. In compensation I sleep a great deal, do nothing, and walk much, silent, by the side of the roaring sea, like Calchas, priest of Apollo.

"The fact is, that until papa's wrath is appeased, I must live with the utmost meekness and humility, and have barely enough money in my possession to pay such small current expenses as fall on me here, where strangers are many and credit does not exist. I pray you, therefore, to tell Mr. Snipson the tailor, Mr. Jackson the bootmaker, honest Solomonson the discounteer of bills, and all such friends in London and Oxford as may make inquiries after me, that I am at this very moment at the city of Munich in Bavaria, from which I shall not return until my marriage with Miss Goldmore, the great Indian heiress; who, upon my honour, will have me, I believe, any day for the asking. "Nothing else will satisfy my honoured father I know, whose purse has already bled pretty freely for me, I must confess, and who has taken the great oath that never is broken, to bleed no more unless this marriage is brought about. Come it must. I can't work, I can't starve, and I can't live under a thousand a-year.

"Here, to be sure, the charges are not enormous; for your edification read my week's bill: 'George Brandon, Esquire, 'To Mrs. James Gann.

'Settled, Juliana Gann.'

"Juliana Gann! Is it not a sweet name? it sprawls over half the paper. Could you but see the owner of the name, my dear fellow! I love to examine the customs of natives of all countries, and upon my word there are some barbarians in our own; less known, and more worthy of being known, than Hottentots, wild Irish, Otaheiteans, or any such savages. If you could see the airs that this woman gives herself; the rouge, ribands, rings, and other female gimcracks that she wears; if you could hear her reminiscences of past times, 'when she and Mr. Gann moved in the very genteelest circles of society;' of the peerage, which she knows by heart; and of the fashionable novels, in every word of which she believes, you would be proud of your order, and A week's lodging Breakfast, cream, eggs Dinner(fourteen mutton-chops) Fire, boot-cleaning, &c.

£. s. d. 1 0 0 0 9 0 0 10 6 0 3 6 £2 3 0

admire the intense respect which the canaille shew towards it. There never was such an old woman, not even our tutor at Christchurch.

"There is a he Gann, a vast, bloated old man, in a rough coat, who has met me once, and asked me, with a grin, if my mutton-chops was to my liking? The satirical monster! What can I eat in this place but mutton-chops? A great bleeding beefsteak, or a filthy, reeking gigot a l'eau, with a turnip poultice? I should die of I did. As for fish in a watering- place, I never touch it; it is sure to be bad. Nor care I for little, sinewy, dry, black-legged fowls. Cutlets are my only resource. I have them nicely enough broiled by a little humble companion of the family (a companion, ye gods, in this family!), who blushed hugely when she confessed that the cooking was hers, and that her name was Caroline. For drink I indulge in gin, of which I consume two wine glasses daily, in two tumblers of cold water;

it is the only liquor that one can be sure to find genuine in a common house in England.

"This Gann, I take it, has similar likings, for I hear him occasionally at midnight floundering up the stairs (his boots lie dirty in the passage) floundering, I say, up the stairs, and cursing the candlestick, whence escape now and anon the snuffers and extinguisher, and with brazen rattle disturb the silence of the night. Thrice a-week, at least, does Gann breakfast in bed sure sign of pridian intoxication; and thrice a-week, in the morning, I hear a hoarse voice roaring for 'my soda-water.' How long have the rogues drunk soda-water?"

"At nine, Mrs. Gann and daughters are accustomed to breakfast; a handsome pair of girls, truly, and much followed, as I hear, in the quarter. These dear creatures are always paying me visits with the tea-kettle, visits with the newspaper (one brings it, and one comes for it); but the one is always at the other's heels, and so one cannot shew oneself to be that dear, gay, seducing fellow that one has been, at home and on the Continent. Do you remember *cette chere marquise at Pau*? That cursed conjugal pistolbullet still plays the deuce with my shoulder. Do you remember Betty Bundy, the butcher's daughter? A pretty race of fools are we to go mad after such women, and risk all oaths, prayers, promises, long wearisome courtships for what? for vanity, truly. When the battle is over, behold your conquest! Betty Bundy is a vulgar country wench; and *cette belle marquise* is old, rouged, and has false hair. Vanitas, vanitatum! what a moral man I will be some day or other!"

"I have found an old acquaintance (and be hanged to him!), who has come to lodge in this very house. Do you recollect at Rome a young artist, Fitch by name, the handsome gaby with the large beard, that mad Mrs. Carrickfergus was doubly mad about? On the second floor of Mrs. Gann's house dwells this youth. His beard brings the gamins of the streets trooping and yelling about him; his fine braided coats have grown somewhat shabby now; and the poor fellow is, like your humble servant (by the way, have you a 500 franc billet to spare?) like your humble servant, I say, very low in pocket. The young Andrea bears up gaily, however; twangles the guitar, paints the worst pictures in the world, and pens sonnets to his imaginary mistress's eyebrow. Luckily the rogue did not know my name, or I should have been compelled to unbosom to him; and when I called out to him, dubious as to my name, 'Don't you know me? I met you at Rome. My name is Brandon,' the painter was perfectly satisfied, and majestically bade me welcome.

"Fancy the continence of this young Joseph he has absolutely run away from Mrs. Carrickfergus! 'Sir,' said he, with some hesitation and blushes, when I questioned him about the widow, 'I was compelled to leave Rome in consequence of the fatal fondness of that woman. I am an 'andsome man, sir I know it all the chaps in the Academy want me for a model; and that woman, sir, is sixty. Do you think I would ally myself with her; sacrifice my happiness for the sake of a creature that's as hugely as an arpy? I'd rather starve, sir. I'd rather give up my hart, and my 'opes of rising in it, than do a haction so dishhhonorable.'

"There is a stock of virtue for you! and the poor fellow half-starved. He lived at Rome upon the seven portraits that the Carrickfergus ordered of him, and, as I fancy, now does not make twenty pounds in the year.

O rare chastity! O wondrous silly hopes! O motus animorum, atque O certamina tanta! pulveris exigui jactu, in such an insignificant little lump of mud as this! Why the deuce does not the fool marry the widow? His betters would. There was a captain of dragoons, an Italian prince, and four sons of Irish peers, all at her feet; but the Cockney's beard and whiskers have overcome them all. Here my paper has come to an end; and I have the honour to bid your lordship a respectful farewell.

"G. B."

Of the young gentleman who goes by the name of Brandon the reader of the above letter will not be so misguided, we trust, as to have a very exalted opinion. The noble viscount read this document to a supper party at Christchurch, in Oxford, and left it in a bowl of milk-punch; whence a scout abstracted it, and handed it over to us. My lord was twenty years of age when he received the epistle; and had spent a couple of years abroad, before going to the university, under the guardianship of the worthy individual who called himself George Brandon.

Mr. Brandon was the son of a halfpay colonel, of good family, who, honouring the great himself, thought his son would vastly benefit by an acquaintance with them, and sent him to Eton, at cruel charges upon a slender purse. From Eton the lad went to Oxford, took honours there, frequented the best society, followed with a kind of proud obsequiousness all the tufts of the university, and left it owing exactly two thousand pounds. Then there came storms at home; fury upon the part of the stern old "governor;" and final payments of the debt. But while this settlement was pending, Master George had contracted many more debts among bill-discounters, and was glad to fly to the Continent as tutor to young Lord Cinquars, in whose company he learned every one of the vices in Europe; and having a good natural genius, and a heart not unkindly, had used these qualities in such an admirable manner as to be at twenty-seven utterly ruined in purse and principle an idler, a spendthrift, and a glutton. He was free of his money; would spend his last guinea for a sensual gratification; would borrow from his neediest friend; had no kind of conscience or remorse left, but believed himself to be a good-natured devil-may-care fellow; had a good deal of wit, and indisputably good manners, and a pleasing, dashing frankness, in conversation with men. I should like to know how many such scoundrels our universities have turned out; and how much rain has been caused by that accursed system, which is called in England "the education of a gentleman." Go, my son, for ten years to a public school, that "world in miniature;" learn "to fight for yourself" against the time when your real struggles shall begin. Begin to be selfish at ten years of age; study for other ten years; get a competent knowledge of boxing, swimming, rowing, and cricket, with a pretty knack of Latin hexameters, and a decent smattering of Greek plays, do this and a fond father shall bless you bless the two thousand pounds which he has spent in acquiring all these benefits for you. And, besides, what else have you not learned! You have been many hundreds of times to chapel, and have learned to consider the religious service performed there as the vainest parade in the world. If your father is a grocer, you have been beaten for his sake, and have learned to be ashamed of him. You have learned to forget (as how should you remember, being separated from them for three-fourths of your time?) the ties and natural affections of home. You have learned, if you have a kindly heart and an open hand, to compete with associates much more wealthy than yourself; and to consider money as not much, but honour the honour of dining and consorting with your betters as a great deal. All this does the public-school and college-boy learn; and wo be to his knowledge! Alas, what natural tenderness and kindly-clinging filial affection is he taught to trample on and despise! My friend Brandon had gone through this process of education, and had been irretrievably ruined by it his heart and his honesty had been ruined by it, that is to say; and he had received, in return for them, a small quantity of classics and mathematics pretty compensation for all he had lost in gaining them!

But I am wandering most absurdly from the point; right or wrong, so nature and education had formed Mr. Brandon, who is one of

a considerable class. Well, this young gentleman was established at Mrs. Gann's house; and we are obliged to enter into all these explanations concerning him, because they are necessary to the right understanding of our story Brandon not being altogether a bad man, nor much worse than many a one who goes through a course of regular selfish swindling all his life-long, and dies religious, resigned, proud of himself, and universally respected by others: for this eminent advantage has the getting-and-keeping scoundrel over the extravagant and careless one.

One day, then, as he was gazing from the window of his lodging-house, a cart, containing a vast number of easels, portfolios, wooden-cases of pictures, and a small carpet-bag that might hold a change of clothes, stopped at the door. The vehicle was accompanied by a remarkable young fellow, dressed in a frock-coat covered over with frogs, a dirty turned-down shirtcollar, with a blue satin cravat, and a cap placed wonderfully on one ear, who had evidently hired apartments at Mr. Gann's. This new lodger was no other than Mr. Andrew Fitch; or, as he wrote on his cards, without the prefix, Andrea Fitch.

Preparations had been made at Gann's for the reception of Mr. Fitch, whose aunt (an auctioneer's lady in the town) had made arrangements that he should board and lodge with the Gann family, and have the apartments on the second floor as his private rooms. In these, then, young Andrea was installed. He was a youth of a poetic temperament, loving solitude; and where is such to be found more easily than on the storm-washed shores of Margate in winter? Then the boarding-house keepers have shut up their houses, and gone away in anguish; then the taverns take their carpets up, and you can have your choice of a hundred and twenty beds in any one of them; then but one dismal waiter remains to superintend this vast echoing pile of loneliness, and the landlord pines for summer; then the flies for Ramsgate stand tenantless beside the pier; and about four sailors, in peajackets, are to be seen in the three principal streets; in the rest, silence, silence, closed shutters, torpid chimneys, enjoying their unnatural winter sinecure not the clack of a patten echoing over the cold dry flags!

This solitude had been chosen by Mr. Brandon for good reasons of his own; Gann and his family would have fled, but that they had no other house wherein to take refuge; and Mrs. Hammerton, the auctioneer's lady, felt so keenly the kindness which she was doing to Mrs. Gann, in providing her with a lodger at such a period, that she considered herself fully justified in extracting from the latter a bonus of two guineas, threatening on refusal to send her darling nephew to a rival establishment over the way.

Andrea was here, then, in loneliness that he loved, a fantastic youth, who lived but for his art; to whom the world was like the Coburg Theatre, and he in a magnificent costume acting a principal part. His art, and his beard and whiskers, were the darlings of his heart. His long pale hair fell over a high polished brow, which looked wonderfully thoughtful; and yet no man was more guiltless of thinking. He was always putting himself into attitudes; he never spoke the truth; and was so entirely affected and absurd, as to be quite honest at last: for it is my belief that the man did not know truth from falsehood any longer, and was when he was alone, when he was in company, nay, when he was unconscious and sound asleep snoring in bed, one complete lump of affectation. When his apartments on the second floor were arranged according to his fancy, they made a tremendous show. He had a large Gothic chest, in which he put his wardrobe (namely, two velvet waistcoats, four varied satin under ditto, two pairs braided trousers, two shirts, half-a-dozen false collars, and a couple of pairs of dreadfully dilapidated Blucher boots). He had some pieces of armour; some China jugs and Venetian glasses; some bits of old damask rags, to drape his doors and windows; and a rickety lay-figure, in a Spanish hat and cloak, over which slung a long Toledo rapier, and a guitar, with a riband of dirty skyblue.

Such was our poor fellow's stock in trade. He had some volumes of poems Lalla Rookh, and the sterner compositions of Byron; for, to do him justice, he hated Don Juan, and a woman was in his eyes an angel: a hangel, alas! he would call her, for nature and the circumstances of his family had taken sad Cockney advantages over Andrea's pronunciation.

The Misses Wellesley Macarty were not, however, very squeamish with regard to grammar, and, in this dull season, voted Mr. Fitch an elegant young fellow. His immense beard and whiskers gave them the highest opinion of his genius; and before long the intimacy between the young people was considerable, for Mr. Fitch insisted upon drawing the portraits of the whole family. He painted Mrs. Gann in her rouge and ribands, as described by Mr. Brandon; Mr. Gann, who said that his picture would be very useful to the artist, as every soul in Margate knew him; and the Misses Macarty (a neat group, representing Miss Bella embracing Miss Linda, who was pointing to a pianoforte).

"I suppose you'll do my Carry next," said Mr. Gann, expressing his approbation of the last picture. "Law, sir," said Miss Linda, "Carry, with her red hair! it would be ojus." "Mr. Fitch might as well paint Becky, our maid," said Miss Bella.

"Carry is quite impossible, Gann," said Mrs. Gann: "she hasn't a gown fit to be seen in. She's not been at church for thirteen Sundays in consequence."

"And more shame for you, ma'am," said Mr. Gann, who liked his child: "Carry shall have a gown, and the best of gowns." And jingling three-and-twenty shillings in his pocket, Mr. Gann determined to spend them all in the purchase of a robe for Carry. But, alas, the gown never came; half the money was spent that very evening at the Bag of Nails.

"Is that that young lady, your daughter?" said Mr. Fitch, surprised, for he fancied Carry was a humble companion of the family.

"Yes, she is, and a very good daughter, too, sir," answered Mr. Gann. "Fetch and Carry I call her, or else Carryvan she's so useful. An't you, Carry?"

"I'm very glad if I am, papa," said the young lady, who was blushing violently, and in whose presence all this conversation had been carried on.

"Hold your tongue, miss," said her mother; "you're very expensive to us, that you are, and need not brag about the work you do. You would not live on charity, would you, like some folks (here she looked fiercely at Mr. Gann); and if your sisters and me starve to keep you and some folks, I presume you are bound to make us some return."

When any allusion was made to Mr. Gann's idleness and extravagance, or his lady shewed herself in any way inclined to be angry, it was honest James's habit not to answer, but to take his hat and walk abroad to the public-house; or if haply she scolded him at night, he would turn his back and fall a snoring. These were the only remedies he found for Mrs. James's bad temper; and the first of them he adopted on hearing these words of his lady, which we have just now transcribed.

Poor Caroline had not her father's refuge of flight, but was obliged to stay and listen: and a wondrous eloquence, God wot! had Mrs. Gann upon the subject of her daughter's ill conduct. The first lecture Mr. Fitch heard, he set down Caroline for a monster. Was

she not idle, sulky, scornful, and a sloven? For these and many more of her daughter's vices Mrs. Gann vouched, declaring that Caroline's misbehaviour was hastening her own death, and finishing by a fainting fit. In the presence of all these charges, there stood Miss Caroline, dumb, stupid, and careless; nay, when the fainting-fit came on, and Mrs. Gann fell back on the sofa, the unfeeling girl took the opportunity to retire, and never offered to smack her mamma's hands, to give her the smelling-bottle, or to restore her with a glass of water.

One stood close at hand; for Mr. Fitch, when this first fit occurred, was sitting in the Gann parlour, painting that lady's portrait; and he was making towards her with his tumbler, when Miss Linda cried out, "Stop! the water's full of paint!" and straightway burst out laughing. Mrs. Gann jumped up at this, cured suddenly, and left the room, looking somewhat foolish.

"You don't know ma," said Miss Linda, still giggling; "she's always fainting."

"Poor thing!" cried Fitch; "very nervous, I suppose?"

"Oh, very!" answered the lady, exchanging arch glances with Miss Bella.

"Poor, dear lady!" continued the artist; "I pity her from my hinmost soul. Doesn't the himmortal bard of Havon observe, how sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child? And is it true, ma'am, that that young woman has been the ruin of her family?"

"Ruin of her fiddlestick!" replied Miss Bella. "Law, Mr. Fitch, you don't know ma yet: she is in one of her tantrums."

"What, then, it isn't true?" cried simple-minded Fitch; to which neither of the young ladies made any answer in words: nor could the little artist comprehend why they looked at each other, and burst out laughing. But he retired pondering on what he had seen and heard; and being a very soft young fellow, most implicitly believed the accusations of poor dear Mrs. Gann, and thought her daughter Caroline was no better than a Regan or Goneril.

A time, however, was to come when he should believe her to be a most pure and gentle Cordelia; and of this change in Fitch's opinions we shall speak in Chapter III.

CHAPTER III.

A shabby genteel dinner, and other incidents of a like nature.

Mr. Brandon's letter to Lord Cinquars produced, as we have said, a great impression upon the family of Gann; an impression which was considerably increased by their lodger's subsequent behaviour: for although the persons with whom he now associated were of a very vulgar, ridiculous kind, they were by no means so low or ridiculous that Mr. Brandon should not wish to appear before them in the most advantageous light; and, accordingly, he gave himself the greatest airs when in their company, and bragged incessantly of his acquaintance and familiarity with the nobility. Mr. Brandon was a tufthunter of the genteel sort; his pride being quite as slavish, and his haughtiness as mean and cringing, in fact, as poor Mrs. Gann's stupid wonder and respect for all the persons whose names are written with titles before them. O free and happy Britons, what a miserable, truckling, cringing race you are!

The reader has no doubt encountered a number of such swaggerers in the course of his conversation with the world men of a decent middle rank, who affect to despise it, and herd only with persons of the fashion. This is an offence in a man which none of us can forgive; we call him tuft-hunter, lickspittle, sneak, unmanly; we hate, and profess to despise him. I fear it is no such thing. We envy Lickspittle, that is the fact; and therefore hate him. Were he to plague us with stories of Jones and Brown, our familiars, the man would be a simple bore, his stories heard patiently; but so soon as he talks of my lord or the duke, we are in arms against him. I have seen a whole merry party in Russell Square grow suddenly gloomy and dumb, because a pert barrister, in a loud shrill voice, told a story of Lord This or the Marquess of That. We all hated that man; and I would lay a wager that every one of the fourteen persons assembled round the boiled turkey and saddle of mutton (not to mention side-dishes from the pastry-cook's opposite the British Museum) I would wager, I say, that every one was muttering inwardly, "A plague on that fellow! he knows a lord, and I never spoke to more than three in the whole course of my life." To our betters we can reconcile ourselves, if you please, respecting them very sincerely, laughing at their jokes, making allowance for their stupidities, meekly suffering their insolence; but we can't pardon our equals going beyond us. A friend of mine, who lived amicably and happily among his friends and relatives at Hackney, was on a sudden disowned by the latter, cut by the former, and doomed in innumerable prophecies to ruin, because he kept a footboy, a harmless, little, blowsy-faced urchin, in light snuff-coloured clothes, glistening over with sugar-loaf buttons. There is another man, a great man, a literary man, whom the public loves, and who took a sudden leap from obscurity into fame and wealth. This was a crime; but he bore his rise with so much

modesty, that even his brethren of the pen did not envy him. One luckless day he set up a one-horse chaise; from that minute he was doomed.

"Have you seen his new carriage?" says Snarley.

"Yes," says Yow; "he's so consumedly proud of it, that he can't see his old friends while he drives."

The fact is that our author, not much accustomed to the whip, is in a little flurry when he takes the reins, and looks at his horse's head during the whole drive.

"Ith it a donkey-cart," lisps Simper, "thith gwand new cawwiage? I always thaid that the man, from hith thtile, wath fitted to be a vewy dethent cothtermonger."

"Yes, yes," cries old Candour, "a sad pity indeed! dreadfully extravagant, I'm told bad health expensive family works going down every day and now he must set up a carriage, forsooth!"

Snarley, Yow, Simper, Candour, hate their brother. If he is ruined, they will be kind to him and just; but he is successful, and wo be to him!

This trifling digression of half a page or so, although it seems to have nothing to do with the story in hand, has, nevertheless, the strongest relation to it; and you shall hear what.

In one word, then, Mr. Brandon bragged so much, and assumed such airs of superiority, that after a while he perfectly disgusted Mrs. Gann and the Misses Macarty, who were gentlefolks themselves, and did not at all like his way of telling them that he was their better. Mr. Fitch was swallowed up in his hart, as he called it, and cared nothing for Brandon's airs. Gann, being a low-spirited fellow, completely submitted to Mr. Brandon, and looked up to him with deepest wonder. And poor little Caroline followed her father's faith, and in six weeks after Mr. Brandon's arrival at the lodgings had grown to believe him the most perfect, finished, polished, agreeable of mankind. Indeed, the poor girl had never seen a gentleman before, and towards such her gentle heart turned instinctively. Brandon never offended her by hard words; insulted her by cruel scorn, such as she met with from her mother and her sisters; there was a quiet manner about the man quite different to any that she had before seen amongst the acquaintances of her family; and if he assumed a tone of superiority in his conversation with her and the rest, Caroline felt that he was their superior, and as such admired and respected him.

What happens when in the innocent bosom of a girl of sixteen such sensations arise? What has happened ever since the world began?

I have said that Miss Caroline had no friend in the world but her father, and must here take leave to recall that assertion; a friend she most certainly had, and that was honest Becky, the smutty maid, whose name has been mentioned before. Miss Caroline had learned, in the course of a life spent under the tyranny of her mamma, some of the notions of the latter, and would have been very much offended to call Becky her friend: but friends, in fact, they were; and a great comfort it was for Caroline to descend to the calm kitchen from the stormy back-parlour, and there vent some of her little woes to the compassionate servant of all work.

When Mrs. Gann went out with her daughters, Becky would take her work and come and keep Miss Caroline company; and, if the truth must be told, the greatest enjoyment the pair used to have was in these afternoons, when they read together out of the precious greasy marble-covered volumes that Mrs. Gann was in the habit of fetching from the library. Many and many a tale had the pair so gone through. I can see them over Manfrone; or, the One-handed Monk the room dark, the street silent, the hour ten the tall, red, lurid candlewick wagglng down, the flame flickering pale upon Miss Caroline's pale face as she read out, and lighting up honest Becky's goggling eyes, who sat silent, her work in her lap: she had not done a stitch of it for an hour. As the trap-door slowly opens, and the scowling Alonzo, bending over the sleeping Imoinda, draws his pistol, cocks it, looks well if the priming be right, places it then to the sleeper's ear, and thunder-under-under down fall the snuffers! Becky has had them in hand for ten minutes, afraid to use them. Up starts Caroline, and flings the book back into her mamma's basket. It is that lady returned with her daughters from a tea-party, where two young gents from London have been mighty genteel indeed.

For the sentimental, too, as well as for the terrible, Miss Caroline and the cook had a strong predilection, and had wept their poor eyes out over Thaddeus of Warsaw and the Scottish Chiefs. Fortified by the examples drawn from those instructive volumes, Becky was firmly convinced that her young mistress would meet with a great lord some day or other, or be carried off, like Cinderella, by a brilliant prince, to the mortification of her elder sisters, whom Becky hated. And when, therefore, the new lodger came, lonely, mysterious, melancholy, elegant, with the romantic name of George Brandon when he wrote a letter directed to a lord, and Miss Caroline and Becky together examined the superscription, such a look passed between them as the pencil of Leslie or Maclise could alone describe for us. Becky's orbs were lighted up with a preternatural look of wondering wisdom; whereas, after an instant, Caroline dropped hers, and blushed, and said, "Nonsense, Becky."

"Is it nonsense?" said Becky, grinning and snapping her fingers with a triumphant air; "the cards comes true; I knew they would. Didn't you have king and queen of hearts three deals running? What did you dream about last Tuesday, tell me that?"

But Miss Caroline never did tell, for her sisters came bouncing down the stairs, and examined the lodger's letter. Caroline, however, went away musing much upon these points; and she began to think Mr. Brandon more wonderful and beautiful every day.

In the meantime, while Miss Caroline was innocently indulging in her inclination for the brilliant occupier of the first floor, it came to pass that the tenant of the second was inflamed by a most romantic passion for her.

For, after partaking for about a fortnight of the family dinner, and passing some evenings with Mrs. Gann and the young ladies, Mr. Fitch, though by no means quick of comprehension, began to perceive that the nightly charges that were brought against poor Caroline could not be founded upon truth. "Let's see," mused he to himself; "Tuesday, the old lady said her daughter was bringing her grey hairs with sorrow to the grave, because the cook had not boiled the potatoes. Wednesday, she said Caroline was an assassin, because she could not find her own thimble. Thursday, she vows Caroline has no religion, because that old pair of silk stockings were not darned. And this can't be," reasoned Fitch, deeply. "A gal haint a murderess because her ma can't find her thimble. A woman that goes to slap her grown-up daughter on the back, and before company too, for such a paltry thing as a hold pair of stockings, can't be surely aspeaking the truth." And thus gradually his first impression against Caroline wore away. As this disappeared, pity took possession of his soul and we know what pity is akin to; and, at the same time, a corresponding hatred for the oppressors of a creature so amiable.

To sum up, in six short weeks after the appearance of the two gentlemen, we find our chief dramatis personae as follows:

Caroline, an innocent young woman in love with Brandon. Fitch, a celebrated painter, almost in love with Caroline. Brandon, a young gentleman in love with himself.

At first he was pretty constant in his attendance upon the Misses Macarty when they went out to walk, nor were they displeased at his attentions; but he found that there were a great number of Margatebeaux ugly, vulgar fellows as ever were who always followed in the young ladies' train, and made themselves infinitely more agreeable than he was. These men Mr. Brandon treated with a great deal of scorn; and, in return, they hated him cordially. So did the ladies speedily: his haughty manners, though quite as impertinent and free, were not half so pleasant to them as Jones's jokes or Smith's charming romps; and the girls gave Brandon very shortly to understand that they were much happier without him. "Ladies, your humble," he heard Bob Smith say, as that little linendraper came skipping to the door from which they were issuing, "the sun's hup and trade is down; if you're for a walk, I'm your man." And Miss Linda and Miss Bella each took an arm of Mr. Smith and sailed down the street. "I'm glad you aint got that proud gent with the glass hi," said Mr. Smith; "he's the most hillbred, supercilious beast I ever see."

"So he is," says Bella.

"Hush!" says Linda.

The "proud gent with the glass hi" was at this moment lolling out of the first-floor window, smoking his accustomed cigar; and his eye-glass was fixed upon the ladies, to whom he made a very low bow. It may be imagined how fond he was of them afterwards, and what looks he cast at Mr. Bob Smith the next time he met him. Mr. Bob's heart beat for a day afterwards; and he found he had business in town.

But the love of society is stronger than even pride; and as we saw the other day, in York gaol, how the illustrious Mr. Feargus O'Connor preferred to be locked up with a couple of felons rather than to remain solitary, in like manner the great Mr. Brandon was sometimes fain to descend from his high station, and consort with the vulgar family with whom he lodged. But, as we have said, he always did this with a wonderfully condescending air, giving his associates to understand how great was the honour he did them.

One day, then, he was absolutely so kind as to accept of an invitation from the ground-floor, which was delivered in the passage by Mr. James Gann, who said, "It was hard to see a gent eating mutton-chops from week's end to week's end; and if Mr. Brandon had a mind to meet a devilish good fellow as ever was, my friend Swigby, a man who rides his horse, and has his five hundred a-year to spend, and to eat a prime cut out of as good a leg of pork (though he said it) as ever a knife was stuck into, they should dine that day at three o'clock sharp, and Mrs. G. and the gals would be glad of the honour of his company."

The person so invited was rather amused at the terms in which Mr. Gann conveyed his hospitable message; and at three o'clock made his appearance in the back-parlour, whence he had the honour of conducting Mrs. Gann (dressed in a sweet yellow mousseline de laine, with a large red turban, a ferroniere, and a smelling-bottle, attached by a ring to a very damp, fat hand) to the "office," where the repast was set out. The Misses Macarty were in costumes equally tasty; one on the guest's right hand; one near the boarder, Mr. Fitch, who, in a large beard, an amethyst velvet waistcoat, his hair fresh wetted, and parted accurately down the middle to fall in curls over his collar, would have been irresistible, if the collar had been a little, little whiter than it was.

Mr. Brandon, too, was dressed in his very best suit; for though he affected to despise his hosts very much, he wished to make the most favourable impression upon them, and took care to tell Mrs. Gann that he and Lord So-and-so were the only two men in the world who were in possession of that particular waistcoat which she admired: for Mrs. Gann was very gracious, and had admired the waistcoat, being desirous to impress with awe Mr. Gann's friend and admirer, Mr. Swigby, who, man of fortune as he was, was a constant frequenter of the club at the Bag of Nails.

About this club and its supporters Mr. Gann's guest, Mr. Swigby, and Gann himself, talked very gaily before dinner; all the jokes about all the club being roared over by the pair.

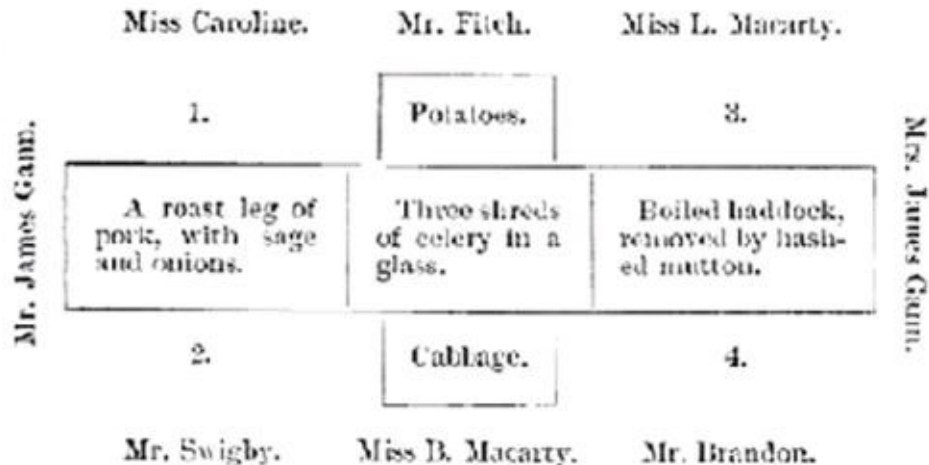
Mr. Brandon, who felt he was the great man of the party, indulged himself in his great propensities without restraint, and told Mrs. Gann stories about half the nobility. Mrs. Gann conversed knowingly about the opera; and declared that she thought Taglioni the sweetest singer in the world.

"Mr. a Swigby, have you ever seen Lablache dance?" asked Mr. Brandon of that gentleman, to whom he had been formally introduced.

"At Vauxhall is he?" said Mr. Swigby, who was just from town. "Yes, on the tight-rope; a charming performer."

On which Mr. Gann told how he had been to Vauxhall when the princes were in London; and his lady talked of these knowingly. And then they fell to conversing about fire-works and rack-punch; Mr. Brandon assuring the young ladies that Vauxhall was the very pink of the fashion, and longing to have the honour of dancing a quadrille with them there. Indeed, Brandon was so very sarcastic, that not a single soul at table understood him.

The table, from Mr. Brandon's plan of it, which was afterwards sent to my Lord Cinqbars, was arranged as follows:



Mr. Gann. "Taste that sherry, sir. Your 'ealth, and my services to you, sir. That wine, sir, is given me as a particular favour by my ahem! my wine-merchant, who only will part with a small quantity of it, and imports it direct, sir, from ahem! from "

Mr. Brandon. "From Xeres, of course. It is, I really think, the finest wine I ever tasted in my life at a commoner's table, that is."

Mrs. Gann. "Oh, in course, a commoner's table! we have no titles, sir (Mr. Gann, I will trouble you for some more crackling), though my poor dear girls are related, by their blessed father's side, to some of the first nobility in the land, I assure you."

Mr. Gann. "Gammon, Jooly, my dear. Them Irish nobility you know, what are they? And, besides, it's my belief that the gals are no more related to them than I am."

Miss Bella (to Mr. Brandon, confidentially). "You must find that poor par is sadly vulgar, Mr. Brandon."

Mrs. Gann. "Mr. Brandon has never been accustomed to such language, I am sure; and I entreat you will excuse Mr. Gann's rudeness, sir."

Miss Linda. "Indeed, I assure you, Mr. Brandon, that we've high connexions as well as low; as high as some people's connexions, per'aps, though we are not always talking of the nobility." This was a double shot; the first barrel of Miss Linda's sentence hit her stepfather, the second part was levelled directly at Mr. Brandon. "Don't you think I'm right, Mr. Fitch?"

Mr. Brandon. "You are quite right, Miss Linda, in this as in every other instance; but I am afraid Mr. Fitch has not paid a proper attention to your excellent remark: for, if I don't mistake the meaning of that beautiful design which he has made with his fork upon the table-cloth, his soul is at this moment wrapped up in his art."

This was exactly what Mr. Fitch wished that all the world should suppose. He flung back his hair, and stared wildly for a moment, and said, "Pardon me, madam; it is true my thoughts were at that moment far away in the regions of my hart." He was really thinking that his attitude was a very elegant one, and that a large garnet ring which he wore on his forefinger must be mistaken by all the company for a ruby.

"Art is very well," said Mr. Brandon; "but with such pretty natural objects before you, I wonder you were not content to think of them."

"Do you mean the mashed potatoes, sir?" said Andrea Fitch, wondering.

"I mean Miss Rosalind Macarty," answered Brandon, gallantly, and laughing heartily at the painter's simplicity. But this compliment could not soften Miss Linda, who had an uneasy conviction that Mr. Brandon was laughing at her, and disliked him accordingly.

At this juncture, Miss Caroline entered and took the place marked as hers, to the left hand of Mr. Gann, vacant. An old ricketty wooden stool was placed for her, instead of that elegant and commodious Windsor chair, which supported every other person at table; and by the side of the plate stood a curious old battered tin mug, on which the antiquarian might possibly discover the inscription of the word "Caroline." This, in truth, was poor Caroline's mug and stool, having been appropriated to her from childhood upwards; and here it was her custom meekly to sit, and eat her daily meal.

It was well that the girl was placed near her father, else I do believe she would have been starved; but Gann was much too good-natured to allow that any difference should be made between her and her sisters. There are some meannesses which are too mean even for man woman, lovely woman alone, can venture to commit them. Well, on the present occasion, and when the dinner was half over, poor Caroline stole gently into the room and took her ordinary place. Caroline's pale face was very red; for the fact must be told that she had been in the kitchen helping Becky, the universal maid; and having heard how the great Mr. Brandon was to dine with them upon that day, the simple girl had been shewing her respect for him, by compiling, in her very best manner, a certain dish, for the cooking of which her papa had often praised her. She took her place, blushing violently when she saw him; and if Mr. Gann had not been making a violent clattering with his knife and fork, it is possible that you might have heard Miss Caroline's heart thump, which it did violently. Her dress was somehow a little smarter than usual; and Becky the maid, who brought in that remove of hashed mutton, which has been set down in the bill of fare, looked at her young lady with a good deal of complacency, as, loaded with plates, she quitted the room. Indeed the poor girl deserved to be looked at; there was an air of gentleness and innocence about her that was apt to please some persons, much more than the bold beauties of her sisters. The two young men did not fail to remark this; one of them, the little painter, had long since observed it.

"You are very late, miss," cried Mrs. Gann, who affected not to know what had caused her daughter's delay. "You're always late!"

and the elder girls stared and grinned at each other knowingly, as they always did when mamma made such attacks upon Caroline, who only kept her eyes down upon the tablecloth, and began to eat her dinner without saying a word.

"Come, my dear," cried honest Gann, "if she is late, you know why. A girl can't be here and there too, as I say; can they, Swigby?" "Impossible!" said Swigby.

"Gents," continued Mr. Gann, "our Carry, you must know, has been down stairs, making the pudding for her old pappy; and a good pudding she makes, I can tell you."

Miss Caroline blushed more vehemently than ever; the artist stared her full in the face; Mrs. Gann said, "nonsense" and "stuff," very majestically; only Mr. Brandon interposed in Caroline's favour.

"I would sooner that my wife should know how to make a pudding," said he, "than how to play the best piece of music in the world!"

"Law, Mr. Brandon! I, for my part, wouldn't demean myself by any such kitchen-work!" cries Miss Linda.

"Make puddns, indeed; it's o'ous!" cries Bella.

"For you, my loves, of course!" interposed their mamma.

"Young women of your family and circumstances is not expected to perform any such work. It's different with Miss Caroline; who, if she does make herself useful now and then, don't make herself near so useful as she should, considering that she's not a shilling, and is living on our charity, like some other folks!"

Thus did this amiable woman neglect no opportunity to give her opinions about her husband and daughter. The former, however, cared not a straw; and the latter, in this instance, was perfectly happy. Had not kind Mr. Brandon approved of her work; and could she ask for more?

"Mamma may say what she pleases to-day," thought Caroline, "I am too happy to be made angry by her."

Poor little mistaken Caroline, to think you were safe against three women! The dinner had not advanced much further, when Miss Isabella, who had been examining her younger sister curiously for some short time, telegraphed Miss Linda across the table; and nodded, and winked, and pointed to her own neck; a very white one, as I have before had the honour to remark, and quite without any covering, except a smart necklace of twenty-four rows of the lightest blue glass beads, finishing in a neat tassel. Linda had a similar ornament of a vermillion colour; whereas Caroline, on this occasion, wore a handsome new collar up to the throat, and a brooch, which looked all the smarter for the shabby frock over which they were placed. As soon as she saw her sisters' signals, the poor little thing, who had only just done fluttering and blushing, fell to this same work over again. Down went her eyes once more, and her face and neck lighted up to the colour of Miss Linda's sham cornelian.

"What's the gals giggling and ogling about?" said Mr. Gann, innocently. "What is it, my darling loves?" said stately Mrs. Gann.

"Why, don't you see, ma?" said Linda. "Look at Miss Carry! I'm blessed if she has not got on Becky's collar and brooch that Sims, the pilot, gave her!"

The young ladies fell back in uproarious fits of laughter, and laughed all the time that their mamma was thundering out a speech, in which she declared that her daughter's conduct was unworthy a gentlewoman, and bid her leave the room and take off those disgraceful ornaments.

There was no need to tell her; the poor little thing gave one piteous look at her father, who was whistling, and seemed indeed to think the matter a good joke; and after she had managed to open the door and totter into the passage, you might have heard her weeping there, weeping tears more bitter than any of the many she had shed in the course of her life. Down she went to the kitchen, and when she reached that humble place of refuge, first pulled at her neck, and made as if she would take off Becky's collar and brooch, and then flung herself into the arms of that honest scullion, where she cried and cried till she brought on the first fit of hysterics that ever she had had.

This crying could not at first be heard in the parlour, where the young ladies, Mrs. Gann, Mr. Gann, and his friend from the Bag of Nails were roaring at the excellence of the joke. Mr. Brandon, sipping sherry, sat by looking very sarcastically and slyly from one party to the other; Mr. Fitch was staring about him too, but with a very different expression, anger and wonder inflaming his bearded countenance. At last, as the laughing died away and a faint voice of weeping came from the kitchen below, Andrew could bear it no longer, but bounced up from his chair, and rushed out of the room exclaiming, "By Jove, it's too bad!"

"What does the man mean?" said Mrs. Gann.

He meant that he was from that moment over head and ears in love with Caroline; and that he longed to beat, buffet, pummel, thump, tear to pieces, those callous ruffians who so piteously laughed at her.

"What's that chop wi' the beard in such tantrums about?" said the gentleman from the Bag of Nails.

Mr. Gann answered this query by some joke intimating that, "Praps Mr. Fitch's dinner did not agree with him," at which these worthies roared again.

The young ladies said, "Well, now, upon my word!"

"Mighty genteel behaviour, truly!" cried mamma; "but what can you expect from the poor thing?"

Brandon only sipped more sherry, but he looked at Fitch as the latter flung out of the room, and his countenance was lighted up by a more unequivocal smile.

These two little adventures were followed by a silence of some few minutes, during which the meats remained on the table, and no signs were shewn of that pudding upon which poor Caroline had exhausted her skill. The absence of this delicious part of the repast was first remarked by Mr. Gann; and his lady, after jangling at the bell for some time in vain, at last begged one of her daughters to go and hasten matters.

"Becky!" shrieked Miss Linda from the hall, but Becky replied not. "Becky, are we to be kept waiting all day?" continued the lady in the same shrill voice. "Mamma wants the pudding!"

"Tell her to fetch it herself!" roared Becky, at which remark Gann and his facetious friend once more went off into fits of laughter.

"This is too bad!" said Mrs. G. starting up; "she shall leave the house this instant!" and so no doubt Becky would but that the lady owed her five quarters' wages; which she, at that period, did not feel inclined to pay.

Well, the dinner at last was at an end; the ladies went away to tea, leaving the gentlemen to their wine; Brandon, very condescendingly, partaking of a bottle of port, and listening with admiration to the toasts and sentiments with which it is still the custom among persons of Mr. Gann's rank of life to preface each glass of wine. As thus: Glass 1. "Gents," says Mr. Gann, rising, "this glass I need say nothink about. Here's the king, and long life to him and the family!"

Mr. Swigby, with his glass, goes knock, knock, knock on the table; and saying gravely, "The king!" drinks off his glass, and smacks his lips afterwards.

Mr. Brandon, who had drank half his, stops in the midst and says, "Oh, 'the king!'"

Mr. Swigby. "A good glass of wine that, Gann, my boy!"

Mr. Brandon. "Capital, really; though, upon my faith, I'm no judge of port."

Mr. Gann. (Smacks.) "A fine fruity wine as ever I tasted. I suppose you, Mr. B., are accustomed only to claret. I've 'ad it, too, in my time, sir, as Swigby there very well knows. I travelled, sir, sure le Continong, I assure you, and drank my glass of claret with the best man in France, or England either. I wasn't always what I am, sir."

Mr. Brandon. "You don't look as if you were."

Mr. Gann. "No, sir. Before that gas came in, I was head, sir, of one of the fust 'ouses in the hoil trade. Gann, Blubberty, and Gann, sir Thames Street, City. I'd my box at Putney, as good a gig and horse as my friend there drives."

Mr. Swigby. "Ay, and a better too, Gann, I make no doubt."

Mr. Gann. "Well, say a better. I had a better, if money could fetch it, sir; and I didn't spare that, I warrant you. No, no, James Gann didn't grudge his purse, sir; and had his friends around him, as he's appy to 'ave now, sir. Mr. Brandon, your 'ealth, sir, and may we hoften meet under this ma'ogany. Swigby, my boy, God bless you!"

Mr. Brandon. "Your very good health."

Mr. Swigby. "Thank you, Gann. Here's to you, and long life and prosperity and happiness to you and yours. Bless you, Jim, my boy; Heaven bless you! I say this, Mr. Bandon Brandon what's your name there aint a better fellow in all Margate than James Gann, no, nor in all England. Here's Mrs. Gann, gents, and the family. Mrs. Gann?!" (drinks.)

Mr. Brandon. "Mrs. Gann. Hip, hip, hurra!" (drinks.)

Mr. Gann. "Mrs. Gann, and thank you, gents. A fine woman, Mr. B.; aint she, now? Ah, if you'd seener when I married her! Gad, she was fine then an out and outer, sir! Such a figure!"

Mr. Swigby. "You'd choose none but a good 'un, I war'nt. Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Gann. "Did I ever tell you of my duel along with the regimental doctor? No! Then I will. I was a young chap, you see, in those days; and when I saw her at Brussels (Brusell, they call it) I was right slick up over head and ears in love with her at once. But what was to be done? There was another gent in the case a regimental doctor, sir a reg'lar dragon. 'Faint heart,' says I, 'never won a fair lady,' and so I made so bold. She took me, sent the doctor to the right about. I met him one morning in the Park at Brussels, and stood to him, sir, like a man. When the affair was over, my second, a lieutenant of dragoons, told me, 'Gann,' says he, 'I've seen many a man under fire I'm a Waterloo man,' says he, 'and have rode by Wellington many a long day; but I never, for coolness, see such a man as you.' Gents, here's the Duke of Wellington and the British harmy!" (the gents drink.)

Mr. Brandon. "Did you kill the doctor, sir?"

Mr. Gann. "Why no, sir; I shot in the hair."

Mr. Brandon. "Shot him in the hair! Egad, that was a severe shot, and a very lucky escape the doctor had of it? Whereabouts in the hair? a whisker, sir; or, perhaps, a pigtail?"

Mr. Swigby. "Haw, haw, haw! shot'n in the hair capital, capital!"

Mr. Gann, who has grown very red. "No, sir, there may be some mistake in my pronounciation, which I didn't expect to have laughed at my hown table."

Mr. Brandon. "My dear sir! I protest and vow "

Mr. Gann. "Never mind it, sir. I gave you my best, and did my best to make you welcome. If you like better to make fun of me, do, sir. That may be the genteel way, but hang me if it's hour way; is it, Jack? Our way; I beg your pardon, sir."

Mr. Swigby. "Jim, Jim! for Heaven's sake! peace and harmony of the evening conviviality social enjoyment didn't mean it did you mean any think. Mr. Whatd-ye-call-'em?"

Mr. Brandon. "Nothing, upon my honour as a gentleman!"

Mr. Gann. "Well, then, there's my hand!" and good-natured Gann tried to forget the insult, and to talk as if nothing had occurred: but he had been wounded in the most sensitive point in which a man can be touched by his superior, and never forgot Brandon's joke. That night at the club, when dreadfully tipsy, he made several speeches on the subject, and burst into tears many times. The pleasure of the evening was quite spoiled; and, as the conversation became rapid and dull, we shall refrain from reporting it. Mr. Brandon speedily took leave, but had not the courage to face the ladies at tea; to whom, it appears the reconciled Becky had brought that refreshing beverage.

CHAPTER IV.

In which Mr. Fitch proclaims his love, and Mr. Brandon prepares for war.

From the splendid halls in which Mrs. Gann was dispensing her hospitality, the celebrated painter, Andrea Fitch rushed forth in a state of mind even more delirious than that which he usually enjoyed. He looked abroad into the street, all there was dusk and lonely; the rain falling heavily, the wind playing Pandean pipes and whistling down the chimney-pots. "I love the storm," said Fitch, solemnly; and he put his great Spanish cloak round him in the most approved manner (it was of so prodigious a size that the tail of it, as it twirled over his shoulder, whisked away a lodging-card from the door of the house opposite Mr. Gann's). "I love the storm and solitude," said he, lighting a large pipe filled full of the fragrant Oronooko; and thus armed, he passed rapidly down the street, his hat cocked over his ringlets.

Andrea did not like smoking, but he used a pipe as a part of his profession as an artist, and as one of the picturesque parts of his costume; in like manner, though he did not fence, he always travelled about with a pair of foils; and quite unconscious of music, nevertheless had a guitar constantly near at hand. Without such properties a painter's spectacle is not complete, and now he determined to add to them another indispensable requisite a mistress. "What great artist was ever without one?" thought he. Long, long had he sighed for some one whom he might love, some one to whom he might address the poems which he was in the habit of making. Hundreds of such fragments had he composed, addressed to Leila, Ximena, Ada imaginary beauties, whom he courted in dreamy verse. With what joy would he replace all those by a real charmer of flesh and blood! Away he went, then, on this evening, the tyranny of Mrs. Gann towards poor Caroline having awakened all his sympathies in the gentle girl's favour, determined now and for ever to make her the mistress of his heart. Monna-Lisa, the Fornarina, Leonardo, Raphael he thought of all these, and vowed that his Caroline should be made famous and live for ever on his canvass. While Mrs. Gann was preparing for her friends, and entertaining them at tea and whist; while Caroline, all unconscious of the love she inspired, was weeping up stairs in her little garret; while Mr. Brandon was enjoying the refined conversation of Gann and Swigby, over their glass and pipe in the office, Andrea walked abroad by the side of the ocean; and, before he was wet through, walked himself into the most fervid affection for poor persecuted Caroline. The reader might have observed him (had not the night been very dark, and a great deal too wet to allow a sensible reader to go abroad on such an errand) at the sea-shore standing on a rock, and drawing from his bosom a locket which contained a curl of hair tied up in riband. He

looked at it for a moment, and then flung it away from him into the black boiling waters below him.

"No other 'air but thine, Caroline, shall ever rest near this 'art!" he said, and kissed the locket and restored it to its place. Light-minded youth, whose hair was it that he thus flung away? How many times had Andrea shewn that very ringlet in strictest confidence to several brethren of the brush, and declared that it was the hair of a dear girl in Spain whom he loved to madness? Alas! 'twas but a fiction of his fevered brain; every one of his friends had a locket of hair, and Andrea, who had no love until now, had clipped this precious token from the wig of a lovely lay-figure, with cast-iron joints and a card-board head, that had stood for some time in his atelier. I don't know that he felt any shame about the proceeding, for he was of such a warm imagination that he had grown to believe that the hair did actually come from a girl in Spain, and only parted with it on yielding to a superior attachment.

This attachment being fixed on, the young painter came home wet through; passed the night in reading Byron; making sketches, and burning them; writing poems to Caroline, and expunging them with pitiless Indian rubber. A romantic man makes a point of sitting up all night, and pacing his chamber; and you may see many a composition of Andrea's dated "Midnight, 10th of March, A. F." with his peculiar flourish over the initials. He was not sorry to be told in the morning, by the ladies at breakfast, that he looked dreadfully pale; and answered, laying his hand on his forehead, and shaking his head gloomily, that he could get no sleep: and then he would heave a huge sigh; and Miss Bella and Miss Linda would look at each other, and grin according to their wont. He was glad, I say, to have his wo remarked, and continued his sleeplessness for two or three nights; but he was certainly still more glad when he heard Mr. Brandon, on the fourth morning, cry out, in a shrill angry voice, to Becky the maid, to give the gentleman up-stairs his compliments Mr. Brandon's compliments and tell him that he could not get a wink of sleep for the horrid trampling he kept up. "I am hauged if I stay in the house a night longer," added the first floor, sharply, "if that Mr. Fitch kicks up such a confounded noise!" Mr. Fitch's point was gained, and henceforth he was as quiet as a mouse; but his wish was not only to be in love, but to let every body know that he was in love, or where is the use of a belle passion?

So, whenever he saw Caroline, at meals, or in the passage, he used to stare at her with the utmost power of his big eyes, and fall to groaning most pathetically. He used to leave his meals untasted, groan, heave sighs, and stare incessantly. Mrs. Gann and her eldest daughters were astonished at these manoeuvres; for they never suspected that any man could possibly be such a fool as to fall in love with Caroline. At length the suspicion came upon them, created immense laughter and delight; and the ladies did not fail to rally Caroline in their usual elegant way. Gann, too, loved a joke (much polite waggery had this worthy man practised in select innparlours for twenty years past), and would call poor Caroline "Mrs. F.;" and say that, instead of Fetch-and-Carry, as he used to name her, he should style her Fitch-and-Carry for the future; and laugh at this great pun, and make many others of a similar sort, that set Caroline blushing.

Indeed, the girl suffered a great deal more from this raillery than at first may be imagined; for after the first awe inspired by Fitch's whiskers had passed away, and he had drawn the young ladies' pictures, and made designs in their albums, and in the midst of their jokes and conversation had remained perfectly silent, the Gann family had determined that the man was an idiot: and, indeed, were not very wide of the mark. In every thing except his own peculiar art honest Fitch was an idiot; and as upon the subject of painting, the Ganns, like most people of their class in England, were profoundly ignorant, it came to pass that he would breakfast and dine for many days in their company, and not utter one single syllable. So they looked upon him with extreme pity and contempt, as a harmless, good-natured, crack-brained creature, quite below them in the scale of intellect, and only to be endured because he paid a certain number of shillings weekly to the Gann exchequer. Mrs. Gann in all companies was accustomed to talk about her idiot. Neighbours and children used to peer at him as he strutted down the street; and though every young lady, including my dear Caroline, is flattered by having a lover, at least they don't like such a lover as this. The Misses Macarty (after having set their caps at him very fiercely, and quarrelled concerning him on his first coming to lodge at their house)

vowed and protested now that he was no better than a chimpanzee; and Caroline and Becky agreed that this insult was as great as any that could be paid to the former. "He's a good creature, too," said Becky, "crack-brained as he is. Do you know, miss, he gave me half a sovereign to buy a new collar, after that business t'other day?"

"And did did Mr , did the first-floor say any thing?" asked Caroline.

"Didn't he! he's a funny gentleman, that Brandon, sure enough; and when I took him up breakfast next morning, asked about Sims the pilot, and what I gied Sims for the collar and brooch, he, he!"

And this was indeed a correct report of Mr. Brandon's conversation with Becky; he had been infinitely amused with the whole transaction, and wrote his friend the viscount a capital facetious account of the manners and customs of the native inhabitants of the Isle of Thanet.

And now, when Mr. Fitch's passion was fully developed as far, that is, as sighs and ogles could give it utterance a curious instance of that spirit of contradiction for which our race is remarkable was seen in the behaviour of Mr. Brandon. Although Caroline, in the depths of her little silly heart, had set him down for her divinity, her wondrous fairy prince, who was to deliver her from her present miserable durance, she had never by word or deed acquainted Brandon with her inclination for him, but had, with instinctive modesty, avoided him more sedulously than before. He, too, had never bestowed a thought upon her. How should such a Jove as Mr. Brandon, from the cloudy summit of his fashionable Olympus, look down and perceive such an humble, retiring being as poor little Caroline Gann? Thinking her at first not disagreeable, he had never, until the day of the dinner, bestowed one single further thought upon her; and only when exasperated by the Miss Macartys' behaviour towards him, did he begin to think how sweet it would be to make them jealous and unhappy.

"The uncouth grinning monsters," said he, "with their horrible court of Bob Smiths and Jack Joneses, daring to look down upon me, a gentleman, me, the celebrated mangeur des caurs a man of genius, fashion, and noble family! If I could but revenge myself on them! What injury can I invent to wound them?"

It is curious to what points a man in his passion will go. Mr. Brandon had long since, in fact, tried to do the greatest possible injury to the young ladies; for it had been, at the first dawn of his acquaintance, as we are bound with much sorrow to confess, his fixed intention to ruin one or the other of them. And when the young ladies had, by their coldness and indifference to him, frustrated this benevolent intention, he straightway facied that they had injured him severely, and cast about for means to revenge himself upon them.

This point, is to be sure, a very delicate one to treat, for in words, at least, the age has grown to be wonderfully moral, and refuses to hear discourses upon such subjects. But human nature, as far as I am able to learn, has not much changed since the time when Richardson wrote and Hogarth painted, a century ago. There are wicked Lovelaces abroad, ladies, now, as then, when it was considered no shame to expose the rogues; and pardon us, therefore, for hinting that such there be. Elegant acts of rouerie, such as that meditated by Mr. Brandon, are often performed still by dashing young men of the world, who think no sin of an amourette, but glory in it, especially if the victim be a person of mean condition. Had Brandon succeeded (such is the high moral state of our British youth), all his friends would have pronounced him, and he would have considered himself, to be a very lucky, captivating dog; nor, as I believe, would he have had a single pang of conscience for the rascally action which he had committed. This supreme act of scoundrelis has man permitted to himself to deceive women. When we consider how he has availed himself of the privilege so created by him, indeed one may sympathise with the advocates of woman's rights who point out this monstrous wrong. We have read of that wretched woman of old whom the pious Pharisees were for stoning incontinently; but we don't hear that they made any outcry against the man who was concerned in the crime. Where was he? Happy, no doubt, and easy in mind, and regaling some choice friends over a bottle with the history of his success.

Being thus injured then, Mr. Brandon longed for revenge. How should he repay these impertinent young women for slighting his addresses? "Pardi!" said he; "just, to punish their pride and insolence, I have a great mind to make love to their sister."

He did not, however, for some time condescend to perform this threat. Eagles such as Brandon do not sail down from the clouds in order to pounce upon small flies, and soar airwards again, contented with such an ignoble booty. In a word, he never gave a minute's thought to Miss Caroline, until further circumstances occurred which caused this great man to consider her as an object somewhat worthy of his remark.

The violent affection suddenly exhibited by Mr. Fitch, the painter, towards poor little Caroline was the point which determined Brandon to begin to act.

“My dear Viscount,” wrote he to the same Lord Cinqbars, whom he formerly addressed, “give me joy, for in a week’s time it is my intention to be violently in love, and love is no small amusement in a watering-place in winter.

“I told you about the fair Juliana Gann and her family. I forgot whether I mentioned how the Juliana had two fair daughters, the Rosalind and the Isabella; and another, Caroline by name, not so good-looking as her half-sisters, but, nevertheless, a pleasing young person.

“Well, when I came hither, I had nothing to do but to fall in love with the two handsomest; and did so, taking many walks with them, talking much nonsense; passing long, dismal evenings over horrid tea with them and their mamma; laying regular siege, in fact, to these Margate beauties, who, according to the common rule in such cases, could not, I thought, last long.

“Miserable deception! disgusting aristocratic blindness!” (Mr. Brandon always assumed that his own high birth and eminent position were granted.) “Would you believe it, that I, who have seen, fought, and conquered in so many places, should have been ignominiously defeated here? Just as American Jackson defeated our Peninsular veterans, I, an old Continental conqueror too, have been overcome by this ignoble enemy. These women have entrenched themselves so firmly in their vulgarity, that I have been beaten back several times with disgrace, being quite unable to make an impression. The monsters, too, keep up a dreadful fire from behind their entrenchments; and, besides, have raised the whole country against me: in a word, all the snobs of their acquaintance are in arms. There is Bob Smith, the linen-draper; Harry Jones, who keeps the fancy tea-shop; young Glauber, the apothecary; and sundry other persons, who are ready to eat me when they see me in the streets; and are all at the beck of the victorious Amazons.

“How is a gentleman to make head against such a canaille as this? a regular jacquerie. Once or twice I have thought of retreating; but a retreat, for sundry reasons I have, is inconvenient. I can’t go to London; I am known at Dover; I believe there is a bill against me at Canterbury; at Chatham, there are sundry quartered regiments whose recognition I should be unwilling to risk. I must stay here and be hanged to the place, until my better star shall rise.

“But I am determined that my stay shall be to some purpose; and so, to shew how persevering I am, I shall make one more trial upon the third daughter, yes, upon the third daughter, a family Cinderella, who shall, I am determined, make her sisters crever with envy. I merely mean fun, you know not mischief, for Cinderella is but a little child; and, besides, I am the most harmless fellow breathing, but must have my joke. Now, Cinderella has a lover, the bearded painter of whom I spoke to you in a former letter. He has lately plunged into the most extraordinary fits of passion for her, and is more mad than even he was before. Wo betide you, O painter! I have nothing to do; a mouth to do that nothing in: in that time, mark my words, I will laugh at that painter’s beard. Should you like a lock of it, or a sofa stuffed with it? there is beard enough: or, should you like to see a specimen of poor little Cinderella’s golden ringlets? Command your slave. I wish I had paper enough to write you an account of a grand Gann dinner, at which I assisted, and of a scene which there took place; and how Cinderella was dressed out, not by a fairy, but by a charitable kitchen,-maid, and was turned out of the room by her indignant mamma, for appearing in the scullion’s finery. But my forte does not lie in such descriptions of polite life. We drank port, and toasts after dinner: here is the menu, and the names and order of the eaters.”

The bill of fare has been given already, and need, not, therefore, be again laid before the public.

“What a fellow that is!” said young Lord Cinqbars, reading the letter to his friends, and in a profound admiration of his tutor’s genius.

“And to think that he was a reading man too, and took a double first,” cried another; “why, the man’s an Admirable Crichton.”

“Upon my life, though, he’s a little too bad,” said a third, who was a moralist. And with this a fresh bowl of milk-punch came reeking from the college butteries, and the jovial party discussed that.

CHAPTER V.

Contains a great deal of complicated love-making.

The Misses Macarty were excessively indignant that Mr. Fitch should have had the audacity to fall in love with their sister; and poor Caroline's life was not, as may be imagined, made much the happier by the envy and passion thus excited. Mr. Fitch's amour was the source of a great deal of pain to her. Her mother would tauntingly say, that as both were beggars, they could not do better than marry; and declared, in the same satirical way, that she should like nothing better than to see a large family of grandchildren about her, to be plagues and burdens upon her, as her daughter was. The short way would have been, when the young painter's intentions were manifest, which they pretty speedily were, to have requested him immediately to quit the house; or, as Mr. Gann said, "to give him the sack at once;" to which measure the worthy man indignantly avowed that he would have resort. But his lady would not allow of any such rudeness; although, for her part, she professed the strongest scorn and contempt for the painter. For the painful fact must be stated: Fitch had a short time previously paid no less a sum than a whole quarter's board and lodging in advance, at Mrs. Gann's humble request, and he possessed his landlady's receipt for that sum; the mention of which circumstance silenced Gann's objections at once. And, indeed, it is pretty certain that, with all her taunts to her daughter, and just abuse of Fitch's poverty, Mrs. Gann in her heart was not altogether averse to the match. In the first place, she loved match-making; next, she would be glad to be rid of her daughter at any rate: and, besides, Fitch's aunt, the auctioneer's wife, was rich, and had no children; painters, as she had heard, make often a great deal of money, and Fitch might be a clever one for aught she knew. So he was allowed to remain in the house, an undeclared but very assiduous lover; and to sigh, and to moan, and make verses and portraits of his beloved, and build castles in the air as best he might. Indeed, our humble Cinderella was in a very curious position. She felt a tender passion for the first floor, and was adored by the second floor, and had to wait upon both at the summons of the bell of either; and as the poor little thing was compelled not to notice any of the sighs and glances which the painter bestowed upon her, she also had schooled herself to maintain a quiet demeanour towards Mr. Brandon, and not allow him to discover the secret which was labouring in her little breast.

I think it may be laid down as a pretty general rule, that most romantic little girls of Caroline's age have such a budding sentiment as this young person entertained; quite innocent, of course; nourished and talked of in delicious secrecy to the confidante of the hour.

Or else what are novels made for? Had Caroline read of Valancourt and Emily for nothing, or gathered no good example from those five tear-fraught volumes which describe the loves of Miss Helen Mar and Sir William Wallace? Many a time had she depicted Brandon in a fancy costume, such as the fascinating Valancourt wore; or painted herself as Helen, tying a sash round her knight's cuirass, and watching him forth to battle. Silly fancies, no doubt; but consider, madam, the poor girl's age and education: the only instruction she had ever received was from these tender, kind-hearted, silly books; the only happiness which Fate had allowed her was in this little silent world of fancy. It would be hard to grudge the poor thing her dreams; and many such did she have, and impart blushing to honest Becky, as they sat by the humble kitchen-fire.

Although it cost her heart a great pang, she had once ventured to implore her mother not to send her upstairs to the lodgers' rooms, for she shrunk at the notion of the occurrence that Brandon should discover her regard for him; but this point had never entered Mrs. Gann's sagacious head. She thought her daughter wished to avoid Fitch, and sternly bade her do her duty, and not give herself such impertinent airs; and, indeed, it can't be said that poor Caroline was very sorry at being compelled to continue to see Brandon. To do both gentlemen justice, neither ever said a word unfit for Caroline to hear. Fitch would have been torn to pieces by a thousand wild horses rather than have breathed a single syllable to hurt her feelings; and Brandon, though by no means so squeamish on ordinary occasions, was innately a gentleman, and, from taste rather than from virtue, was carefully respectful in his behaviour to her.

As for the Misses Macarty themselves, it has been stated that they had already given away their hearts several times; Miss Isabella being at this moment attached to a certain young wine-merchant, and to Lieutenant or Colonel Swabber of the Spanish service; and Miss Rosalind having a decided fondness for a foreign nobleman, with black mustachios, who had paid a visit to Margate. Of Miss Bella's lovers, Swabber had disappeared; but she still met the wine-merchant pretty often, and it is believed had gone very nigh to accept him. As for Miss Rosalind, I am sorry to say that the course of her true love ran by no means smoothly: the Frenchman had turned out to be not a marquess, but a biliard-marker; and a sad, sore subject the disappointment was with the neglected lady.

We should have spoken of it long since, had the subject been one that was much canvassed in the Gann family; but once when Gann had endeavoured to rally his step-daughter on this unfortunate attachment (using for the purpose those delicate terms of wit for which the honest gentleman was always famous), Miss Linda had flown into such a violent fury, and comported herself in a way so dreadful, that James Gann, Esquire, was fairly frightened out of his wits by the threats, screams, and imprecations which she uttered. Miss Bella, who was disposed to be jocose likewise, was likewise awed into silence; for her dear sister talked of tearing her eyes out that minute, and uttered some hints, too, regarding love matters personally affecting Miss Bella herself, which caused that young lady to turn pale-red, to mutter something about "wicked lies," and to leave the room immediately. Nor was the subject ever again broached by the Ganns. Even when Mrs. Gann once talked about that odious French impostor, she was stopped immediately, not by the lady concerned, but by Miss Bella, who cried, sharply, "Mamma, hold your tongue, and don't vex our dear Linda by alluding to any such stuff." It is most probable that the young ladies had had a private conference, which, beginning a little fiercely at first, had ended amicably: and so the marquess was mentioned no more.

Miss Linda, then, was comparatively free (for Bob Smith, the linendraper, and young Glauber, the apothecary, went for nothing); and, very luckily for her, a successor was found for the faithless Frenchman, almost immediately.

This gentleman was a commoner, to be sure, but had a good estate of five hundred a-year, kept his horse and gig, and was, as Mr. Gann remarked, as good a fellow as ever lived. Let us say at once that the new lover was no other than Mr. Swigby. From the day when he had been introduced to the family he appeared to be very much attracted by the two sisters; sent a turkey off his own farm, and six bottles of prime Hollands, to Mr. and Mrs. Gann, in presents; and, in ten short days after his first visit, had informed his friend Gann that he was violently in love with two women, whose names he would never never breathe. The worthy Gann knew right well how the matter was; for he had not failed to remark Swigby's melancholy, and to attribute it to its right cause.

Swigby was forty-eight years of age, stout, hearty, gay, much given to drink, and had never been a lady's man, or, indeed, passed half-a-dozen evenings in ladies society. He thought Gann the noblest and finest fellow in the world. He never heard any singing like James's, nor any jokes like his; nor had met with such an accomplished gentleman or man of the world. "Gann has his faults," Swigby would say at the Bag of Nails; "which of us has not? but I tell you what, he's the greatest trump I ever see." Many scores of scores had he paid for Gann, many guineas and crown-pieces had he lent him, since he came into his property some three years before. What were Swigby's former pursuits I can't tell. What need we care? Hadn't he five hundred a-year now, and a horse and gig? Ay, that he had.

Since his accession to fortune, this gay young bachelor had taken his share (what he called "his whack") of pleasure; had been at one nay, perhaps, at two public-houses every night; and had been drunk, I make no doubt, nearly a thousand times in the course of the three years. Many people had tried to cheat him; but, no, no! he knew what was what, and in all matters of money was simple and shrewd. Gann's gentility won him; his bragging, his ton, and the stylish tuft on his chin. To be invited to his house was a proud moment; and when he went away, after the banquet described in the last chapter, he was in a perfect ferment of love and liquor.

"What a stylish woman is that Mrs. Gann!" thought he, as he tumbled into bed at his inn: "fine she must have been as a gal! fourteen stone now, without saddle and bridle, and no mistake. And them Miss Macartys, Jupiter! what spanking, handsome, elegant creatures! real elegance in both on 'em! Such hair! black's the word as black as my mare; such cheeks, such necks, and shoulders!" At noon he repeated these observations to Gann himself, as he walked up and down the pier with that gentleman, smoking Manilla cheroots. He was in raptures with his evening. Gann received his praises with much majestic good-humour.

“Blood, sir!” said he, “blood’s every thing! Them gals have been brought up as few ever have. I don’t speak of myself; but their mother their mother’s a lady, sir. Shew me a woman in England as is better bred or knows the world more than my Juliana!”

“It’s impawisible,” said Swigby.

“Think of the company we’ve kep, sir, before our misfortunes the fust in the land. Brandenburg House, sir England’s injured queen. Law bless you, Juliana was always there!”

“I make no doubt, sir; you can see it in her,” said Swigby, solemnly.

“And as for those gals, why, aint they related to the fust families in Ireland, sir? In course, they are. As I said before, blood’s every thing; and those young women have the best of it: they are connected with the reglar old noblesse.”

“They have the best of every think, I’m sure,” said Swigby, “and deserve it too,” and relapsed into his morning remarks. “What creatures! what elegance! what hair and eyes, sir! black, and all’s black, as I say. What complexion, sir! ay, and what makes too! Such a neck and shoulders I never see!”

Gann, who had his hands in his pockets (his friend’s arm being hooked into one of his), here suddenly withdrew his hand from its hiding-place, clenched his fist, assumed a horrible knowing grin, and gave Mr. Swigby such a blow in the ribs as well-nigh sent him into the water. “You sly dog!” said Mr. Gann, with inexpressible emphasis, “you’ve found that out too, have you? Have a care, Joe, my boy, have a care.”

And herewith Gann and Joe burst into tremendous roars of laughter, fresh explosions taking place at intervals of five minutes during the rest of the walk. The two friends parted exceedingly happy; and when they met that evening at “The Nails,” Gann drew Swigby mysteriously into the bar, and thrust into his hand a triangular piece of pink paper, which the latter read:

“Mrs. Gann and the Misses Macarty request the honour and pleasure of Mr. Swigby’s company (if you have no better engagement) to tea to-morrow evening, at half-past five.

“Margaretta Cottage, Salamanca Road North. Thursday evening.”

The faces of the two gentlemen were wonderfully expressive of satisfaction as this communication passed between them. And I am led to believe that Mrs. Gann had been unusually pleased with her husband’s conduct on that day, for honest James had no less than thirteen and sixpence in his pocket, and insisted, as usual, upon standing glasses all round. Joe Swigby, left alone in the little parlour behind the bar, called for a sheet of paper, a new pen and a wafer, and in the space of half-an-hour concocted a very spirited and satisfactory answer to this note; which was carried off by Gann, and duly delivered. Punctually at half-past five Mr. Joseph Swigby knocked at Margaretta Cottage door, in his new coat with glistering brass buttons, his face clean shaved, and his great ears shining over

his great shirt-collar, delightfully bright and red.

What happened at this tea-party it is needless here to say; but Swigby came away from it quite as much enchanted as before, and declared that the duets, sung by the ladies in hideous discord, were the sweetest music he had ever heard. He sent the gin and the turkey the next day; and, of course, was invited to dine. The dinner was followed up on his part by an offer to drive all the young ladies and their mamma into the country; and he hired a very smart barouche to conduct them. The invitation was not declined; and Fitch, too, was asked by Mr. Swigby, in the height of his good-humour, and accepted with the utmost delight. "Me and Joe will go on the box," said Gann. "You four ladies and Mr. Fitch shall go inside. Carry must go bodkin; but she aint very big."

"Carry, indeed, will stop at home," said her mamma; "she's not fit to go out."

At which poor Fitch's jaw fell: it was in order to ride with her that he had agreed to accompany the party; nor could he escape now, having just promised so eagerly.

"Oh, don't let's have that proud Brandon," said the young ladies, when the good-natured Mr. Swigby proposed to ask that gentleman; and therefore he was not invited to join them in their excursion: but he stayed at home very unconcernedly, and saw the barouche and its load drive off. Somebody else looked at it from the parlour-window with rather a heavy heart, and that some one was poor Caroline. The day was bright and sunshiny; the spring was beginning early; it would have been pleasant to have been a lady for once, and to have driven along in a carriage with prancing horses. Mr. Fitch looked after her in a very sheepish, melancholy way; and was so dismal and silly during the first part of the journey, that Miss Linda, who was next him, said to her papa that she would change places with him; and actually mounted the box by the side of the happy, trembling Mr. Swigby. How proud he was, to be sure! How knowingly did he spank the horses along, and fling out the shillings at the turnpikes!

"Bless you, he don't care for change!" said Gann, as one of the toll-takers offered to render some copers; and Joe felt infinitely obliged to his friend for setting off his amiable qualities in such a way.

O mighty Fate, that over us miserable mortals rulest supreme, with what small means are thy ends effected! with what scornful ease and mean instruments does it please thee to govern mankind! Let each man think of the circumstances of his life, and how its lot has been determined. The getting up a little earlier or later, the turning down this street or that, the eating of this dish or the other, may influence all the years and actions of a future life. Mankind walks down the left-hand side of Regent Street instead of the right, and meets a friend who asks him to dinner, and goes, and finds the turtle remarkably good, and the iced punch very cool and pleasant; and, being in a merry, jovial, idle mood, has no objection to a social rubber of whist nay, to a few more glasses of that cool punch. In the most careless, good-humoured way, he loses a few points; and still feels thirsty, and loses a few more points; and, like a man of spirit, increases his stakes, to be sure, and just by that walk down Regent Street is ruined for life. Or he walks down the right-hand side of Regent Street instead of the left, and, good Heavens! who is that charming young creature who has just stepped into her carriage from Mr. Fraser's shop, and to whom and her mamma Mr. Fraser has made the most elegant bow in the world? It is the lovely Miss Moidore, with a hundred thousand pounds, who has remarked your elegant figure, and regularly drives to town on the first of the month, to purchase her darling Magazine. You drive after her as fast as the hack-cab will carry you. She reads the Magazine the whole way. She stops at her papa's elegant villa at Hampstead, with a conservatory, a double coach-house, and a parklike paddock. As the lodge-gate separates you from that dear girl, she looks back just once, and blushes. Erubuit, salva est res. She has blushed, and you are all right. In a week you are introduced to the family, and pronounced a charming young fellow of high principles. In three weeks you have danced twenty-nine quadrilles with her, and whisked her through several miles of waltzes. In a month Mrs. O'Flaherty has flung herself into the arms of her mother, just having come from a visit to the village of Gretna, near Carlisle; and you have an account at your banker's ever after. What is the cause of all this good fortune? A walk on a particular side of Regent Street. And so true and indisputable is this fact, that there is a young north country gentleman, with whom I am acquainted, that daily paces up and down the abovenamed street for many hours, fully expecting that such an adventure will happen to him; for which end he keeps a cab in readiness at the corner of Vigo Lane.

Now, after a dissertation in this history, the reader is pretty sure to know that a moral is coming; and the facts connected with our tale, which are to be drawn from the above little essay on fate, are simply these: 1. If Mr. Fitch had not heard Mr. Swigby invite all the ladies, he would have refused Swigby's invitation, and stayed at home. 2. If he had not been in the carriage, it is quite certain that Miss Rosalind Macarty would not have been seated by him on the back seat. 3. If he had not been sulky, she never would have asked her papa to let her take his place on the box. 4. If she had not taken her papa's place on the box, not one of the circumstances would have happened which did happen; and which were as follows:

1. Miss Bella remained inside.

2. Mr. Swigby, who was wavering between the two, like a certain animal between two bundles of hay, was determined by this circumstance, and made proposals to Miss Linda, whispering to Miss Linda: "Miss, I aint equal to the like of you; but I'm hearty, healthy, and have five hundred a-year. Will you marry me?" In fact, this very speech had been taught him by cunning Gann, who saw well enough that Swigby would speak to one or other of his daughters. And to it the young lady replied, also in a whispering, agitated tone, "Law, Mr. S.! What an odd man! How can you?" And, after a little pause, added, "Speak to mamma."

3. (And this is the main point of my story.) If little Caroline had been allowed to go out, she never would have been left alone with Brandon at Margate. When Fate wills that something should come to pass, she sends forward a million of little circumstances to clear and prepare the way.

In the month of April (as indeed in half-a-score of other months of the year) the reader may have remarked that the cold north-east wind is prevalent; and that when, tempted by a glimpse of sunshine he issues forth to take the air, he receives not only it, but such a quantity of it as is enough to keep him shivering through the rest of the miserable month. On one of these happy days of English weather (it was the very day before the pleasure party described in the last chapter) Mr. Brandon, cursing heartily his country, and thinking how infinitely more congenial to him were the winds and habits prevalent in other nations, was marching over the cliffs near Margate, in the midst of a storm of shrill east wind which no ordinary mortal could bear, when he found perched on the cliff, his fingers blue with cold, the celebrated Andrea Fitch, employed in sketching a land or a sea-scape on a sheet of grey paper.

"You have chosen a fine day for sketching," said Mr. Brandon, bitterly, his thin aquiline nose peering out livid from the fur collar

of his coat.

Mr. Fitch smiled, understanding the allusion.

"An hartist, sir," said he, "doesn't mind the coldness of the weather. There was a chap in the Academy who took sketches twenty degrees below zero in Hiceland Mount 'Ecla, sir! E was the man that gave the first hidea of Mount 'Ecla for the Surrey Zoological Gardens."

"He must have been a wonderful enthusiast!" said Mr. Brandon; "I fancy that most men would prefer to sit at home, and not numb their fingers in such a freezing storm as this!"

"Storm, sir!" replied Fitch, majestically; "I live in a storm, sir! A true artist is never so appy as when he can have the advantage to gaze upon yonder tempestuous hocean in one of its hangry moods."

"Ay, there comes the steamer," answered Mr. Brandon; "I can fancy that there are a score of unhappy people on board who are not artists, and would wish to behold your ocean quiet."

"They are not poets, sir; the glorious hever-changing expression of the great countenance of Nature is not seen by them, no more than the storm and the sunshine which rages and gleams halternately in the face of my favourite hactor, Mr. M'Hasterisk, is seen by the gents in the gallery. They are too far away from it, sir; those vulgar people, sucking their horanges and paying their shilling. I should consider myself unworthy my hart, if I could not bear a little privation of cold or 'eat for its sake. And besides, sir, whatever their hardships may be, such a sight hamply repays me; for, although my private sorrows may be (has they are) tremendous, I never can look abroad upon the green hearth and hawful sea, without in a measure forgetting my personal woes and wrongs; for what right has a poor creature like me to think of his affairs in the presence of such a spectacle as this? I can't, sir; I feel ashamed of myself; I bow my head and am quiet. When I set myself to examining hart, sir (by which I mean nature), I don't dare to think of any thing else."

"You worship a very charming and consoling mistress," answered Mr. Brandon, with a supercilious air, lighting and beginning to smoke a cigar; "your enthusiasm does you credit."

"If you have another," said Andrea Fitch, "I should like to smoke one, for you seem to have a real feeling about hart, and I was a-getting so deucedly cold here that really there was scarcely any bearing of it."

"The cold is very severe," replied Mr. Brandon.

"No, no, it's not the weather, sir!" said Mr. Fitch; "it's here, sir, here" (pointing to the left side of his waistcoat).

"What you, too, have had sorrows?"

"Sorrows, sir! hagonies hagonies, which I have never unfolded to any mortal! I have endured halmost heavery thing. Poverty, sir, 'unger, hobloquy, 'opeless love! but for my hart, sir, I should be the most miserable wretch in the world!"

And herewith Mr. Fitch began to pour forth into Mr. Brandon's ears the history of some of those sorrows under which he laboured, and which he communicated to every single person who would listen to him.

Mr. Brandon was greatly amused by Fitch's prattle, and the latter told him under what privations he had studied his art; how he had starved for three years in Paris and Rome, while labouring at his profession; how meanly jealous the Royal Academy was, which would never exhibit a single one of his pictures; how he had been driven from the Heternal City by the attentions of an immense fat Mrs. Carrickfergus, who absolutely proposed marriage to him; and how he was at this moment (a fact of which Mr. Brandon was already quite aware) madly and desperately in love with one of the most beautiful maidens in this world. For Fitch, having a mistress to his heart's desire, was boiling with impatience to have a confidant; what, indeed, would be the joy of love, if one were not allowed to speak of one's feelings to a friend who could know how to sympathise with them? Fitch was sure Brandon did, because Brandon was the very first person with whom the painter had talked since he had come to the resolution recorded in the last chapter.

"I hope she is as rich as that unlucky Mrs. Carrickfergus, whom you treated so cruelly?" said the confidant, affecting entire ignorance.

"Rich, sir! no, I thank Heaven, she has not a penny!" said Fitch.

"I presume, then, you are yourself independent," said Brandon, smiling; "for, in the marriage state, one or the other of the parties concerned should bring a portion of the filthy lucre?"

"Haven't I my profession, sir?" said Fitch, majestically, having declared five minutes before that he starved in his profession. "Do you suppose a painter gets nothing? Haven't I horders from the first people in Europe? commissions, sir, to hexecute history-pieces, battle-pieces, halter-pieces?"

"Master-pieces, I am sure," said Brandon, bowing politely; "for a gentleman of your astonishing genius can do no other."

The delighted artist received this compliment with many blushes, and vowed and protested that his performances were not really worthy of such high praise; but he fancied Mr. Brandon a great connoisseur, nevertheless, and unburdened his mind to him in a manner still more open. Fitch's sketch was by this time finished; and, putting his drawing implements together, he rose, and the gentlemen walked away. The sketch was hugely admired by Mr. Brandon, and when they came home, Fitch, culling it dexterously out of his book, presented it in a neat speech to his friend, "the gifted hamateur."

"The gifted hamateur" received the drawing with a profusion of thanks, and so much did he value it, that he had actually torn off a piece to light a cigar with, when he saw that words were written on the other side of the paper, and deciphered the following:

"SONG OF THE VIOLET.

A humble flower long time I pined, Upon the solitary plain, And trembled at the angry wind, And shrunk before the bitter rain.

And, oh! how in a blessed hour, A passing wanderer chanced to see; And, pitying the lonely flower, To stoop and gather me. I fear no more the tempest rude, Or dreary heath no more I pine; But left my cheerless solitude, To deck the breast of Caroline. Alas! our days are brief at best, Nor loug I feel will mine endure, Though shelter'd here upon a breast So gentle and so pure. It draws the fragrance from my leaves, It robs me of my sweetest breath; And every time it falls and heaves, It warns me of my coming death. But one I know would glad forego All joys of life to be as I; An hour to rest on that sweet breast, And then, contented die.

"Andrea."

When Mr. Brandon had finished the perusal of these verses, he laid them down with an air of considerable vexation. "Egad!" said he, "this fellow, fool as he is, is not so great a fool as he seems; and if he goes on in this way, may finish by turning the girl's head.

They can't resist a man if he but presses hard enough I know they can't!" And here Mr. Brandon mused over his various experience, which confirmed his observation, that be a man ever so silly, a gentlewoman will yield to him out of sheer weariness. And he thought of several cases in which, by the persevering application of copies of verses, young ladies had been brought, from dislike to sufferance of a man, from sufferance to partiality, and from partiality to St. George's, Hanover Square. "A ruffian who murders his h's to carry off such a delicate little creature as that!" cried he in a transport: "it shall never be if I can prevent it!" He thought Caroline more and more beautiful every instant, and was himself by this time almost as much in love with her as Fitch himself.

Mr. Brandon, then, saw Fitch depart in Swigby's carriage with no ordinary feelings of pleasure. Miss Caroline was not with them. "Now is my time!" thought Brandon; and, ringing the bell, he inquired with some anxiety, from Becky, where Miss Caroline was? It must be confessed that mistress and maid were at their usual occupation, working and reading novels in the back-parlour. Poor Carry! what other pleasure had she?

She had not gone through many pages, or Becky advanced many stitches in the darning of that table-cloth which the good housewife, Mrs. Gann, had confided to her charge, when an humble knock was heard at the door of the sitting-room, that caused the blushing Caroline to tremble and drop her book, as Miss Lydia Languish does in the play.

Mr. George Brandon entered with a very demure air. He held in his hand a black satin neck-scarf, of which a part had come to be broken. He could not wear it in its present condition, that was evident; but Miss Caroline was blushing and trembling a great deal too much to suspect that this wicked Brandon had himself torn his own scarf with his own hands one moment before he entered the room. I don't know whether Becky had any suspicions of this fact, or whether it was only the ordinary roguish look which she had when any thing pleased her, that now lighted up her eyes and caused her mouth to expand smilingly, and her fat, red cheeks to gather up into wrinkles.

"I have had a sad misfortune," said he, "and should be very much obliged indeed to Miss Caroline to repair it." (Caroline was said with a kind of tender hesitation that caused the young woman, so named, to blush more than ever.) "It is the only stock I have in the world, and I can't go bare-necked into the streets; can I, Mrs. Becky?"

"No sure," said Becky.

"Not unless I was a celebrated painter, like Mr. Fitch," added Mr. Brandon, with a smile, which was reflected speedily upon the face of the lady whom he wished to interest. "Those great geniuses," he added, "may do any thing."

"For," says Becky, "hee's got enough beard on hees faze to keep hees neck warm!" At which remark, though Miss Caroline very properly said, "For shame, Becky!" Mr. Brandon was so convulsed with laughter, that he fairly fell down upon the sofa on which Miss Caroline was seated. How she startled and trembled, as he flung his arm upon the back of the couch! Mr. Brandon did not attempt to apologise for what was an act of considerable impertinence, but continued mercilessly to make many more jokes concerning poor Fitch, which were cleverly suited to the comprehension of the maid and the young mistress, as to elicit a great number of roars of laughter from the one, and to cause the other to smile in spite of herself. Indeed Brandon had gained a vast reputation for wit with Becky in his morning colloquies with her, and she was ready to laugh at any single word which it pleased him to utter. How many of his good things had this honest scullion carried down stairs to Caroline, and how pitilessly had she contrived to estropier them in their passage from the drawing-room to the kitchen.

Well, then, while Mr. Brandon "was a-going on," as Becky said, Caroline had taken his stock, and her little fingers were occupied in repairing the damage he had done to it. Was it clumsiness on her part? Certain it is that the rent took several minutes to repair: of them the mangeur des caurs did not fail to profit, conversing in an easy, kindly, confidential way, which set our fluttering heroine speedily at rest, and enabled her to reply to his continual queries, addressed with much adroitness and an air of fraternal interest, by a number of those pretty, little, timid, whispering, yeses and noes, and those gentle quick looks of the eyes, where-with young and modest maidens are wont to reply to the questions of seducing young bachelors. Dear yeses and noes, how beautiful you are when gently whispered by pretty lips! glances of quick innocent eyes, how charming are you! and how charming the soft blush that steals over the cheek, towards which the dark lashes are drawing the full blue-veined eyelids down. And here let the writer of this solemnly declare, upon his veracity, that he means nothing but what is right and moral. But look, I pray you, at an innocent, bashful girl, of sixteen; if she be but good, she must be pretty. She is a woman now, but a girl still. How delightful all her ways are! How exquisite her instinctive grace! All the arts of all the Cleopatras are not so captivating as her nature. Who can resist her confiding simplicity, or fail to be touched and conquered by her gentle appeal to protection?

All this Mr. Brandon saw and felt, as many a gentleman educated in his school will. It is not because a man is a rascal himself that he cannot appreciate virtue and purity very keenly; and our hero did feel for this simple, gentle, tender, artless creature, a real respect and sympathy a sympathy so fresh and delicious, that he was but too glad to yield to it and indulge in it, and which he mistook, probably, for a real love of virtue, and a return to the days of his innocence.

Indeed, Mr. Brandon, it was no such thing. It was only because vice and debauch were stale for the moment, and this pretty virtue new. It was only because your cloyed appetite was long unused to this simple meat that you felt so keen a relish for it; and I thought of you only the last blessed Saturday, at Mr. Lovegrove's, West India Tavern, Blackwall, where a company of fifteen epicures, who had scorned the turtle, poohpoohed the punch, and sent away the whitebait, did suddenly and simultaneously make a rush upon a dish of beans and bacon. And if the assiduous reader of novels will think upon some of the most celebrated works of that species, which have lately appeared in this and other countries, he will find, amidst much debauch of sentiment, and enervating dissipation of intellect, that the writers have from time to time a returning appetite for innocence and freshness, and indulge us with occasional repasts of beans and bacon. How long Mr. Brandon remained by Miss Caroline's side I have no means of judging; it is probable, however, that he stayed a much longer time than was necessary for the mending of his black satin stock. I believe, indeed, that he read to the ladies a great part of the *Mysteries of Udolpho*, over which they were engaged; and interspersed his reading with many remarks of his own, both tender and satirical. Whether he was in her company half-an-hour or four hours, this is certain, that the time slipped away very swiftly with poor Caroline; and when a carriage drove up to the door, and shrill voices were heard crying "Becky!" "Carry!" and Rebecca, the maid, starting up, cried, "Lor', here's missus!" and Brandon jumped rather suddenly off the sofa, and fled up the stairs when all these events took place, I know Caroline felt very sad indeed, and opened the door for her parents with a very heavy heart.

Swigby helped Miss Linda off the box with excessive tenderness. Papa was bustling and roaring in high goodhumour, and called for "hot water and tumblers immediately." Mrs. Gann was gracious; and Miss Bell sulky, as she had good reason to be, for she insisted upon taking the front seat in the carriage before her sister, and had lost a husband by that very piece of obstinacy.

Mr. Fitch, as he entered, bestowed upon Carloline a heavy sigh and a deep stare, and silently ascended to his own apartment. He was lost in thought. The fact is, he was trying to remember some verses regarding a violet, which he had made five years before, and which he had somehow lost from among his papers. So he went up stairs, muttering, "A humble flower long since I pined Upon a solitary plain "

CHAPTER VI.

Describes a shabby-genteel Marriage, and more Love-making.

It will not be necessary to describe the particulars of the festivities which took place on the occasion of Mr. Swigby's marriage to Miss Macarty. The happy pair went off in a postchaise and four to the bridegroom's country-seat, accompanied by the bride's blushing sister: and when the first week of their matrimonial bliss was ended, that worthy woman, Mrs. Gann, with her excellent husband, went to visit the young couple. Miss Caroline was left, therefore, sole mistress of the house, and received especial cautions from her mamma as to prudence, economy, the proper management of the lodgers' bills, and the necessity of staying at home.

Considering that one of the gentlemen remaining in the house was a declared lover of Miss Caroline, I think it is a little surprising that her mother should leave her unprotected; but in this matter the poor are not so particular as the rich; and so this young lady was consigned to the guardianship of her own innocence, and the lodgers' loyalty: nor was there any reason why Mrs. Gann should doubt the latter. As for Mr. Fitch, he would have far preferred to be torn to pieces by ten thousand wild horses, rather than to offer to the young woman any unkindness or insult; and how was Mrs. Gann to suppose that her other lodger was a whit less loyal? that he had any partiality for a person of whom he always spoke of as a mean, insignificant, little baby? So, without any misgiving, and in a onehorse fly with Mr. Gann by her side, with a bran new green coat and gilt buttons, Juliana Gann went forth to visit her beloved child, and console her in her married state.

And here, were I allowed to occupy the reader with extraneous matters, I could give a very curious and touching picture of the Swigby menage. Mrs. S., I am sorry to say, quarrelled with her husband on the third day after their marriage, and for what, pr'ythee? Why, because, he would smoke, and no gentleman ought to smoke. Swigby, therefore, patiently resigned his pipe, and with it one of the quietest, happiest, kindest companions of his solitude. He was a different man after this; his pipe was as a limb of his body. Having on Tuesday conquered the pipe, Mrs. Swigby, on Thursday, did battle with her husband's rum-and-water, a drink of an odious smell, as she very properly observed; and the smell was doubly odious, now that the tobacco smoke no longer perfumed the parlourbreeze, and counteracted the odours of the juice of West India sugar-canes. On Thursday, then, Mr. Swigby and rum held out pretty bravely. Mrs. S. attacked the punch with some sharpshooting, and fierce charges of vulgarity; to which S. replied, by opening a battery of oaths (chiefly directed to his own eyes, however), and loud protestations that he would never surrender. In three days more, however, the

rum-and-water was gone. Mr. Swigby, defeated and prostrate, had given up that stronghold; his young wife and sister were triumphant; and his poor mother, who occupied her son's house, and had till now taken her place at the head of his table, saw that her empire was for ever lost, and was preparing suddenly to succumb to the imperious claims of the new mistress of the mansion.

All this, I say, I wish I had the liberty to describe at large, as also to narrate the arrival of majestic Mrs. Gann; and a battle-royal which speedily took place between the two worthy mothers-in-law. Noble is the hatred of ladies who stand in this relation to each other; each sees what injury the other is inflicting upon her darling child; each mistrusts, detests, and to her offspring privily abuses the arts and crimes of the other. A house with a wife is often warm enough; a house with her wife and mother is rather warmer than any spot on the known globe; a house with two mother-in-law is so excessively hot, that it can be likened to no place on earth at all, but one must go lower for a simile. Think of a wife who despises her husband, and teaches him manners; of an elegant sister, who joins in rallying him, (this was almost the only point of union between Bella and Linda now, for since the marriage, Linda hated her sister consumedly.) Think, I say, of two mothers-in-law, one, large, pompous, and atrociously genteel, another, coarse and shrill, determined not to have her son put upon, and you may see what a happy fellow Joe Swigby was, and into what a piece of good luck he had fallen.

What would have become of him without his father-in-law? Indeed one shudders to think; but the consequence of that gentleman's arrival and intervention was speedily this: About four o'clock, when the dinner was removed, and the quarrelling used commonly to set in, the two gents (we love to call them by that delightful title) the two gents took their hats, and sallied out; and as one has found when the body is inflamed that the application of a stringent medicine may cause the ill to disappear for a while, only to return elsewhere with greater force; in like manner, Mrs. Swigby's sudden victory over the pipe and rum-and-water, although it had caused a temporary cessation of the evil of which she complained, was quite unable to stop it altogether; it disappeared from one spot only to rage with more violence elsewhere. In Swigby's parlour, rum and tobacco odours arose no more (except, indeed, when Mrs. Gann would partake of the former as a restorative); but if you could have seen the Half-Moon and Snuffers down the village; if you could have seen the good dry skittle-ground which stretched, at the back of that inn, and the window of the back parlour which superintended that skittle-ground; if the hour at which you beheld these objects was evening, what time the rustics from their toils released, trolled the stout ball amidst the rattling pins (the oaken pins that standing in the sun did cast long shadows on the golden sward); if you had remarked all this, I say, you would have also seen in the back parlour a tallow candle (winking in the shade, and standing on a little greasy table. Upon the greasy table was a pewter porter-pot, and to the left a teaspoon glittering in a glass of gin; close to each of these two delicacies was a pipe of tobacco; and behind the pipes sat Mr. Gann and Mr. Swigby, who now made the Half-Moon and Snuffers their usual place of resort, and forgot their married cares.

In spite of all our promises of brevity, these things have taken some space to describe; and the reader must also know that some short interval elapsed ere they occurred. A month at least passed away before Mr. Swigby had decidedly taken up his position at the little inn: all this time, Gann was staying with his son-in-law, at the latter's most earnest request; and Mrs. Gann remained under the same roof at her own desire. Not the hints of her daughter, not the broad questions of the dowager Mrs. Swigby, could induce honest Mrs. Gann to stir from her quarters. She had had her lodger's money in advance, as was the worthy woman's custom; she knew Margate in April was dreadful dull, and she determined to enjoy the country until the jovial town season arrived. The Canterbury coachman, whom Gann knew, and who passed through the village, used to take her cargo of novels to and fro; and the old lady made herself as happy as circumstances would allow. Should any thing of importance occur during her mamma's absence, Caroline was to make use of the same conveyance, and inform Mrs. Gann in a letter.

Miss Caroline looked at her papa and mamma as the vehicle which was to bear them to the newly married couple moved up the street; but, strange to say, she did not feel that heaviness of heart which she before had experienced when forbidden to share the festivities of her family, but was on this occasion more happy than any one of them, so happy, that the young woman felt quite ashamed herself; and Becky was fain to remark how her mistress's cheek flushed, and her eye sparkled (and turned perpetually to the door), and her whole little frame was in a flutter.

"I wonder if he will come," said the little heart; and the eyes turned and looked at that well-known sofa-corner, where he had been placed a fortnight before. He looked exactly like Lord Byron, that he did, with his pale brow, and his slim bare neck; only not half so wicked no, no. She was sure that her Mr. Br her Bran her George, was as good as he was beautiful. Don't let us be angry with her for calling him George; the girl was bred in an humble sentimental school; she did not know enough of society to be squeamish; she never thought that she could be his really, and gave way in the silence of her fancy to the full extent of her affection for him.

She had not looked at the door above twenty-five times that is to say, her parents had not quitted the house ten minutes when, sure enough, the latch did rattle, the door opened, and with a faint blush on his cheek divine George entered. He was going to make some excuse, as on the former occasion; but he looked first into Caroline's face, which was beaming with joy and smiles; and the little thing, in return, regarded him, and made room for him on the sofa. O, sweet instinct of love! Brandon had no need of excuses, but sat down, and talked away as easily, happily, and confidentially, and neither took any note of time. Andrea Fitch (the sly dog!) witnessed the Gann departure with feelings of exultation, and had laid some deep plans of his own with regard to Miss Caroline. So strong was his confidence in his friend on the first floor, that Andrea actually descended to those apartments, on his way to Mrs. Gann's parlour, in order to consult Mr. Brandon, and make known to him his plan of operations.

It would have made your heart break, or, at the very least, your sides ache, to behold the countenance of poor Mr. Fitch, as he thrust his bearded head in at the door of the parlour. There was Brandon lolling on the sofa, at his ease; Becky in full good humour; and Caroline, always absurdly inclined to blush, blushing at Fitch's appearance more than ever! She could not help looking from him slyly and gently into the face of Mr. Brandon. That gentleman saw the look, and did not fail to interpret it. It was a confession of love an appeal for protection. A thrill of delightful vanity shot through Brandon's frame, and made his heart throb, as he noticed this look of poor Caroline. He answered it with one of his own that was cruelly wrong, cruelly triumphant, and sarcastic; and he shouted out to Mr. Fitch, with a loud, disconcerted tone, which only made that young painter feel more awkward than ever he had been. Fitch made some clumsy speech regarding his dinner, whether that meal was to be held, in the absence of the parents, at the usual hour, and then took his leave.

The poor fellow had been pleasing himself with the notion of taking this daily meal *tete-a-tete* with Caroline. What progress would

he make in her heart during the absence of her parents! Did it not seem as if the first marriage had been arranged on purpose to facilitate his own? He determined thus his plan of campaign. He would make, in the first place, the most beautiful drawing of Caroline that ever was seen. "The conversations I'll 'ave with her during the sittings," says he, "will carry me a pretty long way; the drawing itself will be so beautiful, that she can't resist that. I'll write her verses in her halbum, and make designs hallusive of my passion for her." And so our pictorial Alnaschar dreamed and dreamed. He had, ere long, established himself in a house in Newman Street, with a footman to open the door. Caroline was up-stairs, his wife, and her picture the crack portrait of the Exhibition. With her by his side, Andrea Fitch felt he could do any thing. Half-a-dozen carriages at his door, a hundred guineas for a kit-cat portrait. Lady Fitch, Sir Andrew Fitch, the President's chain, all sorts of bright visions floated before his imagination; and as Caroline was the first precious condition of his preferment, he determined forthwith to begin, and realise that.

But, Oh, disappointment! on coming down to dinner at three o'clock to that charming tete-a-tete, he found no less than four covers laid on the table, Miss Caroline blushing (according to custom) at the head of it; Becky, the maid, grinning at the foot; and Mr. Brandon sitting quietly on one side, as much at home, forsooth, as if he had held that position for a year.

The fact is, that the moment after Fitch retired, Brandon, inspired by jealousy, had made the same request which had been brought forward by the painter; nor must the ladies be too angry with Caroline, if, after some scruples and struggles, she yielded to the proposal. Remember that the girl was the daughter of a boardinghouse, accustomed to continual dealings with her mamma's lodgers, and up to the present moment thinking herself as safe among them as the young person who walked through Ireland with a bright gold wand, in the scene of Mr. Thomas Moore. On the point, however, of Bradon's admission, it must be confessed, for Caroline's honour, that she did hesitate. She felt that she entertained very different feelings towards him to those with which any other lodger or man had inspired her, and made a little movement of resistance at first. But the poor girl's modesty overcame this, as well as her wish. Ought she to avoid him? Ought she not to stifle any preference which she might feel towards him, and act towards him with the same indifference which she would shew to any other person in a like situation? Was not Mr. Fitch to dine at table as usual, and had she refused him? So reasoned she in her heart. Silly, little, cunning heart it knew that all these reasons were lies, and that she should avoid the man; but she was willing to accept of any pretext for meeting, and so made a kind of compromise with her conscience. Dine he should; but Becky should dine too, and be a protector to her. Becky laughed loudly at the idea of this, and took her place with huge delight.

It is needless to say a word about this dinner, as we have already described a former meal; suffice it to say, that the presence of Brandon caused the painter to be excessively sulky and uncomfortable; and so gave his rival, who was gay, triumphant, and at his ease, a decided advantage over him. Nor did Brandon neglect to use this to the utmost. When Fitch retired to his own apartments not jealous as yet, for the simple fellow believed every word of Brandon's morning conversation with him but vaguely annoyed and disappointed. Brandon assailed him with all the force of ridicule; at all his manners, words, looks, he joked mercilessly; laughed at his low birth (Miss Gann, he it remembered, had been taught to pique herself upon her own family), and invented a series of stories concerning his past life which made the ladies for Becky, being in the parlour, must be considered as such conceive the greatest contempt and pity for the poor painter.

After this, Mr. Brandon would expatiate with much eloquence upon his own superior attractions and qualities. He talked of his cousin, Lord So-and-so with the easiest air imaginable; told Caroline what princesses he had danced with at foreign courts; frighdanced with at foreign courts; frightened her with accounts of dreadful duels he had fought; in a ward, “posed” before her as hero of the most sublime kind. How the poor little thing drank in all his tales; and how she and Becky (for they now occupied the same bedroom) talked over them at night!

Miss Caroline, as Mr. Fitch has already stated, had in her possession, like almost every young lady in England, a little square book called an album, containing prints from annuals; hideous designs of flowers; old pictures of faded fashions, cut out and pasted into the leaves; and small scraps of verses selected from Byron, Landon, or Mrs. Hemans; and written out in the girlish hand of the owner of the book. Brandon looked over this work with a good deal of curiosity for the contended, always, that a girl’s disposition, always, that a girl’s disposition might be learned from the character of this museum of hers and found here several sketches by Mr. Fitch, for which, before that gentleman had declared his passion for her, Caroline had begged. These sketches the sentimental painter had illustrated with poetry, which, I must confess, Caroline thought charming, until now, when Mr. Brandon took occasion to point out how wretchedly poor the verses were (as indeed was the fact), and to parody them all. He was not unskilful at this kind of exercise, and at the drawing of caricatures, and had soon made a dozen of both parodies and drawings, which reflected cruelly upon the person and the talents of the painter.

What now did this wicked Mr. Brandon do? He, in the first place, drew a caricature of Fitch; and, secondly, having gone to a gardener’s near the town, and purchased there a bunch of violets, he presented them to Miss Caroline, and wrote Mr. Fitch’s own verses before given into her album. He signed them with his own initials, and thus declared open war with the painter.

CHAPTER VII.

Which brings a great number of people to Margate by the Steamboat.

The events which this history records began in the month of February. Time had now passed, and April had arrived, and with it that festive season so loved by schoolboys, and called the Easter holydays. Not only schoolboys, but men, profit by this period of leisure, such men, especially, as have just come into enjoyment of their own cups and saucers, and are in daily expectation of their whiskers college men, I mean, who are persons more anxious than any others to designate themselves and each other by the manly title.

Among other men, then, my Lord Viscount Cinqbars, of Christ Church, Oxon, received a sum of money to pay his quarter's bill; and having written to his papa that he was busily engaged in reading for the little-go, and must, therefore, decline the delight he had promised himself of passing the vacation at Cinqbars Hall, and having, the day after his letter was despatched, driven to town tandem with young Tom Tufthunt, of the same university, and having exhausted the pleasures of the metropolis the theatres, the Cider-cellars, the Finish, the station-houses, and other places which need by no means be here particularised, Lord Cinqbars, I say, growing tired of London at the end of ten days, quitted the metropolis somewhat suddenly: nor did he pay his hotel bills at Long's before his departure; but he left that document in possession of the landlord, as a token of his (my Lord Cinqbars') confidence in his host.

Tom Tufthunt went with my lord, of course (although of an aristocratic turn in politics, Tom loved and respected a lord as much as any democrat in England). And whither do you think this worthy pair of young gentlemen were bound? To no less a place than Margate; for Cinqbars was filled with a longing to go and see his old friend Brandon, and determined, to use his own elegant words, "to knock the old buck up."

There was no adventure of consequence on board the steamer which brought Lord Cinqbars and his friend from London to Margate, and very few passengers besides. A wandering Jew or two were set down at Gravesend; the Rev. Mr. Wackerbart, and six unhappy little pupils whom the reverend gentleman had pounced upon in London, and was carrying back to his academy near Herne Bay; some of those inevitable persons of dubious rank who seem to have free tickets, and always eat and drink hugely with the captain; and a lady and her party, formed the whole list of passengers.

The lady a very fat lady had evidently just returned from abroad. Her great green travelling chariot was on the deck, and on all her imperials were pasted fresh large bills, with the words Ince's British Hotel, Boulogne-sur-mer; for it is the custom of that worthy

gentleman to seize upon and plaster all the luggage of his guests with tickets, on which his name and residence are inscribed, by which simple means he keeps himself perpetually in their recollection, and brings himself to the notice of all other persons who are in the habit of peering at their fellow-passengers' trunks, to find out their names. I need not say what a large class this is.

Well; this fat lady had a courier, a tall whiskered man, who spoke all languages, looked like a field-marshal, went by the name of Donnerwetter, and rode on the box; a French maid, Mademoiselle Augustine; and a little black page, called Saladin, who rode in the rumble. Saladin's whole business was to attend a wheezy, fat, white poodle, who usually travelled inside with his mistress, and her fair *compagnon de voyage*, whose name was Miss Runt. She was evidently a person of distinction. This fat lady, during the first part of the voyage, on a windy, sunshiny April-day, paced the deck stoutly, leaning on the arm of poor little Miss Runt; and after they had passed Gravesend, when the vessel began to pitch a good deal, retired to her citadel, the travelling chariot, to and from which the steward, the stewardess, and the whiskered courier were continually running with supplies, of sandwiches first, and afterwards of very hot brandy-and-water: for the truth must be told, it was rather a rough afternoon, and the poodle was sick; Saladin was as bad; the French maid, like all French maids, was outrageously ill; the lady herself was very unwell indeed; and poor, dear, sympathising Runt was qualmish.

"Ah, Runt!" would the fat lady say in the intervals, "what a thing this malady de mare is! O mongjew! O O!" "It is, indeed, dear madam," said Runt, and went *OO* in chorus.

"Ask the steward if we are near Margate, Runt." And Runt did, and asked this question every five minutes, as people do on these occasions.

"Issy Monsieur Donnerwetter: ally dimandy ung pew d'o sho poor mwaw." "Et del'eau de fie afec, n'est-ce-bas," Matame?" said Mr. Donnerwetter. "Wee, wee, comme vous vouly."

And Donnerwetter knew very well what "comme vous vouly" meant, and brought the liquor exactly in the wished for state.

"Ah, Runt, Runt! there's something even worse than sea-sickness. Heigh-ho!"

"Dear, dear Marianne, don't flutter yourself," cries Runt, squeezing a fat paw of her friend and patroness between her own bony fingers. "Don't agitate your nerves, dear. I know you're miserable; but haven't you got a friend in your faithful Runt?"

"You're a good creater, that you are," said the fat lady, who seemed herself to be a good-humoured old soul; "and I don't know what I should have done without you. Heigh-ho!"

"Cheer up, dear! you'll be happier when you get to Margate: you know you will," cried Runt, very knowingly. "What do you mean, Elizabeth?"

"You know very well, dear Marianne I mean that there's some one there will make you happy; though he's a nasty wretch, that he is, to have treated my darling, beautiful Marianne so."

"Runt, Runt, don't abuse that best of men. Don't call me beautiful I'm not, Runt; I have been, but I aint now: and, oh! no woman in the world is assy bong poor lui,"

"But an angel is; and you are, as you always was, an angel, as good as an angel, as kind as an angel, as beautiful as one."

"Ally dong," said her companion, giving her a push; "you flatter me, Runt, you know you do."

"May I be struck down dead if I don't say the truth; and if he refuses you, as he did at Rome, that is if, after all his attentions and vows, he's faithless to you, I say he's a wretch, that he is; and I will say he's a wretch, and he is a wretch a nasty, wicked wretch!"

"Elizabeth, if you say that you'll break my heart, you will! Vous cassere mong pover cure." But Elizabeth swore, on the contrary, that she would die for her Marianne, which consoled the fat lady a little.

A great deal more of this kind of conversation took place during the voyage; but as it occurred inside a carriage, so that to hear it was very difficult, and as possibly it was not of that edifying nature which would induce the reader to relish many chapters of it, we shall give no further account of the ladies' talk: suffice it to say, that about half-past four o'clock the journey ended, by the vessel bringing up at Margate Pier. The passengers poured forth, and hied to their respective homes, or inns. My Lord Cinqbars and his companion (of whom we have said nothing, as they on their sides had scarcely spoken a word the whole way, except "deuce-ace," "quater-tray," "sizes," and so on, being occupied ceaselessly in drinking bottled stout, and playing backgamon) order their luggage to be conveyed to Wright's Hotel, whither the fat lady and suite followed them. The house was vacant, and the best rooms in it were placed, of course, at the service of the new comers. The fat lady sailed out of her bed-room towards her saloon, just as Lord Cinqbars, eigar in mouth, was swaggering out of his parlour. They met in the passage; when, to the young lord's surprise, the fat lady dropped him a low courtesy, and said, "Munseer le Veconte de Cinqbars, sharmy de vous voir. Vous-vous rappelaz de mwaw, n'est-ice pas? Je vous ai vew a Rome shay I'ambassadeure vous savy."

Lord Cinqbars stared her in the face, and pushed by her without a word, leaving the fat lady rather disconcerted.

"Well, Runt, I'm sure," said she, "he need not be so proud; I've met him twenty times at Rome, when he was a young chap with his tutor."

"Who the devil can that fat foreigner be?" mused Lord Cinqbars. "Hang her, I've seen her somewhere; but I'm curst if I understand a word of her jabber." And so, dismissing the subject, he walked on to Brandon's.

"Dang it, it's a strange thing!" said the landlord of the hotel; "but both my lord and the fat woman in number nine have asked their way to Mother Gann's lodging, for so did he dare to call that respectable woman!"

It was true: as soon as number nine had eaten her dinner, she asked the question mentioned by the landlord; and, as this meal occupied a considerable time, the shades of evening had by this time fallen upon the quiet city; the silver moon lighted up the bay, and, supported by a numerous and well-appointed train of gas lamps, illuminated the streets of a town, of autumn eves so crowded and so gay; of gusty April nights, so desolate. At this still hour (it might be half-past seven), two ladies passed the gates of Wright's Hotel, "in shrouding mantle wrapped, and velvet cap." Up the deserted High Street toiled they, by gaping rows of empty bathing-houses, by melancholy Jolley's French bazar, by mouldy pastry-cooks, blank reading rooms, by fishmongers who never sold a fish, mercers who vended not a yard of riband because, as yet, the season was not come, and Jews and Cockneys still remained in town. At High Street's corner, near to Hawly Square, they passed the house of Mr. Fincham, chemist, who doth not only healthful drugs supply, but likewise sells cigars the worst cigars that ever mortal man gave threepence for.

Up to this point, I say, I have had a right to accompany the fat lady and Miss Runt; but whether, on arriving at Mr. Fincham's, they

turned to the left, in the direction of the Royal Hotel, or to the right, by the beach, the bathing machines, and queer, rickety old row of houses, called Buenos Ayres, no power on earth shall induce me to say; suffice it, they went to Mrs. Gann's. Why should we set all the world gadding to a particular street, to know where that lady lives? They arrived before that lady's house at about eight o'clock. Every house in the street had bills on it, except hers (bitter mockery, as if any body came down at Easter)! and at Mrs. Gann's house there was a light in the garret, and another in the two-pair front. I believe I have not mentioned before, that all the front windows were bow or bay windows; but so much the reader may know.

The two ladies, who had walked so far, examined wistfully the plate on the door, stood on the steps for a short time, retreated, and conversed with one another.

"Oh, Runt!" said the stouter of the two, "he's here I know he's here, mong cure le dee my heart tells me so." And she put a large hand upon a place on her left side, where there once had been a waist.

"Do you think he looks front or back, dear?" asked Runt. "P'raps he's not at home."

"That that's his croisy," said the stout person: "I know it is;" and she pointed with instinctive justice to the two-pair. "Ecouty!" she added, "he's coming; there's some one at that window. O mong jew, mong jew! c'est Andre, c'est lui!"

The moon was shining full on the face of the bow-windows of Mrs. Gann's house; and the two fair spies, who were watching on the other side, were, in consequence, completely in shadow. As the lady said, a dark form was seen in the two-pair front; it paced the room for a while, for no blinds were drawn. It then flung itself on a chair; its head in its hand; it then began to beat its brows wildly, and paced the room again. Ah! how the fat lady's heart throbbed as she looked at all this!

She gave a piercing shriek almost fainted; and little Runt's knees trembled under her, as with all her might she supported, or rather pushed up, the falling figure of her stout patroness, who saw at that instant Fitch come to the candle with an immense pistol in his hand, and give a most horrible grin as he looked at it, and clasped it to his breast.

"Unhand me, Runt; he's going to kill himself! It's for me! I know it is I will go to him! Andrea, my Andrea!" And the fat lady was pushing for the opposite side of the way, when suddenly the second-floor window went clattering up, and Fitch's pale head was thrust out.

He had heard a scream, and had possibly been induced to open the window in consequence; but by the time he had opened it he had forgotten every thing, and put his head vacantly out of the window, and gazed, the moon shining cold on his pale features.

"Pallid horb!" said Fitch, "shall I ever see thy light again? Will another night see me on this hearth, or view me, stark and cold, a lifeless corpse?" He took his pistol up, and slowly aimed it at a chimney-pot opposite. Fancy the fat lady's sensations, as she beheld her lover standing in the moonlight, and exercising this deadly weapon.

"Make ready present fire!" shouted Fitch, and did instantaneously, not fire off, but lower his weapon. "The bolt of death is sped!" continued he, clapping his hand on his side. "The poor painter's life is over! Caroline, Caroline, I die for thee!"

"Runt, Runt, I told you so!" shrieked the fat lady. "He is dying for me, and Caroline's my second name."

What the fat lady would have done more, I can't say; for Fitch, disturbed out of his reverie by her talking below, looked out, frowning vacantly, and saying, "Ullloh! we've hinterlopers 'ere!" suddenly banged down the window, and pulled down the blinds.

This gave a check to the fat lady's projected rush, and disconcerted her a little. But she was consoled by Miss Runt, promised to return on the morrow, and went home happy in the idea that her Andrea was faithful to her.

Alas, poor fat lady! little did you know the truth. It was Caroline Gann Fitch was raving about; and it was a part of his last letter to her, to be delivered after his death, that he was spouting out of the window.

Was the crazy painter going to fight a duel, or was he going to kill himself? This will be explained in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

Which treats of war and love, and many things that are not to be understood in Chap. VII.

Fitch's verses, inserted in the August number of this Magazine (and of which lines, by the way, the printer managed to make still greater nonsense than the ingenious bard ever designed), had been composed many years before; and it was with no small trouble and thought that the young painter called the greater part of them to memory again, and furbished up a copy for Caroline's album. Unlike the love of most men, Andrea's passion was not characterised by jealousy and watchfulness, otherwise he would not have failed to perceive certain tokens of intelligence passing from time to time between Caroline and Brandon, and the lady's evident coldness to himself. The fact is, the painter was in love with being in love, entirely absorbed in the consideration of the fact that he, Andrea Fitch, was at last enamoured; and he did not mind his mistress much more than Don Quixote did Dulcinea del Toboso.

Having rubbed up his verses, then, and designed a pretty emblematical outline which was to surround them, representing an arabesque of violets, dewdrops, fairies, and other objects, he came down one morning, drawing in hand; and having informed Caroline, who was sitting very melancholy in the parlour, preoccupied, with a pale face and red eyes, and not earring twopence for the finest drawing in the world, having informed her that he was going to make in her halbum a humble hoffer of his hart, poor Fitch was just on the point of sticking in the drawing with gum, as painters know very well how to do, when his eye lighted upon a page of the album, in which nestled a few dried violets and his own verses, signed with the name of George Brandon.

"Miss Caroline Miss Gann, mam!" shrieked Fitch, in a tone of voice which made the young lady start out of a profound revery, and cry, nervously, "What, in Heaven, is the matter?"

"These verses, madam a faded violet word for word, gracious Eavens! every word!" roared Fitch, advancing with the book.

She looked at him rather vacantly, and, as the violets caught her eye, put out her hand, and took them. "Do you know the hawthor, Miss Gann, of 'The faded Violets?'"

"Author? Oh, yes; they are they are George's!" She burst into tears as she said that word; and, pulling the little faded flowers to pieces, went sobbing out of the room. Dear, dear little Caroline! she has only been in love two months, and is already beginning to feel the woes of it!

It cannot be from want of experience for I have felt the noble passion of love many times these forty years, since I was a boy of

twelve (by which the reader may form a pretty good guess of my age), it cannot be, I say, from want of experience that I am unable to describe, step by step, the progress of a love-affair; nay, I am perfectly certain that I could, if I chose, make a most astonishing and heart-rending *liber amoris*; but, nevertheless, I always feel a vast repugnance to the following out of a subject of this kind, which I attribute to a natural diffidence and sense of shame that prevent me from enlarging on a theme that has in it something sacred certain *arcana* which an honest man, although initiated into them, should not divulge.

If such coy scruples and blushing delicacy prevent one from passing the threshold even of an honourable love, and setting down, at so many guineas or shillings per page, the pious emotions and tendernesses of two persons chastely and legally engaged in sighing, ogling, hand-squeezing, kissing, and so forth (for with such outward signs, I believe that the passion of love is expressed), if a man feel, I say, squeamish about describing an innocent love, he is doubly disinclined to describe a guilty one; and I have always felt a kind of loathing for the skill of such geniuses as Rousseau or Richardson, who could paint with such painful accuracy all the struggles and woes of *Eloisa* and *Clarissa*, all the wicked arts and triumphs of such scoundrels as *Lovelace*.

We have in this history a scoundrelly *Lovelace* in the person going by the name of *George Brandon*, and a dear, tender, innocent, yielding creature on whom he is practising his infernal skill; and whether the public feel any sympathy for her or not, the writer can only say, for his part, that he heartily loves and respects poor little *Caroline*, and is quite unwilling to enter into any of the slow, painful, wicked details of the courtship which passed between her and her lover.

Not that there was any wickedness on her side, poor girl! or that she did any thing but follow the natural and beautiful impulses of an honest little female heart, that leads it to trust, and love, and worship a being of the other sex, whom the eager fancy invests with all sorts of attributes of superiority. There was no wild, conceited tale that *Brandon* told *Caroline* which she did not believe, no virtue which she could conceive or had read of in novels with which she did not endow him. Many long talks had they, and many sweet, stolen interviews, during the periods in which *Caroline's* father and mother were away making merry at the house of their son-in-law; and while she was left under the care of her virtue and of *Becky* the maid. Indeed, it was a blessing that the latter was left in the joint guardianship. For *Becky*, who had such an absurd opinion of her young lady's merits as to fancy that she was a fit wife for any gentleman of the land, and that any gentleman might be charmed and fall in love with her, had some instinct, or possibly some experience, as to the passions and errors of youth, and warned *Caroline* accordingly. "If he's really in love, Miss, and I think he be, he'll marry you; if he won't marry you, he's a rescal; and you're too good for him, and must have nothing to do with him." To which *Caroline* replied, that she was sure *Mr. Brandon* was the most angelic, highprincipled of human beings, and that she was sure his intentions were of the most honourable description.

We have before described what *Mr. Brandon's* character was. He was not a man of honourable intentions at all. But he was a gentleman of so excessively eager a temperament, that if properly resisted by a practised coquette, or by a woman of strong principles, he would sacrifice any thing to obtain his ends, nay, marry to obtain them; and, considering his disposition, it is only a wonder that he had not been married a great number of times already; for he had been in love perpetually since his seventeenth year. By which the reader may pretty well appreciate the virtue or the prudence of the ladies with whom hitherto our inflammable young gentleman had had to do.

The fruit, then, of all his stolen interviews, of all his prayers, vows, and protestations to *Caroline*, had been only this, that she loved him; but loved him as an honest girl should, and was ready to go to the altar with him when he chose. He talked about his family, his peculiar circumstances, his proud father's curse. Little *Caroline* only sighed, and said her dearest *George* must wait until he could obtain his parent's consent. When pressed harder, she would burst into tears, and wonder how one so good and affectionate as he could propose to her any thing unworthy of them both. It is clear to see that the young lady had read a vast number of novels, and knew something of the nature of love; and that she had a good principle and honesty of her own, which set her lover's schemes at naught: indeed, she had both these advantages, her education, such as it was, having given her the one, and her honest nature having endowed her with the other.

On the day when *Fitch* came down to *Caroline* with his verses, *Brandon* had pressed these unworthy propositions upon her. She had torn herself violently away from him, and rushed to the door; but the poor little thing fell before she could reach it, screaming in a fit of hysterics; which brought *Becky* to her aid, and caused *Brandon* to leave her, abashed. He went out; she watched him go, and stole up into his room, and laid on his table the first letter she had ever written to him. It was written in pencil, in a trembling, school-girl hand, and contained simply the following words:

"George, You have almost broken my heart. Leave me if you will, and if you dare not act like an honest man. If ever you speak to me so again as you did this morning, I declare solemnly, before Heaven, I will take poison C."

Indeed, the poor thing had read romances to some purpose; without them, it is probable she never would have thought of such a means of escape from a lover's persecutions: and there was something in the girl's character that made *Brandon* feel sure that she would keep her promise. How the words agitated him! He felt a violent mixture of raging disappointment and admiration, and loved the girl ten thousand times more than ever.

Mr. Brandon had scarcely finished the reading of this document, and was yet agitated by the various passions which the perusal of it created, when the door of his apartment was violently flung open, and some one came in. *Brandon* started, and turned round, with a kind of dread that *Caroline* had already executed her threat, and that a messenger was come to inform him of her death. *Mr. Andrea Fitch* was the intruder. His hat was on his eyes were glaring; and if the beards of men did stand on end any where but in poems and romances, his, no doubt, would have formed round his countenance a bristling auburn halo. As it was, *Fitch* only looked astonishingly fierce, as he stalked up to the table, his hands behind his back. When he had arrived at this barrier between himself and *Mr. Brandon* he stopped, and, speechless, stared that gentleman in the face.

"May I beg, *Mr. Fitch*, to know what has procured me the honour of this visit?" exclaimed *Mr. Brandon*, after a brief pause of wonder.

"Honour! ha, ha ha!" growled *Mr. Fitch*, in a most sardonic, discordant way "honour!"

"Well, sir, honour or no honour, I can tell you, my good man, it certainly is no pleasure!" said *Brandon*, testily. "In plain English, then, what the devil has brought you here?"

Fitch plumped the album down on the table close to Mr. Brandon's nose, and said, "That has brought me, sir that halbum, sir; or I ask your pardon, that a album ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, I see!" said Mr. Brandon, who could not refrain from a smile. "It was a cruel trick of mine, Fitch, to rob you of your verses; but all's fair in love."

"Fitch, sir! don't Fitch me, sir! I wish to be intimate honly with men of h-honour, not with forgers, sir; not with 'artless miscreants! Miscreants, sir, I repeat; vipers, sir; bbb blackguards, sir!"

"Blackguards, sir!" roared Mr. Brandon, bouncing up; "blackguards, you dirty Cockney mountebank! Quit the room, sir, or I'll fling you out of the window!"

"Will you, sir? try sir; I wish you may get it, sir. I'm a hartist, sir, and as good a man as you. Miscreant, forger, traitor, come on!"

And Mr. Brandon would have come on, but for a circumstance that deterred him; and this was, that Mr. Fitch drew from his bosom a long, sharp, shining, waving poniard of the middle ages, that formed a part of his artistical properties, and with which he had armed himself for this encounter.

"Come on, sir!" shrieked Fitch, brandishing this fearful weapon. "Lay a finger on me, and I bury this blade in your treacherous' art. Ha! do you tremble?"

Indeed the aristocratic Mr. Brandon turned somewhat pale.

"Well, well," said he, "what do you want? Do you suppose I am to be bullied by your absurd melodramatic airs? It was, after all, but a joke, sir, and I am sorry that it has offended you. Can I say more? what shall I do?"

"You shall hapologise; not only to me, sir, but you shall tell Miss Caroline, in my presence, that you stole those verses from me, and used them quite unauthorised by me."

"Look you, Mr. Fitch, I will make you another set of verses quite as good, if you like; but what you ask is impossible."

"I will 'asten myself, then, to Miss Caroline, and acquaint her with your dastardly forgery sir. I will hopen her heyese, sir!"

"You may hopen her heyese, as you call them, if you please: but I tell you fairly, that the young lady will credit me rather than you; and if you swear ever so much that the verses are yours, I must say that"

"Say what, sir?"

"Say that you lie, sir!" said Mr. Brandon, stamping on the ground. "I'll make you other verses, I repeat; but this is all I can do, and now go about your business!"

"Curse your verses, sir! liar and forger yourself! Hare you a coward as well, sir? A coward! yes, I believe you are; or will you meet me to-morrow morning like a man, and give me satisfaction for this hinfamous hinsult?"

"Sir," said Mr. Brandon, with the utmost stateliness and scorn, "if you wish to murder me as you do the king's English, I won't balk you. Although a man of my rank is not called upon to meet a blackguard of your condition, I will, nevertheless, grant you your will. But have a care; by Heavens I wont spare you, and I can hit an ace of hearts at twenty paces!"

"Two can play at that," said Mr. Fitch, calmly; "and if I can't hit a hace of 'arts at twenty paces, I can hit a man at twelve, and to-morrow I'll try;" with which, giving Mr. Brandon a look of the highest contempt, the young painter left the room.

What were Mr. Brandon's thoughts, as his antagonist left him? Strange to say, rather agreeable. He had much too great a contempt for Fitch to suppose that so low a fellow should ever think seriously of fighting him, and reasoned with himself thus:

"This Fitch, I know, will go off to Caroline, tell her the whole transaction, frighten her with a tale of a duel, and then she and I shall have a scene. I will tell her the truth about those infernal verses, menace death, blood, and danger, and then "

Here he fell back into a charming revery; the wily fellow knew what power such a circumstance would give him over a poor weak girl, who would do any thing rather than that her beloved should risk his life. And with this dastardly speculation as to the price he should ask for refraining from meeting Fitch, he was entertaining himself; when, much to his annoyance, that gentleman again came into the room. "Mr. Brandon," said he, "you have insulted me in the grossest and cruellest way." "Well, sir, are you come to apologise?" said Brandon, sneeringly.

"No, I'm not come to apologise, Mr. Aristocrat: it's past that. I'm come to say this sir, that I take you for a coward; and that, unless you will give me your solemn word of honour not to mention a word of this quarrel to Miss Gann, which might prevent our meeting, I will never leave you till we do fight!"

"This is outrageous, sir! Leave the room, or by Heavens I'll not meet you at all!"

"Heasy, sir; easy, I beg your pardon, I can force you to that!"

"And how, pray sir?"

"Why, in the first place, here's a stick, and I'll 'orsewhip you; and here are a pair of pistols, and we can fight now!"

"Well, sir, I give you my honour," said Mr. Brandon, in a diabolical rage; and added, "I'll meet you to-morrow, not now; and you need not be afraid that I'll miss you!"

"Hadew, sir," said the chivalrous little Fitch; "bon giorno, sir, as we used to say at Rome." And so, for the second time, he left Mr. Brandon, who did not like very well the extraordinary courage he had displayed.

"What the deuce has exasperated the fellow so?" thought Brandon. Why, in the first place, he had crossed Fitch in love; and, in the second, he had sneered at his pronunciation and his gentility, and Fitch's little soul was in a fury which nothing but blood would allay: he was determined, for the sake of his hart and his lady, to bring this proud champion down.

So Brandon was at last left to his cogitations; when, confusion! about five o'clock came another knock at his door.

"Come in!" growled the owner of the lodgings.

A sallow, blear-eyed, rickety, undersized creature, tottering upon a pair of high-heeled lacquered boots, and supporting himself upon an immense gold-knobbed cane, entered the room with his hat on one side and a jaunty air. It was a white hat with a broad brim, and under it fell a great deal of greasy lank hair, that shrouded the cheek-bones of the wearer. The little man had no beard to his chin, appeared about twenty years of age, and might weigh, stick and all, some seven stone. If you wish to know how this exquisite was dressed, I have the pleasure to inform you that he wore a great sky-blue embroidered satin stock, in the which figured a carbuncle that looked like a lambent gooseberry. He had a shawl-waistcoat of many colours; a pair of loose, blue trowsers, neatly strapped to show his

little feet; a brown cut-away coat with brass buttons, that fitted tight round a spider waist; and over all a white or drab surtout, with a sable collar and cuffs, from which latter on each hand peeped five little fingers covered with lemon-coloured kid gloves. One of these hands he held constantly to his little chest; and, with a hoarse, thin voice, he piped out, "George, my buck! how goes it?" We have been thus particular in our description of the costume of this individual (whose inward man strongly corresponded with his manly and agreeably exterior) because he was the person whom Mr. Brandon most respected in the world.

"Cinqbars!" exclaimed our hero; "why, what the deuce has brought you to Margate?"

"Fwendship, my old cock!" said the Honourable Augustus Frederick Ringwood, commonly called Viscount Cinqbars, for indeed it was he; "Fwendship and the City of Canterbuwy steamer!" and herewith his lordship held out his right-hand fore-finger to Brandon, who inclosed it most cordially in all his. "Wathn't it good of me, now, George, to come down and conthole you in thith curthed, thtupid plathe hay, now?" said my lord, after these salutations.

Brandon swore he was very glad to see him, which was very true, for he had no sooner set eyes upon his lordship, than he had determined to borrow as much money from him as ever he could induce the young nobleman to part with.

"I'll tell you how it wath, my boy; you thee I wath thopping at Longth, when I found, by Jove, that the governor wath come to town! Cuth me if I didn't meet the infarnal old family dwag, with my mother, thiththerth, and all, ath I wath dwiving a hack-cab with Polly Tomkinth in the Pawk! Tho when I got home, 'Hang it!' thayth I to Tufthunt. 'Tom, my boy,' thaith I, 'I've just theen the governor, and must be off!' 'What, back to Ockthford?' thaith Tom. 'No,' thaith I, 'that won't do. Abroad to Jewicho any where. Egad, I have it! I'll go down to Margate and thee old George, that I will.' And tho off I came the very nexth day; and here I am, and thereth dinner waiting for uth at the hotel, and thix bottleth of champaign in ithe, and thum thalmon: tho you mutht come."

To this proposition Mr. Brandon readily agreed, being glad enough of the prospect of a good dinner and some jovial society, for he was low and disturbed in spirits, and so promised to dine with his friend at the Sun.

The two gentlemen conversed for some time longer. Mr. Brandon was a shrewd fellow, and knew perfectly well a fact, of which, no doubt, the reader has a notion namely, that Lord Cinqbars was a ninny; but, nevertheless, Brandon esteemed him highly as a lord. We pardon stupidity in lords; nature or instinct, however sarcastic a man may be among ordinary persons, renders him towards men of quality benevolently blind: a divinity hedges not only the king, but the whole peerage.

"That's the girl, I suppose," said my lord, knowingly winking at Brandon; "that little pale girl, who let me in, I mean. A nice little filly, upon my honour, Georgy, my buck!"

"Oh that yes I wrote, I think, something about her," said Brandon, blushing slightly; for, indeed, he now begun to wish that his

friend should make no comments upon a young lady with whom he was so much in love.

"I suppose it's all up now?" continued my lord, looking still more knowing. "All over with her, hay? I saw it was by her looks, in a minute."

"Indeed you do me a great deal too much honour. Miss ah Miss Gann is a very respectable young person, and I would not for the world have you to suppose that I would do any thing that should the least injure her character."

At this speech, Lord Cinqbars was at first much puzzled; but, in considering it, was fully convinced that Brandon was a deeper dog than ever. Boiling with impatience to know the particulars of this delicate intrigue, this cunning diplomatist determined he would pump the whole story out of Brandon by degrees; and so, in the course of half an hour's conversation that the young men had together, Cinqbars did not make less than forty allusions to the subject that interested him. At last Brandon cut him short rather haughtily, by begging that he would make no further allusions to the subject, as it was one that was excessively disagreeable to him.

In fact, there was no mistake about it now. George Brandon was in love with Caroline. He felt that he was while he blushed at his friend's alluding to her, while he grew indignant at the young lord's coarse banter about her.

Turning the conversation to another point, he asked Cinqbars about his voyage, and whether he had brought any companion with him to Margate; whereupon my lord related all his feats in London, how he had been to the watchhouse, how many bottles of champaign he had drunk, how he had "milled" a policeman, &c. &c.; and he concluded by saying that he had come down with Tom Tufthunt, who was at the inn at that very moment smoking a cigar.

This did not increase Brandon's good-humour; and when Cinqbars mentioned his friend's name, Brandon saluted it mentally with a hearty curse. These two gentlemen hated each other of old. Tufthunt was a small college man of no family, with a foundation fellowship; and it used to be considered that a sporting fellow of a small college was a sad, raffish, disreputable character. Tufthunt, then, was a vulgar fellow, and Brandon a gentleman, so they hated each other. They were both toadies of the same nobleman, so they hated each other. They had had some quarrel at college about a disputed bet, which Brandon knew he owed, and so they hated each other; and in their words about it Brandon had threatened to horsewhip Tufthunt, and called him a "sneaking, swindling, small-college snob;" and so little Tufthunt, who had not resented the words, hated Brandon far more than Brandon hated him. The latter only had a contempt for his rival, and voted him a profound bore and vulgarian.

So, although Mr. Tufthunt did not choose to frequent Mr. Brandon's rooms, he was very anxious that his friend, the young lord, should not fall into his old bear-leader's hands again, and came down to Margate to counteract any influence which the arts of Brandon might acquire.

"Curse the fellow!" thought Tufthunt in his heart (there was a fine reciprocity of curses between the two men); "he has drawn Cinqbars already for fifty pounds this year, and will have some half of his last remittance, if I don't keep a look-out, the swindling thief!"

And so frightened was Tufthunt at the notion of Brandon's return to power and dishonest use of it, that he was at the time on the point of writing to Lord Ringwood to tell him of his son's doings, only he wanted some money deucedly himself. Of Mr. Tufthunt's physique and history it is necessary merely to say, that he was the son of a country attorney who was agent to a lord; he had been sent to a foundation-school, where he distinguished himself for ten years, by fighting and being flogged more than any boy of the five hundred. From the foundation-school he went to college with an exhibition, which was succeeded by a fellowship, which was to end in a living. In his person Mr. Tufthunt was short and bow-legged; he wore a sort of clerico-sporting costume, consisting of a black straight-cut coat, and light drab breeches, with a vast number of buttons at the ancles; a sort of dress much affected by sporting gentlemen of the university in the author's time.

Well, Brandon said he had some letters to write and promised to follow his friend, which he did; but, if the truth must be told, so infatuated was the young man become with his passion, with the resistance he had met with, and so nervous from the various occurrences of the morning, that he passed the half hour during which he was free from Cinqbar's society in kneeling, imploring, weeping at Caroline's little garret-door, which had remained piteously closed to him. He was wild with disappointment, mortification mad, longing to see her. The cleverest coquette in Europe could not have so inflamed him. His first act on entering the dinner-room was to drink off a large tumbler of champaign; and when Cinqbars, in his elegant way, began to rally him upon his wildness, Mr. Brandon only growled and cursed with frightful vehemency, and applied again to the bottle. His face, which had been quite white, grew a bright red; his tongue, which had been tied, began to chatter vehemently; before the fish was off the table, Mr. Brandon shewed strong symptoms of intoxication; before the dessert appeared, Mr. Tufthunt, winking knowingly to Lord Cinqbars, had begun to draw him out; and Brandon, with a number of shrieks and oaths, was narrating the history of his attachment.

"Look you, Tufthunt," said he, wildly; "hang you, I hate you, but I must talk! I've been, for two months now, in this cursed hole; in a rickety lodging, with a vulgar family; as vulgar, by Jove, as you are yourself!"

Mr. Tufthunt did not like this style of address half so much as Lord Cinqbars, who was laughing immoderately, and to whom Tufthunt whispered rather sheepishly, "Pooh, pooh, he's drunk!"

"Drunk! no, sir," yelled out Brandon; "I'm mad, though, with the prudery of a little devil of fifteen, who has cost me more trouble than it would take me to seduce every one of your sisters ha, ha! every one of the Miss Tufthunts, by Jove! Miss Suky Tufthunt, Miss Dolly Tufthunt, Miss Anna-Maria Tufthunt, and the whole bunch! Come, sir, don't sit scowling at me, or I'll brain you with the decanter." (Tufthunt was down again on the sofa.) "I've borne with the girl's mother, and her father, and her sisters, and a cook in the house, and a scoundrel of a painter, that I'm going to fight about her; and for what? why, for a letter, which says, 'George, I'll kill myself! George, I'll kill myself! ha, ha! a little devil like that killing herself ha, ha! and I I who who adore her, who am mad for "

"Mad, I believe he is," said Tufthunt; and at this moment Mr. Brandon was giving the most unequivocal signs of madness; he had plunged his head into the corner of the sofa, and was kicking his feet violently into the cushions.

"You don't understand him, Tufty, my boy," said Lord Cinqbars, with a very superior air. "You ain't up to these things, I tell you; and I suspect, by Jove, that you never were in love in your life. I know what it is, sir. And as for Brandon, Heaven bless you! I've often seen him in that way when we were abroad. When he has an intrigue, he's mad about it. Let me see, there was the Countess Fritzch, at Baden-Baden; there was the woman at Pau; and that girl at Paris, was it? no, at Vienna. He went on just so about them all; but I'll tell

you what, when we do the thing, we do it easier, my boy, hay?"

And so saying, my lord cocked up his little, sallow, beardless face, into a grin, and then fell to eyeing a glass of execrable claret across a candle. An intrigue, as he called it, was the little creature's delight; and, until the time should arrive when he could have one himself, he loved to talk of those of his friends.

As for Tufthunt, we may fancy how that gentleman's previous affection for Brandon was increased by the latter's brutal addresses to him. Brandon continued to drink and to talk, though not always in the sentimental way in which he had spoken about his loves and injuries. Growing presently madly jocose as he had before been madly melancholy, he narrated to the two gentlemen the particulars of his quarrel with Fitch, mimicking the little painter's manner in an excessively comic way, and giving the most ludicrous account of his person, kept his companions in a roar of laughter. Cinqbars swore that he would see the fun in the morning, and agreed that if the painter wanted a second, either he or Tufthunt would act for him.

Now my Lord Cinqbars had an excessively clever servant, a merry rogue, whom he had discovered in the humble capacity of scout's assistant at Christchurch, and raised to be his valet. The chief duties of the valet were to black his lord's beautiful boots, that we have admired so much, and to put his lordship to bed when overtaken with liquor. He heard every word of the young men's talk (it being his habit, much encouraged by his master, to join occasionally in the conversation); and, in the course of the night, when at supper with Monsieur Donnerwetter and Mdlle. Augustine, he related every word of the talk above-stairs, mimicking Brandon quite as cleverly as the latter had mimicked Fitch. When, then, after making his company laugh by describing Brandon's love-agonies, Mr. Tom informed them how that gentleman had a rival, with whom he was going to fight a duel the next morning an artistfellow with an immense beard, whose name was Fitch, to his surprise Mdlle. Augustine burst into a scream of laughter, and exclaimed, "Feesh, Feesh! c'est notre homme! it is our man, sare! Saladin, remember you Mr. Fish?"

Saladin said gravely, "Missa Fis, Missa Fis! know um quite well, Missa Fis! Painter-man, big beard, gib Saladin bit injy-rubby, Missis lub Missa Fis!"

It was too true, the fat lady was the famous Mrs. Carrickfergus, and she had come all the way from Rome in pursuit of her adored painter.

CHAPTER IX.

Which threatens death, but contains a great deal of marrying.

As the morrow was to be an eventful day in the lives of all the heroes and heroines of this history, it will be as well to state how they passed the night previous. Brandon, like the English before the battle of Hastings, spent the evening in feasting and carousing; and Lord Cinqbars, at twelve o'clock, his usual time after his usual quantity of drink, was carried up to bed by the servant kept by his lordship for that purpose. Mr. Tufthunt took this as a hint to wish Brandon good night, at the same time promising that he and Cinqbars would not fail him in the morning about the duel.

Shall we confess that Mr. Brandon, whose excitement now began to wear off, and who had a dreadful headach, did not at all relish the idea of the morrow's combat?

"If," said he, "I shoot this crackbrained painter, all the world will cry out, 'Muder!' If he shoot me, all the world will laugh at me! And yet, confound him! he seems so bent upon blood, that there is no escaping a meeting."

At any rate, Brandon thought, there will be no harm in a letter to Caroline. So, on arriving at home, he sat down and wrote a very pathetic one; saying, that he fought in her cause, and if he died, his last breath should be for her. So having written, he jumped into bed, and did not sleep one single wink all night.

As Brandon passed his night like the English, Fitch went through his like the Normans, in fasting, and mortification, and meditation. The poor fellow likewise indited a letter to Caroline; a very long and strong one, interspersed with pieces of poetry, and containing the words we have just heard him utter out of the window. Then he thought about making his will; but he recollected, and, indeed, it was a bitter thought to the young man, that there was not one single soul in the wide world who cared for him except, indeed, thought he, after a pause, that poor Mrs. Carrickfergus at Rome, who did like me, and was the only person who ever bought my drawings. So he made over all his sketches to her, regulated his little property, found that he had enough money to pay his washerwoman; and so, having disposed of his worldly concerns, Mr. Fitch also jumped into bed, and speedily fell into a deep sleep. Brandon could hear him snoring all night, and did not feel a bit the more comfortable because his antagonist took matters so unconcernedly.

Indeed, our poor painter had no guilty thoughts in his breast, nor no particular revenge against Brandon, now that the first pangs of

mortified vanity were over. But, with all his vagaries, he was a man of spirit; and after what had passed in the morning, the treason that had been done him, and the insults heaped upon him, he felt that the duel was irrevocable. He had a misty notion, imbibed somewhere, that it was the part of a gentleman's duty to fight duels, and had long been seeking for an opportunity. "Suppose I do die," said he, "what's the odds? Caroline doesn't care for me. Dr. Wackerbart's boys won't have their drawing-lesson next Wednesday; and no more will be said of poor Andrea."

And now for the garret. Caroline was wrapped up in her own woes, poor little soul! and in the arms of the faithful Becky cried herself to sleep. But the slow hours passed on; and the tide, which had been out, now came in; and the lamps waxed fainter and fainter; and the watchman cried six o'clock; and the sun arose and gilded the minarets of Margate; and Becky got up and scoured the steps, and the kitchen, and made ready the lodgers' breakfasts; and at half-past eight there came a thundering rap at the door, and two gentlemen, one with a mahogany case under his arm, asked for Mr. Brandon, and were shewn up to his room by the astonished Becky, who was bidden by Mr. Brandon to get breakfast for three.

The thundering rap awakened Mr. Fitch, who rose and dressed himself in his best clothes, gave a twist of the curling-tongs to his beard, and conducted himself throughout with perfect coolness. Nine o'clock struck, and he wrapped his cloak round him, and put under his cloak that pair of foils which we have said he possessed, and did not know in the least how to use. However, he had heard his comrades d'atelier, at Paris and Rome, say that they were the best weapons for duelling; and so forth he issued.

Becky was in the passage as he passed down; she was always scrubbing there. "Becky," said Fitch, in a hollow voice, "here is a letter; if I should not return in half an hour, give it to Miss Gann, and promise on your honour that she shall not have it sooner." Becky promised. She thought the painter was at some of his mad tricks. He went out of the door, saluting her gravely.

But he went only a few steps and came back again: "Becky," said he, "you you've always been a good girl to me, and here's something for you; per'aps we shan't see each other for some time." The tears were in his eyes as he spoke, and he handed her over seven shillings and fourpence halfpenny, being every farthing he possessed in the world.

"Well, I'm sure!" said Becky; and that was all she said, for she pocketed the money, and fell to scrubbing again.

Presently the three gentlemen up stairs came clattering down. "Lock bless you, don't be in such a 'urry!" exclaimed Becky; "it's full herly yet, and the water's not biling."

"We'll come back to breakfast, my dear," said one, a little gentleman in high-heeled boots; "and, I thay, mind and have thum thoda-water;" and he walked out, twirling his cane. His friend with the case followed him. Mr. Brandon came last.

He too turned back after he had gone a few paces. "Becky," said he, in a grave voice, "if I am not back in half-an-hour, give that to Miss Gann."

Becky was fairly flustered by this; and after turning the letters round and round, and peeping into the sides, and looking at the seals very hard, she like a fool determined she would not wait half-an-hour, but carry them up to Miss Caroline; and so up she mounted, finding pretty Caroline in the act of lacing her stays.

And the consequence of Becky's conduct was that little Carry left off lacing her stays (a sweet little figure the poor thing looked in them; but that is neither here nor there), took the letters, looked at one, which she threw down directly; at the other, which she eagerly opened, and having read a line or two, gave a loud scream, and fell down dead in a fainting fit!

Waft us, O Muse, to Mr. Wright's hotel, and quick narrate what chances there befel. Very early in the morning Mdlle. Augustine made her appearance in the apartment of Miss Runt, and with great glee informed that lady of the event which was about to take place. "Figurez vous, mademoiselle, que notre homme va se battre oh, but it will be droll to see him sword in hand!"

"Don't plague me with your ojoues servants' quarrels, Augustine; that horrid courier is always quarrelling and tipsy.

"Mon Dieu, qu'elle est bete!" exclaimed Augustine: "but I tell you it is not the courier; it is he, l'objet, le peintre dont madame s'est amourachee, Monsieur Feesh."

"Mr. Fitch!" cried Runt, jumping up in bed, "Mr. Fitch going to fight! Augustine, my stockings quick, my robe-de-chambre tell me when, how, where!"

And so Augustine told her that the combat was to take place at nine that morning behind the Windmill, and that the gentleman with whom Mr. Fitch was to go out had been dining at the hotel the night previous, in company with the little milor, who was to be his second.

Quick as lightning flew Runt to the chamber of her patroness. That lady was in a profound sleep; and I leave you to imagine what were her sensations on awaking and hearing this dreadful tale.

Such is the force of love, that although for many years Mrs. Carrickfergus had never left her bed before noon, although in all her wild wanderings after the painter she, nevertheless, would have her tea and cutlet in bed, and her doze likewise, before she set forth on a journey, she now started up in an instant, forgetting her nap, muttonchops, every thing, and began dressing with a promptitude which can only be equalled by Harlequin when disguising himself in a pantomime. She would have had an attack of nerves, only she knew there was no time for it; and I do believe that twenty minutes were scarcely over her head, as the saying is, when her bonnet and cloak were on, and with her whole suite, and an innwaiter or two whom she pressed into her service, she was on full trot to the field of action. For twenty years before, and from that day to this, Marianne Carrickfergus never had or has walked so quickly.

"Hullo, here'th a go!" exclaimed Lord Viscount Cinqbars, as they arrived on the ground behind the windmills; "cuth me, there'th only one man!"

This was indeed the case: Mr. Fitch, in his great cloak, was pacing slowly up and down the grass, his shadow stretching far in the sunshine. Mr. Fitch was alone too; for the fact is he had never thought about a second. This he admitted frankly, bowing with much majesty to the company as they came up. "But that, gents," said he, "will make no difference, I hope, nor prevent fair play from being done." And flinging off his cloak, he produced the foils, from which the buttons had been taken off. He went up to Brandon, and was for offering him one of the weapons, just as they do at the theatre. Brandon stepped back, rather abashed; Cinqbars looked posed; Tufthunt, delighted: "Ecod," said he, "I hope the bearded fellow will give it him."

"Excuse me, sir," said Mr. Brandon; "as the challenged party, I demand pistols."

Mr. Fitch, with great presence of mind and gracefulness, stuck the swords into the grass.

"Oh, pittholth of courth," lisped my lord; and presently called aside Tufthunt, to whom he whispered something in great glee; to which Tufthunt objected at first, saying, "No, d him, let him fight." "And your fellowship and living, Tufty, my boy," interposed my lord; and then they walked on. After a couple of minutes, during which Mr. Fitch was employed in examining Mr. Brandon from the toe upwards to the crown of his head, or hat, just as Mr. Widdicombe does Mr. Cartlich, before those two gentlemen proceed to join in combat on the boards of Astley's Amphitheatre (indeed, poor Fitch had no other standard of chivalry) when Fitch had concluded this examination, of which Brandon did not know what the deuce to make, Lord Cinqbars came back to the painter, and gave him a nod.

"Sir," said he, "as you have come unprovided with a second, I, with your leave, will act as one. My name is Cinqbars Lord Cinqbars; and though I had come to the ground to act as the friend of my friend here, Mr. Tufthunt will take that duty upon him; and as it appears to me that there can be no other end to this unhappy affair, we will proceed at once."

It is a marvel how Lord Cinqbars ever made such a gentlemanly speech. When Fitch heard that he was to have a lord for a second, he laid his hand on his chest, and vowed it was the greatest h-honor of his life; and was turning round to walk towards his ground, when my lord, gracefully thrusting his tongue into his cheek, and bringing his thumb up to his nose, twiddled about his fingers for a moment, and said to Brandon, %Gammon.

Mr. Brandon smiled, and heaved a great, deep, refreshing sigh. The truth was a load was taken off his mind, of which he was very glad to be rid; for there was something in the coolness of that crazy painter that our fashionable gentleman did not at all approve of.

"I think, Mr. Tufthunt," said Lord Cinqbars, very loud, that considering the gravity of the case threatening horse whipping, you know, lie on both sides, and lady in the case I think we must have the barrier-duel."

"What's that?" said Fitch.

"The simplest thing in the world; and," in a whisper, "let me add, the best for you. Look here. We shall put you at twenty paces, and a hat between you. You walk forward and fire when you like. When you fire you stop; and you both have the liberty of walking up to the hat. Nothing can be more fair than that."

"Very well," said Fitch; and, with a great deal of preparation, the pistols were loaded.

"I'll tell you what," whispered Cinqbars to Fitch, "if I hadn't chosen this way you were a dead man. If he fires, he hits you dead. You must not let him fire, but have him down first."

"I'll try," said Fitch, who was a little pale, and thanked his noble friend for his counsel. The hat was placed, and the men took their places.

"Are you all ready?"

"Ready," said Brandon.

"Advance when I drop my handkerchief." And presently down it fell, Lord Cinqbars crying, "Now!"

The combatants both advanced, each covering his man. When he had gone about six paces, Fitch stopped, fired, and missed. He grasped his pistol tightly, for he was very near dropping it; and then stood biting his lips, and looking at Brandon, who grinned savagely, and walked up to the hat.

"Will you retract what you said of me yesterday, you villain?" said Brandon.

"I can t."

"Will you beg for life?"

"No."

"Then take a minute and make your peace with God, for you are a dead man."

Fitch dropped his pistol to the ground, shut his eyes for a moment. and flinging up his chest, and clenching his fists, said, "Now I'm ready."

Brandon fired and, strange to say, Andrea Fitch, as he gasped and staggered backwards, saw, or thought he saw, Mr. Brandon's pistol flying up in the air, where it went off, and heard that gentleman yell out an immense oath in a very audible voice. When he came to himself, a thick stick was lying at Brandon's feet, Mr. Brandon was capering about the ground, and cursing and shaking a maimed elbow, and a whole posse of people were rushing upon them. The first was the great German courier, who rushed upon Brandon, and shook that gentleman, and shouting, "Schelm! spitzbube! blagard! goward!" in his ear. "If I had not drown my stick and brogen his damt arm, he wod have murdered dat boor young man."

The German's speech contained two unfounded assertions; in the first place, Brandon would not have murdered Fitch; and, secondly, his arm was not broken he had merely received a blow on that part which anatomists call the funny-bone; a severe blow, which sent the pistol spinning into the air, and caused the gentleman to scream with pain. Two waiters seized upon the murderer too: a baker, who had been brought from his rounds; a bellman; several boys, were yelling round him, and shouting out, "Pole-e-eace!"

Next to these came, panting and blowing, some women. Could Fitch believe his eyes? that fat woman in red satin! yes no yes he was, he was in the arms of Mrs. Carrick fergus!

The particulars of this meeting are too delicate to relate. Suffice it to say that somehow matters were explained, Mr. Brandon was let loose, and a fly was presently seen to drive up, into which Mr. Fitch consented to enter with his new-found friend.

Brandon had some good movements in him. As Fitch was getting into the carriage, he walked up to him and held out his left hand: "I can't offer you my right hand, Mr. Fitch, for that cursed courier's stick has maimed it; but I hope you will allow me to apologise for my shameful conduct to you, and to say that I never in my life met a more gallant fellow than yourself."

"That he is, by Jove!" said my Lord Cinqbars.

Fitch blushed as red as a peony, and trembled very much. "And yet," said he, "you would have murdered me just now, Mr. Brandon. I can't take your 'and, sir."

"Why, you great flat," said my lord, wisely, "he couldn't have hurt you, nor you him. There wath no ballth in the pittholth." "What," said Fitch, starting back, "do you gents call that a joke? Oh, my lord, my lord!" And here poor Fitch actually burst into tears on the red satin bosom of Mrs. Carrickfergus: she and Miss Runt were crying as hard as they could. And so, amidst much shouting and huzzaing, the fly drove away.

"What a blubbering, abthurd donkey!" said Cinqbars, with his usual judgment; "aint he, Tufthunt?"

Tufthunt, of course, said yes; but Brandon was in a virtuous mood. "By Heavens! I think his tears do the man honour. When I came out with him this morning, I intended to act fairly by him. And as for Mr. Tufthunt, who calls a man a coward because he cries Mr. Tufthunt knows well what a pistol is, and that some men don't care to face it, brave as they are."

Mr. Tufthunt understood the hint, and bit his lips and walked on. and as for that worthy moralist, Mr. Brandon, I am happy to say that there was some good fortune in store for him, which, though similar in kind to that bestowed lately upon Mr. Fitch, was superior in degree.

It was no other than this, that forgetting all maidenly decency and decorum, before Lord Viscount Cinqbars and his friend, that silly little creature, Caroline Gann, rushed out from the parlour into the passage she had been at the window ever since she was rid of her fainting-fit; and, ah! what agonies of fear had that little panting heart endured during the half-hour of her lover's absence! Caroline Gann, I say, rushed into the passage, and leaped upon the neck of Brandon, and kissed him, and called him her dear, dear, dear, darling George, and sobbed, and laughed, until George, taking her round the waist gently, carried her into the little dingy parlour, and closed the door behind him.

"Egad," cried Cinqbars, "this is quite a thene! Hullo, Becky, Polly, what's your name? bring uth up the breakfatht; and I hope you've remembered the thoda-water. Come along up thtairth, Tufty, my boy."

When Brandon came up stairs and joined them, which he did in a minute or two, consigning Caroline to Becky's care, his eyes were full of tears; and when Cinqbars began to rally him in his usual delicate way, Brandon said, gravely, "No laughing, sir, if you please; for I swear that that lady before long shall be my wife."

"Your wife! and what will your father say, and what will your duns say, and what will Miss Goldmore say, with her hundred thousand pounds?" cried Cinqbars.

"Miss Goldmore be hanged," said Brandon, "and the duns too; and my father may reconcile it to himself as he can." And here Brandon fell into a reverie.

"It's no use thinking," he cried, after the pause. "You see what a girl it is, Cinqbars. I love her by Heavens, I'm mad with love for her! She shall be mine, let what will come of it. And, besides," he added, in a lower tone of voice, "why need, why need my father know any thing about it?"

"O flames and furies, what a lover it is!" exclaimed his friend. "But, by Jove, I like your spirit; and hang all governors say I. Stop a bright thought! If you must marry, why, here's Tom Tufthunt, the very man to do your business." Little Lord Cinqbars was delighted with the excitement of the affair, and thought to himself, "By Jove, this is an intrigue!"

"What, is Tufthunt in orders?" said Brandon.

"Yes," replied that reverend gentleman: "don't you see my coat? I took orders six weeks ago, on my fellowship. Cinqbars' governor has promised me a living."

"And you shall marry George here, so you shall."

"What, without a license?"

"Hang the license! we won't peach, will we, George?"

"Her family must know nothing of it," said George, "or they would."

"Why should they? Why shouldn't Tom marry you in this very room, without any church or stuff at all?"

Tom said: "You'll hold me out, my lord, if any thing comes of it; and, if Brandon likes, why, I will. He's done for if he does," muttered Tufthunt, "and I have had my revenge on him, the bullying, supercilious blackleg!"

And so on that very day, in Brandon's room, without a license, and by that worthy clergyman the Rev. Thomas Tufthunt, with my Lord Cinqbars for the sole witness, poor Caroline Gann, who knew no better, who never heard of licenses, and did not know what bans meant, was married in a manner to the person calling himself George Brandon; George Brandon not being his real name.

No writings at all were made, and the ceremony merely read through. Becky, Caroline's sole guardian, when the poor girl kissed her, and, blushing, shewed her gold ring, thought all was in order; and the happy couple set off for Dover that day, with fifty pounds which Cinqbars lent the bridegroom.

Becky received a little letter from Caroline, which she promised to carry to her mamma at Swigby's; and it was agreed that she was to give warning, and come and live with her young lady. Next morning Lord Cinqbars and Tufthunt took the boat for London; the latter uneasy in mind, the former vowing that "he'd never spent such an exciting day in his life, and loved an intrigue of all things."

Next morning, too, the great travelling chariot of Mrs. Carrickfergus rolled away with a bearded gentleman inside. Poor Fitch had been back to his lodgings to try one more chance with Caroline, and he arrived in time to see her get into a post-chaise alone with Brandon.

Six weeks afterwards Galignani's Messenger contained the following announcement:

"Married, at the British embassy, by Bishop Luscombe, Andrew Fitch, Esq. to Marianne Caroline Matilda, widow of the late Antony Carrickfergus, of Lombard Street and Gloucester Place, Esquire. The happy pair, after a magnificent dejeune, set off for the south in their splendid carriage-and-four. Miss Runt officiated as bride's-maid. And we remarked among the company Earl and Countess Crabs, General Sir Rice Curry, K.C.B., Colonel Wapshot, Sir Charles Swang, the Hon. Algernon Perey Deuceace and his lady, Count Punter, and others of the elite of the fashionables now in Paris. The bridegroom was attended by his friend, Michael Angelo Titmarsh, Esquire; and the lady was given away by the Right Hon. the Earl of Crabs. On the departure of the bride and bridegroom the festivities were resumed, and many a sparkling bumper of Meurice's champagne was quaffed to the health of the hospitable and interesting couple."

And with one more marriage this chapter shall conclude. About this time the British Auxiliary Legion came home from Spain; and Lieut.-General Swabber, a knight of San Fernando, of the order of Isabella the Catholic, of the Tower and Sword, &c., who, as plain Lieutenant Swabber, had loved Miss Isabella Macarty, as a general now actually married her. I leave you to suppose how glorious Mrs. Gann was, and how Gann got tipsy at the Bag of Nails; but as her daughters each insisted upon their 30l. a-year income, and Mrs. Gann had so only 60l. left, she was obliged still to continue the lodging-house at Margate, in which have occurred the most interesting passages of this SHABBY GENTEEL STORY.

Becky never went to her young mistress, who was not heard of after she wrote the letter to her parents, saying that she was married to Mr. Brandon; but, for particular reasons, her dear husband wished to keep his marriage secret, and for the present her beloved parents must be content to know she was happy. Gann missed his little Carry at first a good deal, but spent more and more of his time at the alehouse, as his house with only Mrs. Gann in it was too hot for him. Mrs. Gann talked unceasingly of her daughter the squire's lady, and her daughter the general's wife; but never once mentioned Caroline after the first burst of wonder and wrath at her departure.

God bless thee, poor Caroline! Thou art happy now, for some short space at least; and here, therefore, let us leave thee.

**The Adventures
of Philip on his
way through the
World; shewing
who robbed him,
who helped him,
and who passed
him by**



THE UNIVERSITY
of ADELAIDE

VOLUME I.

CHAPTER 1

DOCTOR FELL.

“**N**ot attend her own son when he is ill!” said my mother. “She does not deserve to have a son!” And Mrs. Pendennis looked towards her own only darling whilst uttering this indignant exclamation. As she looked, I know what passed through her mind. She nursed me: she dressed me in little caps and long-clothes: she attired me in my first jacket and trousers: she watched at my bedside through my infantile and juvenile ailments: she tended me through all my life: she held me to her heart with infinite prayers and she held me to her heart with infinite prayers and blessings. She is no longer with us to bless and pray; but from heaven, where she is, I know her love pursues me; and often and often I think she is here, only invisible.

“Mrs. Firmin would be of no good,” growled Dr. Goodenough. “She would have hysterics, and the nurse would have two patients to look after.”

“Don’t tell me,” cries my mother, with a flush on her cheeks. “Do you suppose if that child” (meaning, of course, her paragon) “were ill, I would not go to him?”

“My dear, if that child were hungry, you would chop off your head to make him broth,” says the doctor, sipping his tea.

“Potage à la bonne femme,” says Mr. Pendennis. “Mother, we have it at the club. You would be done with milk, eggs, and a quantity of vegetables. You would be put to simmer for many hours in an earthen pan, and — ”

“Don’t be horrible, Arthur!” cries a young lady, who was my mother’s companion of those happy days.

“And people when they knew you would like you very much.”

My uncle looked as if he did not understand the allegory.

“What is this you are talking about? potage à la — what d’ye call ’em?” says he. “I thought we were speaking of Mrs. Firmin, of Old Parr Street. Mrs. Firmin is doosid delicate woman,” interposed the major. “All the females of that family are. Her mother died early. Her sister, Mrs. Twysden, is very delicate. She would be of no more use in a sick room than a — than a bull in a china-shop, begad! and she might catch the fever, too.”

“And so might you, major!” cries the doctor. “Aren’t you talking to me, who have just come from the boy? Keep your distance, or I shall bite you.”

The old gentleman gave a little backward movement with his chair.

“Gad, it’s no joking matter,” says he; “I’ve known fellows catch fevers at — at ever so much past my age. At any rate, the boy is no boy of mine, begad! I dine at Firmin’s house, who has married into a good family, though he is only a doctor, and — ”

“And pray what was my husband?” cried Mrs. Pendennis.

“Only a doctor, indeed!” calls out Goodenough. “My dear creature, I have a great mind to give him the scarlet fever this minute!”

“My father was a surgeon and apothecary, I have heard,” says the widow’s son.

“And what then? And I should like to know if a man of one of the most ancient families in the kingdom — in the empire, begad! — hasn’t a right to pursoo a learned, a useful, an honourable profession. My brother John was — ”

“A medical practitioner!” I say, with a sigh.

And my uncle arranges his hair, puts his handkerchief to his teeth, and says —

“Stuff! nonsense — no patience with these personalities, begad! Firmin is a doctor, certainly — so are you — so are others. But Firmin is a university man, and a gentleman. Firmin has travelled. Firmin is intimate with some of the best people in England, and has married into one of the first families. Gad, sir, do you suppose that a woman bred up in the lap of luxury — in the very lap, sir — at Ringwood and Whipham, and at Ringwood House in Walpole Street, where she was absolute mistress, begad — do you suppose such a woman is fit to be nurse-tender in a sick room? She never was fit for

that, or for anything except — ” (here the major saw smiles on the countenances of some of his audience) “except, I say, to preside at Ringwood House and — and adorn society, and that sort of thing. And if such a woman chooses to run away with her uncle’s doctor, and marry below her rank — why, I don’t think it’s a laughing matter, hang me if I do.”

“And so she stops at the Isle of Wight, whilst the poor boy remains at the school,” sighs my mother.

“Firmin can’t come away. He is in attendance on the Grand Dook. The prince is never easy without Firmin. He has given him his Order of the Swan. They are moving heaven and earth in high quarters; and I bet you even, Goodenough, that that boy whom you have been attending will be a baronet — if you don’t kill him off with your confounded potions and pills, begad!”

Dr. Goodenough only gave a humph and contracted his great eyebrows.

My uncle continued —

“I know what you mean. Firmin is a gentlemanly man — a handsome man. I remember his father, Brand Firmin, at Valenciennes with the Dook of York — one of the handsomest men in Europe. Firebrand Firmin, they used to call him — a red-headed fellow — a tremendous duellist: shot an Irishman — became serious in after life, and that sort of thing — quarrelled with his son, who was doosid wild in early days. Gentlemanly man, certainly, Firmin. Black hair: his father had red. So much the better for the doctor; but — but — we understand each other, I think, Goodenough? and you and I have seen some queer fishes in our time.”

And the old gentleman winked and took his snuff graciously, and, as it were, puffed the Firmin subject away.

“Was it to show me a queer fish that you took me to Dr. Firmin’s house in Parr Street?” asked Mr. Pendennis of his uncle. “The house was not very gay, nor the mistress very wise, but they were all as kind as might be; and I am very fond of the boy.”

“So did Lord Ringwood, his mother’s uncle, like him,” cried Major Pendennis. “That boy brought about a reconciliation between his mother and her uncle, after her runaway match. I suppose you know she ran away with Firmin, my dear?”

My mother said “she had heard something of the story.” And the major once more asserted that Dr. Firmin was a wild fellow twenty years ago. At the time of which I am writing he was Physician to the Plethoric Hospital, Physician to the Grand Duke of Gröningen, and knight of his order of the Black Swan, member of many learned societies, the husband of a rich wife, and a person of no small consideration.

As for his son, whose name figures at the head of these pages, you may suppose he did not die of the illness about which we had just been talking. A good nurse waited on him, though his mamma was in the country. Though his papa was absent, a very competent physician was found to take charge of the young patient, and preserve his life for the benefit of his family, and the purpose of this history.

We pursued our talk about Philip Firmin and his father, and his grand-uncle the earl, whom Major Pendennis knew intimately well, until Dr. Goodenough’s carriage was announced, and our kind physician took leave of us, and drove back to London. Some who spoke on that summer evening are no longer here to speak or listen. Some who were young then have topped the hill and are descending towards the valley of the shadows. “Ah,” said old Major Pendennis, shaking his brown curls, as the doctor went away; “did you see, my good soul, when I spoke about his confrère, how glum Goodenough looked? They don’t love each other, my dear. Two of a trade don’t agree, and besides I have no doubt the other doctor-fellows are jealous of Firmin, because he lives in the best society. A man of good family, my dear. There has already been a great rapprochement; and if Lord Ringwood is quite reconciled to him, there’s no knowing what luck that boy of Firmin’s may come to”

Although Dr. Goodenough might think but lightly of his confrère, a great portion of the public held him in much higher estimation: and especially in the little community of Grey Friars, of which the kind reader has heard in previous works of the present biographer, Dr. Brand Firmin was a very great favourite, and received with much respect and honour. Whenever the boys at that school were afflicted with the common ailments of youth, Mr. Sprat, the school apothecary, provided for them; and by the simple, though disgusting remedies which were in use in those times, generally succeeded in restoring his young patients to health. But if young Lord Eggham, (the Marquis of Ascot’s son, as my respected reader very likely knows) happened to be unwell, as was frequently the case, from his lordship’s great command of pocket-money and imprudent fondness for the contents of the pastrycook’s shop; or if any very grave case of illness occurred in the school,

then, quick, the famous Dr. Firmin, of Old Parr Street, Burlington Gardens, was sent for; and an illness must have been very severe, if he could not cure it. Dr Firmin had been a school-fellow, and remained a special friend, of the head-master. When young Lord Egham, before mentioned (he was our only lord, and therefore we were a little proud and careful of our darling youth), got the erysipelas, which swelled his head to the size of a pumpkin, the doctor triumphantly carried him through his illness, and was complimented by the head-boy in his Latin oration on the annual speech-day for his superhuman skill and godlike delight salutem hominibus dando. The head-master turned towards Dr. Firmin, and bowed: the governors and bigwigs buzzed to one another, and looked at him: the boys looked at him: the physician held his handsome head down towards his shirt-frill. His modest eyes would not look up from the spotless lining of the broad-brimmed hat on his knees. A murmur of applause hummed through the ancient hall, a scuffling of young feet, a rustling of new cassocks among the masters, and a refreshing blowing of noses ensued, as the orator polished off his period, and then passed to some other theme.

Amidst the general enthusiasm, there was one member of the auditory scornful and dissentient. This gentleman whispered to his comrade at the commencement of the phrase concerning the doctor the (I believe of Eastern derivation) monosyllable "Bosh!" and he added sadly, looking towards the object of all this praise, "He can't construe the Latin — though it is all a parcel of humbug."

"Hush, Phil!" said his friend; and Phil's face flushed red, as Dr. Firmin, lifting up his eyes, looked at him for one moment; for the recipient of all this laudation was no other than Phil's father.

The illness of which we spoke had long since passed away. Philip was a schoolboy no longer, but in his second year at the university, and one of half-a-dozen young men, ex-pupils of the school, who had come up for the annual dinner. The honours of this year's dinner were for Dr. Firmin, even more than for Lord Ascot in his star and ribbon, who walked with his arm in the doctor's into chapel. His lordship faltered when, in his after-dinner speech, he alluded to the inestimable services and skill of his tried old friend, whom he had known as a fellow-pupil in those walls — (loud cheers) — whose friendship had been the delight of his life — a friendship which he prayed might be the inheritance of their children. (Immense applause; during which Dr. Firmin struggled with his emotion.)

The doctor's speech was perhaps a little commonplace; the Latin quotations which he used were not exactly novel; but Phil need not have been so angry or illbehaved. He went on sipping sherry, glaring at his father, and muttering observations that were anything but complimentary to his parent. "Now look," says he, "he is going to be overcome by his feelings. He will put his handkerchief up to his mouth, and show his diamond ring. I told you so! It's too much. I can't swallow this — this sherry. I say, you fellows, let us come out of this, and smoke somewhere." And Phil rose up and quitted the dining-room, just as his father was declaring what a joy, and a pride, and a delight it was to him to think that the friendship with which his noble friend honoured him was likely to be transmitted to their children, and that when he had passed away from this earthly scene (cries of "No, no!" "May you live a thousand years!") it would be his joy to think that his son would always find a friend and protector in the noble, the princely house of Ascot.

We found the carriages waiting outside Grey Friars' Gate, and Philip Firmin, pushing me into his father's, told the footman to drive home, and that the doctor would return in Lord Ascot's carriage. Home then to Old Parr Street we went, where many a time as a boy I had been welcome. And we retired to Phil's private den in the back buildings of the great house: and over our cigars we talked of the Founder's -day Feast, and the speeches delivered; and of the old Cistercians of our time; and how Thompson was married, and Johnson was in the army; and Jackson (not red-haired Jackson, pig-eyed Jackson,) was first in his year, and so forth; and in this twaddle we were most happily engaged, when Phil's father flung open the tall door of the study.

"Here's the governor!" growled Phil; and in an undertone, "what does he want?"

"The governor," as I looked up, was not a pleasant object to behold. Dr. Firmin had very white false teeth, which perhaps were a little too large for his mouth, and these grinned in the gas-light very fiercely. On his cheeks were black whiskers, and over his glaring eyes fierce black eyebrows, and his bald head glittered like a billiard-ball. You would hardly have known that he was the original of that melancholy philosophic portrait which all the patients admired in the doctor's waiting-room.

"I find, Philip, that you took my carriage," said the father; "and Lord Ascot and I had to walk ever so far for a cab!"

"Hadh't he got his own carriage? I thought, of course, he would have his carriage on a State-day, and that you would

come home with the lord," said Philip.

"I had promised to bring him home, sir!" said the father.

"Well, sir, I'm very sorry," continued the son, curtly.

"Sorry!" growls the other.

"I can't say any more, sir, and I am very sorry," answers Phil; and he knocked the ash of his cigar into the stove.

The stranger within the house hardly knew how to look on its master or his son. There was evidently some dire quarrel between them. The old man glared at the young one, who calmly looked his father in the face. Wicked rage and hate seemed to flash from the doctor's eyes, and anon came a look of wild pitiful supplication towards the guest, which was most painful to bear. In the midst of what dark family mystery was I? What meant this cruel spectacle of the father's terrified anger, and the son's scorn?

"I— I appeal to you, Pendennis," says the doctor, with a choking utterance and ghastly face.

"Shall we begin ab ovo, sir?" says Phil. Again the ghastly look of terror comes over the father's face.

"I— I promise to bring one of the first noblemen in England," gasps the doctor, "from a public dinner, in my carriage; and my son takes it, and leaves me and Lord Ascot to walk! — Is it fair, Pendennis? Is it the conduct of a gentleman to a gentleman; of a son to a father?"

"No, sir," I said gravely, "nothing can excuse it." Indeed I was shocked at the young man's obduracy and undutifulness.

"I told you it was a mistake!" cries Phil, reddening. "I heard Lord Ascot order his own carriage; I made no doubt he would bring my father home. To ride in a chariot with a footman behind me, is no pleasure to me, and I would far rather have a Hansom and a cigar. It was a blunder, and I am sorry for it — there! And if I live to a hundred I can't say more."

"If you are sorry, Philip," said the father, "it is enough." "You remember, Pendennis, when — when my son and I were not on this — on this footing," and he looked up for a moment at a picture which was hanging over Phil's head — a portrait of Phil's mother; the lady of whom my own mother spoke, on that evening when we had talked of the boy's illness. Both the ladies had passed from the world now, and their images were but painted shadows on the wall.

The father had accepted an apology, though the son had made none. I looked at the elder Firmin's face, and the character written on it. I remembered such particulars of his early history as had been told to me; and I perfectly recalled that feeling of doubt and misliking which came over my mind when I first saw the doctor's handsome face some few years previously, when my uncle first took me to the doctor's in Old Parr Street; little Phil being then a flaxen-headed, pretty child, who had just assumed his first trousers, and I a fifth-form boy at school.

My father and Dr. Firmin were members of the medical profession. They had been bred up as boys at the same school, whither families used to send their sons from generation to generation, and long before people had ever learned that the place was unwholesome. Grey Friars was smoky, certainly; I think in the time of the plague great numbers of people were buried there. But had the school been situated in the most picturesque swamp in England, the general health of the boys could not have been better. We boys used to hear of epidemics occurring in other schools, and were almost sorry that they did not come to ours, so that we might shut up, and get longer vacations. Even that illness which subsequently befel Phil Firmin himself attacked no one else — the boys all luckily going home for the holidays on the very day of poor Phil's seizure; but of this illness more anon. When it was determined that little Phil Firmin was to go to Grey Friars, Phil's father bethought him that Major Pendennis, whom he met in the world and society, had a nephew at the place, who might protect the little fellow, and the major took his nephew to see Dr. and Mrs. Firmin one Sunday after church, and we had lunch at Old Parr Street, and there little Phil was presented to me, whom I promised to take under my protection. He was a simple little man; an artless child, who had not the least idea of the dignity of a fifth-form boy. He was quite unabashed in talking to me and other persons, and has remained so ever since. He asked my uncle how he came to have such odd hair. He partook freely of the delicacies on the table. I remember he hit me with his little fist once or twice, which liberty at first struck me with a panic of astonishment, and then with a sense of the ridiculous so exquisitely keen, that I burst out into a fit of laughter. It was, you see, as if a stranger were to hit the Pope in the ribs, and call him "Old boy;" as if Jack were to tweak one of the giants by the nose; or Ensign Jones to ask the Duke of Wellington to take wine. I had a strong sense of humour, even in those early days, and enjoyed this joke accordingly.

"Philip!" cries mamma, "you will hurt Mr. Pendennis."

"I will knock him down!" shouts Phil. Fancy knocking me down, — ME, a fifth-form boy!

“The child is a perfect Hercules,” remarks the mother.

“He strangled two snakes in his cradle,” says the doctor, looking at me. (It was then, as I remember, I felt Dr. Fell towards him.)

“La, Dr. Firmin!” cries mamma, “I can’t bear snakes. I remember there was one at Rome, when we were walking one day; a great, large snake, and I hated it, and I cried out, and I nearly fainted; and my uncle Ringwood said I ought to like snakes, for one might be an agreeable rattle; and I have read of them being charming in India, and I dare say you have, Mr. Pendennis, for I am told you are very clever; and I am not in the least; I wish I were; but my husband is, very — and so Phil will be. Will you be a very clever boy, dear? He was named after my dear papa, who was killed at Busaco when I was quite, quite a little thing, and we wore mourning, and we went to live with my uncle Ringwood afterwards; but Maria and I had both our own fortunes; and I am sure I little thought I should marry a physician — la, one of uncle Ringwood’s grooms, I should as soon have thought of marrying him! — but, you know, my husband is one of the cleverest men in the world. Don’t tell me, — you are, dearest, and you know it; and when a man is clever I don’t value his rank in life; no, not if he was that fender; and I always said to uncle Ringwood, ‘Talent I will marry, for talent I adore;’ and I did marry you, Dr. Firmin, you know I did, and this child is your image. And you will be kind to him at school,” says the poor lady, turning to me, her eyes filling with tears, “for talent is always kind, except uncle Ringwood, and he was very — ”

“A little more wine, Mr. Pendennis?” said the doctor — Doctor Fell still, though he was most kind to me. “I shall put my little man under your care, and I know you will keep him from harm. I hope you will do us the favour to come to Parr Street whenever you are free. In my father’s time we used to come home of a Saturday from school, and enjoyed going to the play.” And the doctor shook me cordially by the hand, and, I must say, continued his kindness to me as long as ever I knew him. When we went away, my uncle Pendennis told me many stories about the great earl and family of Ringwood, and how Dr. Firmin had made a match — a match of the affections — with this lady, daughter of Philip Ringwood, who was killed at Busaco; and how she had been a great beauty, and was a perfect grande dame always; and, if not the cleverest, certainly one of the kindest and most amiable women in the world.

In those days I was accustomed to receive the opinions of my informant with such respect that I at once accepted this statement as authentic. Mrs. Firmin’s portrait, indeed, was beautiful: it was painted by young Mr. Harlowe, that year he was at Rome, and when in eighteen days he completed a copy of the Transfiguration, to the admiration of all the Academy; but I, for my part, only remember a lady weak, and thin, and faded, who never came out of her dressing-room until a late hour in the afternoon, and whose superannuated smiles and grimaces used to provoke my juvenile sense of humour. She used to kiss Phil’s brow; and, as she held the boy’s hand in one of her lean ones, would say, “Who would suppose such a great boy as that could be my son?” “Be kind to him when I am gone,” she sighed to me, one Sunday evening, when I was taking leave of her, as her eyes filled with tears, and she placed the thin hand in mine for the last time. The doctor, reading by the fire, turned round and scowled at her from under his tall shining forehead. “You are nervous, Louisa, and had better go to your room, I told you you had,” he said, abruptly. “Young gentlemen, it is time for you to be off to Grey Friars. Is the cab at the door, Brice?” And he took out his watch — his great shining watch, by which he had felt the pulses of so many famous personages, whom his prodigious skill had rescued from disease. And at parting, Phil flung his arms round his poor mother, and kissed her under the glossy curls; the borrowed curls; and he looked his father resolutely in the face (whose own glance used to fall before that of the boy), and bade him a gruff goodnight, ere we set forth for Grey Friars.



CHAPTER 2

AT SCHOOL AND AT HOME.

I dined yesterday with three gentlemen, whose time of life may be guessed by their conversation, a great part of which consisted of Eton reminiscences and lively imitations of Dr. Keate. Each one, as he described how he had been flogged, mimicked to the best of his power the manner and the mode of operating of the famous doctor. His little parenthetical remarks during the ceremony were recalled with great facetiousness: the very hwhish of the rods was parodied with thrilling fidelity, and after a good hour's conversation the subject was brought to a climax by a description of that awful night when the doctor called up squad after squad of boys from their beds in their respective boardinghouses, whipped through the whole night, and castigated I don't know how many hundred rebels. All these mature men laughed, prattled, rejoiced, and became young again, as they recounted their stories; and each of them heartily and eagerly bade the stranger to understand how Keate was a thorough gentleman. Having talked about their floggings, I say, for an hour at least, they apologized to me for dwelling upon a subject which after all was strictly local: but, indeed, their talk greatly amused and diverted me, and I hope, and am quite ready, to hear all their jolly stories over again.

Be not angry, patient reader of former volumes by the author of the present history, if I am garrulous about Grey Friars, and go back to that ancient place of education to find the heroes of our tale. We are but young once. When we remember that time of youth, we are still young. He over whose head eight or nine lustres have passed, if he wishes to write of boys, must recall the time when he himself was a boy. Their habits change; their waists are longer or shorter; their shirt-collars stick up more or less; but the boy is the boy in King George's time as in that of his royal niece — once our maiden queen, now the anxious mother of many boys. And young fellows are honest, and merry, and idle, and mischievous, and timid, and brave, and studious, and selfish, and generous, and mean, and false, and truth-telling, and affectionate, and good, and bad, now as in former days. He with whom we have mainly to do is a gentleman of mature age now walking the street with boys of his own. He is not going to perish in the last chapter of these memoirs — to die of consumption with his love weeping by his bedside, or to blow his brains out in despair, because she has been married to his rival, or killed out of a gig, or otherwise done for in the last chapter but one. No, no; we will have no dismal endings. Philip Firmin is well and hearty at this minute, owes no man a shilling, and can enjoy his glass of port in perfect comfort. So, my dear miss, if you want a pulmonary romance, the present won't suit you. So, young gentleman, if you are for melancholy, despair, and sardonic satire, please to call at some other shop. That Philip shall have his trials, is a matter of course — may they be interesting, though they do not end dismally! That he shall fall and trip in his course sometimes, is pretty certain. Ah, who does not upon this life-journey of ours? Is not our want the occasion of our brother's charity, and thus does not good come out of that evil? When the traveller (of whom the Master spoke) fell among the thieves, his mishap was contrived to try many a heart beside his own — the Knave's who robbed him, the Levite's and Priest's who passed him by as he lay bleeding, the humble Samaritan's whose hand poured oil into his wound, and held out its pittance to relieve him.

So little Philip Firmin was brought to school by his mamma in her carriage, who entreated the housekeeper to have a special charge of that angelic child; and as soon as the poor lady's back was turned, Mrs. Bunce emptied the contents of the little boy's trunk into one of sixty or seventy little cupboards, wherein reposed other boys' clothes and haberdashery: and then Mrs. Firmin requested to see the Rev. Mr. X., in whose house Philip was to board, and besought him, and explained many things to him, such as the exceeding delicacy of the child's constitution, and Mr. X., who was very good-natured, patted the boy kindly on the head, and sent for the other Philip, Philip Ringwood, Phil's cousin, who had arrived at Grey Friars an hour or two before; and Mr. X. told Ringwood to take care of the little fellow; and Mrs. Firmin, choking behind her pocket-handkerchief, gurgled out a blessing on the grinning youth, and at one time had an idea of giving Master Ringwood a sovereign, but paused, thinking he was too big a boy, and that she might not take such a liberty, and presently she was gone; and little Phil Firmin was introduced to the long-room and his schoolfellows of Mr. X.'s house; and having plenty of money, and naturally finding his way to the pastrycook's, the next day after school, he was met by his cousin Ringwood and robbed of half the tarts which he had purchased. A fortnight afterwards, the hospitable doctor and his wife asked their young kinsman to Old Parr Street, Burlington Gardens, and the two boys went; but Phil never mentioned anything to his parents regarding the robbery of tarts, being deterred, perhaps, from speaking by awful threats of

punishment which his cousin promised to administer when they got back to school, in case of the little boy's confession. Subsequently, Master Ringwood was asked once in every term to Old Parr Street; but neither Mrs. Firmin, nor the doctor, nor Master Firmin liked the baronet's son, and Mrs. Firmin pronounced him a violent, rude boy.

I, for my part, left school suddenly and early, and my little protégé behind me. His poor mother, who had promised herself to come for him every Saturday, did not keep her promise. Smithfield is a long way from Piccadilly; and an angry cow once scratched the panels of her carriage, causing her footman to spring from his board into a pig-pen, and herself to feel such a shock, that no wonder she was afraid of visiting the City afterwards. The circumstances of this accident she often narrated to us. Her anecdotes were not numerous, but she told them repeatedly. In imagination, sometimes, I can hear her ceaseless, simple cackle; see her faint eyes, as she prattles on unconsciously, and watch the dark looks of her handsome, silent husband, scowling from under his eyebrows and smiling behind his teeth. I daresay he ground those teeth with suppressed rage sometimes. I daresay to bear with her endless volubility must have tasked his endurance. He may have treated her ill, but she tried him. She, on her part, may have been a not very wise woman, but she was kind to me. Did not her housekeeper make me the best of tarts, and keep goodies from the company dinners for the young gentlemen when they came home? Did not her husband give me of his fees? I promise you, after I had seen Dr. Fell a few times, that first displeasing impression produced by his darkling countenance and sinister good looks wore away. He was a gentleman. He had lived in the great world, of which he told anecdotes delightful to boys to hear; and he passed the bottle to me as if I was a man.

I hope and think I remembered the injunction of poor Mrs. Firmin to be kind to her boy. As long as we stayed together at Grey Friars, I was Phil's champion, whenever he needed my protection, though of course I could not always be present to guard the little scapegrace from all the blows which were aimed at his young face by pugilists of his own size. There were seven or eight years' difference between us (he says ten, which is absurd, and which I deny); but I was always remarkable for my affability, and, in spite of our disparity of age, would often graciously accept the general invitation I had from his father for any Saturday and Sunday when I would like to accompany Philip home.

Such an invitation is welcome to any schoolboy. To get away from Smithfield, and show our best clothes in Bond Street, was always a privilege. To strut in the Park on Sunday, and nod to the other fellows who were strutting there too, was better than remaining at school, "doing Diatessaron," as the phrase used to be, having that endless roast beef for dinner, and hearing two sermons in chapel. There may have been more lively streets in London than Old Parr Street; but it was pleasanter to be there than to look at Goswell Street over Grey Friars' wall; and so the present biographer and reader's very humble servant found Dr. Firmin's house an agreeable resort. Mamma was often ailing, or, if well, went out into the world with her husband; in either case, we boys had a good dinner provided for us, with the special dishes which Phil loved; and after dinner we adjourned to the play, not being by any means too proud to sit in the pit with Mr. Brice, the doctor's confidential man. On Sunday we went to church at Lady Whittlesea's, and back to school in the evening; when the doctor almost always gave us a fee. If he did not dine at home (and I own his absence did not much damp our pleasure), Brice would lay a small enclosure on the young gentlemen's coats, which we transferred to our pockets. I believe schoolboys disdain fees in the present disinterested times.

Everything in Dr. Firmin's house was as handsome as might be, and yet somehow the place was not cheerful. One's steps fell noiselessly on the faded Turkey carpet; the room was large, and all save the dining-table in a dingy twilight. The picture of Mrs. Firmin looked at us from the wall, and followed us about with wild violet eyes. Philip Firmin had the same violet odd bright eyes, and the same coloured hair of an auburn tinge; in the picture it fell in long wild masses over the lady's back as she leaned with bare arms on a harp. Over the sideboard was the doctor, in a black velvet coat and a fur collar, his hand on a skull, like Hamlet. Skulls of oxen, horned, with wreaths, formed the cheerful ornaments of the cornice. On the side-table glittered a pair of cups, given by grateful patients, looking like receptacles rather for funereal ashes than for festive flowers or wine. Brice, the butler, wore the gravity and costume of an undertaker. The footman stealthily moved hither and thither, bearing the dinner to us; we always spoke under our breath whilst we were eating it. "The room don't look more cheerful of a morning when the patients are sitting here, I can tell you," Phil would say; indeed, we could well fancy that it was dismal. The drawing-room had a rhubarb-coloured flock paper (on account of the governor's attachment to the shop, Master Phil said), a great piano, a harp smothered in a leather bag in the corner, which the languid owner now never touched; and everybody's face seemed scared and pale in the great looking-glasses, which reflected you over and over again into the distance, so that you seemed to twinkle off right through the Albany into Piccadilly.

Old Parr Street has been a habitation for generations of surgeons and physicians. I suppose the noblemen for whose use the street was intended in the time of the early Georges fled, finding the neighbourhood too dismal, and the gentlemen in black coats came and took possession of the gilded, gloomy chambers which the sacred mode vacated. These mutations of fashion have always been matters of profound speculation to me. Why shall not one moralize over London, as over Rome, or Baalbec, or Troy town? I like to walk among the Hebrews of Wardour Street, and fancy the place, as it once was, crowded with chairs and gilt chariots, and torches flashing in the hands of the running footmen. I have a grim pleasure in thinking that Golding Square was once the resort of the aristocracy, and Monmouth Street the delight of the genteel world. What shall prevent us Londoners from musing over the decline and fall of city sovereignties, and drawing our cockney morals? As the late Mr. Gibbon meditated his history leaning against a column in the Capitol, why should not I muse over mine, reclining under an arcade of the Pantheon? Not the Pantheon at Rome, in the Cabbage Market by the Piazza Navona, where the immortal gods were worshipped, — the immortal gods who are now dead; but the Pantheon in Oxford Street, ladies, where you purchase feeble pomatums, music, glassware, and baby-linen; and which has its history too. Have not Selwyn, and Walpole, and March, and Carlisle figured there? Has not Prince Florizel flounced through the hall in his rustling domino, and danced there in powdered splendour? and when the ushers refused admission to lovely Sophy Baddeley, did not the young men, her adorers, draw their rapiers and vow to slay the doorkeepers; and, crossing the glittering blades over the head of the enchantress, make a warlike triumphal arch for her to pass under, all flushed, and smiling, and perfumed, and painted? The lives of streets are as the lives of man, and shall not the streetpreacher, if so minded, take for the text of his sermon the stones in the gutter? That you were once the resort of the fashion, O Monmouth Street! by the invocation of blessed St. Giles shall I not improve that sweet thought into a godly discourse, and make the ruin edifying? O mes frères! There were splendid thoroughfares, dazzling company, bright illuminations, in our streets when our hearts were young: we entertained in them a noble youthful company of chivalrous hopes and lofty ambitions; of blushing thoughts in snowy robes spotless and virginal. See, in the embrasure of the window, where you sate looking to the stars and nestling by the soft side of your first-love, hang Mr. Moses' moseum of turned old clothes, very cheap; of worn old boots, bedraggled in how much and how many people's mud; a great bargain. See! along the street, strewed with flowers once mayhap — a fight of beggars for the refuse of an apple-stall, or a tipsy basket-woman, reeling shrieking to the station. O me! O my beloved congregation! I have preached this stale sermon to you for ever so many years. O my jolly companions, I have drunk many a bout with you, and always found *vanitas vanitatum* written on the bottom of the pot!

I choose to moralize now when I pass the place. The garden has run to seed, the walks are mildewed, the statues have broken noses, the gravel is dank with green moss, the roses are withered, and the nightingales have ceased to make love. It is a funereal street, Old Parr Street, certainly; the carriages which drive there ought to have feathers on the roof, and the butlers who open the doors should wear weepers — so the scene strikes you now as you pass along the spacious empty pavement. You are bilious, my good man. Go and pay a guinea to one of the doctors in those houses; there are still doctors there. He will prescribe *taraxacum* for you, or *pil: hydrarg*: Bless you! in my time, to us gentlemen of the fifth form, the place was bearable. The yellow fogs didn't damp our spirits — and we never thought them too thick to keep us away from the play: from the chivalrous Charles Kemble, I tell you, my *Mirabel*, my *Mercutio*, my princely *Falconbridge*: from his adorable daughter (O my distracted heart!): from the classic Young: from the glorious Long Tom Coffin: from the unearthly Vanderdecken — "Return, O my love, and we'll never, never part" (where art thou, sweet singer of that most thrilling ditty of my youth?): from the sweet, sweet Victorine and the Bottle Imp. Oh, to see that Bottle Imp again, and hear that song about the "Pilgrim of Love!" Once, but — hush! — this is a secret — we had private boxes, the doctor's grand friends often sending him these; and finding the opera rather slow, we went to a concert in M— d — n Lane, near Covent Garden, and heard the most celestial glees, over a supper of fizzing sausages and mashed potatoes, such as the world has never seen since. We did no harm; but I daresay it was very wrong. Brice, the butler, ought not to have taken us. We bullied him, and made him take us where we liked. We had rum-shrub in the housekeeper's room, where we used to be diverted by the society of other butlers of the neighbouring nobility and gentry, who would step in. Perhaps it was wrong to leave us so to the company of servants. Dr. Firmin used to go to his grand parties, Mrs. Firmin to bed. "Did we enjoy the performance last night?" our host would ask at breakfast. "Oh, yes, we enjoyed the performance!" But my poor Mrs. Firmin fancied that we enjoyed *Semiramide* or the *Donna del Lago*; whereas we had been to the pit at the Adelphi (out of our own money), and seen that jolly John Reeve, and laughed — laughed till we were fit to drop — and stayed till the curtain was down. And then we would come home, and, as aforesaid, pass a delightful hour over supper, and hear the anecdotes of Mr. Brice's friends,

the other butlers. Ah, that was a time indeed! There never was any liquor so good as rum-shrub, never; and the sausages had a flavour of Elysium. How hushed we were when Dr. Firmin, coming home from his parties, let himself in at the street-door! Shoeless, we crept up to our bedrooms. And we came down to breakfast with innocent young faces — and let Mrs. Firmin, at lunch, prattle about the opera; and there stood Brice and the footman behind us, looking quite grave, the abominable hypocrites!

Then, sir, there was a certain way, out of the study window, or through the kitchen, and over the leads, to a building, gloomy, indeed, but where I own to have spent delightful hours of the most flagitious and criminal enjoyment of some delicious little Havannahs, ten to the shilling. In that building there were stables once, doubtless occupied by great Flemish horses and rumbling gold coaches of Walpole's time; but a celebrated surgeon, when he took possession of the house, made a lecture-room of the premises, — "And this door," says Phil, pointing to one leading into the mews, "was very convenient for having the bodies in and out" — a cheerful reminiscence. Of this kind of furniture there was now very little in the apartment, except a dilapidated skeleton in a corner, a few dusty casts of heads, and bottles of preparations on the top of an old bureau, and some mildewed harness hanging on the walls. This apartment became Mr. Phil's smoking-room when, as he grew taller, he felt himself too dignified to sit in the kitchen regions: the honest butler and housekeeper themselves pointing out to their young master that his place was elsewhere than among the servants. So there, privately and with great delectation, we smoked many an abominable cigar in this dreary back-room, the gaunt walls and twilight ceilings of which were by no means melancholy to us, who found forbidden pleasures the sweetest, after the absurd fashion of boys. Dr. Firmin was an enemy to smoking, and ever accustomed to speak of the practice with eloquent indignation. "It was a low practice — the habit of cabmen, pot-house frequenters, and Irish apple-women," the doctor would say, as Phil and his friend looked at each other with a stealthy joy. Phil's father was ever scented and neat, the pattern of handsome propriety. Perhaps he had a clearer perception regarding manners than respecting morals; perhaps his conversation was full of platitudes, his talk (concerning people of fashion chiefly) mean and uninteresting, his behaviour to young Lord Egham rather fulsome and lacking of dignity. Perhaps, I say, the idea may have entered into young Mr. Pendennis's mind that his hospitable entertainer and friend, Dr. Firmin, of Old Parr Street, was what at the present day might be denominated an old humbug; but modest young men do not come quickly to such unpleasant conclusions regarding their seniors. Dr. Firmin's manners were so good, his forehead was so high, his frill so fresh, his hands so white and slim, that for some considerable time we ingenuously admired him; and it was not without a pang that we came to view him as he actually was — no, not as he actually was — no man whose early nurture was kindly can judge quite impartially the man who has been kind to him in boyhood.

I quitted school suddenly, leaving my little Phil behind me, a brave little handsome boy, endearing himself to old and young by his good looks, his gaiety, his courage, and his gentlemanly bearing. Once in a way a letter would come from him, full of that artless affection and tenderness which fills boys' hearts, and is so touching in their letters. It was answered with proper dignity and condescension on the senior boy's part. Our modest little country home kept up a friendly intercourse with Dr. Firmin's grand London mansion, of which, in his visits to us, my uncle, Major Pendennis, did not fail to bring news. A correspondence took place between the ladies of each house. We supplied Mrs. Firmin with little country presents, tokens of my mother's good-will and gratitude towards the friends who had been kind to her son. I went my way to the university, having occasional glimpses of Phil at school. I took chambers in the Temple, which he found great delight in visiting; and he liked our homely dinner from Dick's, and a bed on the sofa, better than the splendid entertainments in Old Parr Street and his great gloomy chamber there. He had grown by this time to be ever so much taller than his senior, though he always persists in looking up to me unto the present day.

A very few weeks after my poor mother passed that judgment on Mrs. Firmin, she saw reason to regret and revoke it. Phil's mother, who was afraid, or perhaps was forbidden, to attend her son in his illness at school, was taken ill herself, and the doctor sent for his boy.

Phil returned to Grey Friars in a deep suit of black; the servants on the carriage wore black too; and a certain tyrant of the place, beginning to laugh and jeer because Firmin's eyes filled with tears at some ribald remark, was gruffly rebuked by Sampson major, the cock of the whole school; and with the question, "Don't you see the poor beggar's in mourning, you great brute?" was kicked about his business.

When Philip Firmin and I met again, there was crape on both our hats. I don't think either could see the other's face very well. I went to see him in Parr Street, in the vacant, melancholy house, where the poor mother's picture was yet

hanging in her empty drawing-room.

“She was always fond of you, Pendennis,” said Phil. “God bless you for being so good to her. You know what it is to lose — to lose what loves you best in the world. I didn’t know how — how I loved her, till I had lost her.” And many a sob broke his words as he spoke.

Her picture was removed from the drawing-room presently into Phil’s own little study — the room in which he sate and defied his father. What had passed between them? The young man was very much changed. The frank looks of old days were gone, and Phil’s face was haggard and bold. The doctor would not let me have a word more with his son after he had found us together, but, with dubious appealing looks, followed me to the door, and shut it upon me. I felt that it closed upon two unhappy men.



CHAPTER 3

A CONSULTATION.

Should I peer into Firmin's privacy, and find the key to that secret? What skeleton was there in the closet? We know that such skulls are locked up in many gentlemen's hearts and memories. Bluebeard, for instance, had a whole museum of them — as that imprudent little last wife of his found out to her cost. And, on the other hand, a lady, we suppose, would select hers of the sort which had carried beards when in the flesh. Given a neat locked skeleton cupboard, belonging to a man of a certain age, to ascertain the sex of the original owner of the bones, you have not much need of a picklock or a blacksmith. There is no use in forcing the hinge, or scratching the pretty panel. We know what is inside — we arch rogues and men of the world. Murders, I suppose, are not many — enemies and victims of our hate and anger, destroyed and trampled out of life by us, and locked out of sight: but corpses of our dead loves, my dear sir — my dear madam — have we not got them stowed away in cupboard after cupboard, in bottle after bottle? Oh, fie! And young people! What doctrine is this to preach to them, who spell your book by papa's and mamma's knee? Yes, and how wrong it is to let them go to church, and see and hear papa and mamma publicly on their knees, calling out, and confessing to the whole congregation, that they are sinners! So, though I had not the key, I could see through the panel and the glimmering of the skeleton inside.

Although the elder Firmin followed me to the door, and his eyes only left me as I turned the corner of the street, I felt sure that Phil ere long would open his mind to me, or give me some clue to that mystery. I should hear from him why his bright cheeks had become hollow, why his fresh voice, which I remember so honest and cheerful, was now harsh and sarcastic, with tones that often grated on the hearer, and laughter that gave pain. It was about Philip himself. that my anxieties were. The young fellow had inherited from his poor mother a considerable fortune — some eight or nine hundred a year, we always understood. He was living in a costly, not to say extravagant manner. I thought Mr. Philip's juvenile remorse was locked up in the skeleton closet, and was grieved to think he had fallen in mischief's way. Hence, no doubt, might arise the anger between him and his father. The boy was extravagant and headstrong; and the parent remonstrant and irritated.

I met my old friend Dr. Goodenough at the club one evening; and as we dined together I discoursed with him about his former patient, and recalled to him that day, years back, when the boy was ill at school, and when my poor mother and Phil's own were yet alive.

Goodenough looked very grave.

"Yes," he said, "the boy was very ill; he was nearly gone at that time — at that time — when his mother was in the Isle of Wight, and his father dangling after a prince. We thought one day it was all over with him; but — "

"But a good doctor interposed between him and pallida mors."

"A good doctor? a good nurse! The boy was delirious, and had a fancy to walk out of window, and would have done so, but for one of my nurses. You know her."

"What! the Little Sister?"

"Yes, the Little Sister."

"And it was she who nursed Phil through his fever, and saved his life? I drink her health. She is a good little soul."

"Good!" said the doctor, with his gruffest voice and frown. — (He was always most fierce when he was most tender-hearted.) "Good, indeed! Will you have some more of this duck? — Do. You have had enough already, and it's very unwholesome. Good, sir? But for women, fire and brimstone ought to come down and consume this world. Your dear mother was one of the good ones. I was attending you when you were ill, at those horrible chambers you had in the Temple, at the same time when young Firmin was ill at Grey Friars. And I suppose I must be answerable for keeping two scapegraces in the world."

"Why didn't Dr. Firmin come to see him?"

"Hm! his nerves were too delicate. Besides, he did come. Talk of the — "

The personage designated by asterisks was Phil's father, who was also a member of our club, and who entered the

dining-room, tall, stately, and pale, with his stereotyped smile, and wave of his pretty hand. By the way, that smile of Firmin's was a very queer contortion of the handsome features. As you came up to him, he would draw his lips over his teeth, causing his jaws to wrinkle (or dimple if you will) on either side. Meanwhile his eyes looked out from his face, quite melancholy and independent of the little transaction in which the mouth was engaged. Lips said, "I am a gentleman of fine manners and fascinating address, and I am supposed to be happy to see you. How do you do?" Dreary, sad, as into a great blank desert, looked the dark eyes. I do know one or two, but only one or two faces of men, when oppressed with care, which can yet smile all over.

Goodenough nods grimly to the smile of the other doctor, who blandly looks at our table, holding his chin in one of his pretty hands.

"How do?" growls Goodenough. "Young Hopeful well?"

"Young Hopeful sits smoking cigars till morning with some friends of his," says Firmin, with the sad smile directed towards me this time. "Boys will be boys." And he pensively walks away from us with a friendly nod towards me; examines the dinner-card in an attitude of melancholy grace; points with the jewelled hand to the dishes which he will have served, and is off, and simpering to another acquaintance at a distant table.

"I thought he would take that table," says Firmin's cynical confrère.

"In the draught of the door? Don't you see how the candle flickers? It is the worst place in the room!"

"Yes; but don't you see who is sitting at the next table?"

Now at the next table was a n-blem-n of vast wealth, who was growling at the quality of the mutton cutlets, and the half-pint of sherry which he had ordered for his dinner. But as his lordship has nothing to do with the ensuing history, of course we shall not violate confidence by mentioning his name. We could see Firmin smiling on his neighbour with his blandest melancholy, and the waiters presently bearing up the dishes which the doctor had ordered for his own refectation. He was no lover of mutton-chops and coarse sherry, as I knew, who had partaken of many a feast at his board. I could see the diamond twinkle on his pretty hand, as it daintily poured out creaming wine from the ice-pail by his side — the liberal hand that had given me many a sovereign when I was a boy.

"I can't help liking him," I said to my companion, whose scornful eyes were now and again directed towards his colleague.

"This port is very sweet. Almost all port is sweet now," remarks the doctor.

"He was very kind to me in my school-days; and Philip was a fine little fellow."

"Handsome a boy as ever I saw. Does he keep his beauty? Father was a handsome man — very. Quite a lady-killer — I mean out of his practice!" adds the grim doctor. "What is the boy doing?"

"He is at the university. He has his mother's fortune. He is wild and unsettled, and I fear he is going to the bad a little."

"Is he? Shouldn't wonder!" grumbles Goodenough.

We had talked very frankly and pleasantly until the appearance of the other doctor, but with Firmin's arrival Goodenough seemed to button up his conversation. He quickly stumped away from the dining-room to the drawing-room, and sate over a novel there until time came when he was to retire to his patients or his home.

That there was no liking between the doctors, that there was a difference between Philip and his father, was clear enough to me: but the causes of these differences I had yet to learn. The story came to me piecemeal; from confessions here, admissions there, deductions of my own. I could not, of course, be present at many of the scenes which I shall have to relate as though I had witnessed them; and the posture, language, and inward thoughts of Philip and his friends, as here related, no doubt are fancies of the narrator in many cases; but the story is as authentic as many histories, and the reader need only give such an amount of credence to it as he may judge that its verisimilitude warrants.

Well, then, we must not only revert to that illness which befell when Philip Firmin was a boy at Grey Friars, but go back yet farther in time to a period which I cannot precisely ascertain.

The pupils of old Gandish's painting academy may remember a ridiculous little man, with a great deal of wild talent, about the ultimate success of which his friends were divided. Whether Andrew was a genius, or whether he was a zany, was always a moot question among the frequenters of the Greek Street billiard-rooms, and the noble disciples of the Academy and St. Martin's Lane. He may have been crazy and absurd; he may have had talent, too: such characters are not unknown

in art or in literature. He broke the Queen's English; he was ignorant to a wonder; he dressed his little person in the most fantastic raiment and queerest cheap finery; he wore a beard, bless my soul! twenty years before beards were known to wag in Britain. He was the most affected little creature, and, if you looked at him, would pose in attitudes of such ludicrous dirty dignity, that if you had had a dun waiting for money in the hall of your lodging-house, or your picture refused at the Academy — if you were suffering under ever so much calamity — you could not help laughing. He was the butt of all his acquaintances; the laughing-stock of high and low; and he had as loving, gentle, faithful, honourable a heart as ever beat in a little bosom. He is gone to his rest now; his palette and easel are waste timber; his genius, which made some little flicker of brightness, never shone much, and is extinct. In an old album, that dates back for more than a score of years, I sometimes look at poor Andrew's strange wild sketches. He might have done something had he continued to remain poor; but a rich widow, whom he met at Rome, fell in love with the strange errant painter, pursued him to England, and married him in spite of himself. His genius drooped under the servitude: he lived but a few short years, and died of a consumption, of which the good Goodenough's skill could not cure him.

One day, as he was driving with his wife in her splendid barouche through the Haymarket, he suddenly bade the coachman stop, sprang over the side of the carriage before the steps could be let fall, and his astonished wife saw him shaking the hands of a shabbily-dressed little woman who was passing — shaking both her hands, and weeping, and gesticulating. and twisting his beard and mustachios, as his wont was when agitated. Mrs. Montfitchet (the wealthy Mrs. Carrickfergus she had been, before she married the painter), the owner of a young husband, who had sprung from her side, and out of her carriage, in order to caress a young woman passing in the street, might well be disturbed by this demonstration; but she was a kind-hearted woman, and when Montfitchet, on reascending into the family coach, told his wife the history of the person of whom he had just taken leave, she cried plentifully too. She bade the coachman drive straightway to her own house: she rushed up to her own apartments, whence she emerged, bearing an immense bag full of wearing apparel, and followed by a panting butler, carrying a bottle-basket and a pie: and she drove off, with her pleased Andrew by her side, to a court in St. Martin's Lane, where dwelt the poor woman with whom he had just been conversing.

It had pleased heaven, in the midst of dreadful calamity, to send her friends and succour. She was suffering under misfortune, poverty, and cowardly desertion. A man, who had called himself Brandon when he took lodgings in her father's house, had married her, brought her to London, tired of her, and left her. She had reason to think he had given a false name when he lodged with her father: he fled, after a few months, and his real name she never knew. When he deserted her, she went back to her father, a weak man, married to a domineering woman, who pretended to disbelieve the story of her marriage, and drove her from the door. Desperate, and almost mad, she came back to London, where she still had some little relics of property that her fugitive husband left behind him. He promised, when he left her, to remit her money; but he sent none, or she refused it — or, in her wildness and despair, lost the dreadful paper which announced his desertion, and that he was married before, and that to pursue him would ruin him, and he knew she never would do that — no, however much he might have wronged her.

She was penniless then — deserted by all — having made away with the last trinket of her brief days of love, having sold the last little remnant of her poor little stock of clothing — alone, in the great wilderness of London, when it pleased God to send her succour in the person of an old friend who had known her, and even loved her, in happier days. When the Samaritans came to this poor child, they found her sick and shuddering with fever. They brought their doctor to her, who is never so eager as when he runs up a poor man's stair. And, as he watched by the bed where her kind friends came to help her, he heard her sad little story of trust and desertion.

Her father was a humble person, who had seen better days; and poor little Mrs. Brandon had a sweetness and simplicity of manner which exceedingly touched the good doctor. She had little education, except that which silence, long-suffering, seclusion, will sometimes give. When cured of her illness, there was the great and constant evil of poverty to meet and overcome. How was she to live? Goodenough got to be as fond of her as of a child of his own. She was tidy, thrifty, gay at times, with a little simple cheerfulness. The little flowers began to bloom as the sunshine touched them. Her whole life hitherto had been cowering under neglect, and tyranny, and gloom.

Mr. Montfitchet was for coming so often to look after the little outcast whom he had succoured that I am bound to say Mrs. M. became hysterically jealous, and waited for him on the stairs as he came down swathed in his Spanish cloak, pounced on him, and called him a monster. Goodenough was also, I fancy, suspicious of Montfitchet, and Montfitchet of Goodenough. Howbeit, the doctor vowed that he never had other than the feeling of a father towards his poor little

protégée, nor could any father be more tender. He did not try to take her out of her station in life. He found, or she found for herself, a work which she could do. "Papa used to say no one ever nursed him so nice as I did," she said. "I think I could do that better than anything, except my needle, but I like to be useful to poor sick people best. I don't think about myself then, sir." And for this business good Mr. Goodenough had her educated and employed.

The widow died in course of time whom Mrs. Brandon's father had married, and her daughters refused to keep him, speaking very disrespectfully of this old Mr. Gann, who was, indeed, a weak old man. And now Caroline came to the rescue of her old father. She was a shrewd little Caroline. She had saved a little money. Goodenough gave up a country-house, which he did not care to use, and lent Mrs. Brandon the furniture. She thought she could keep a lodging-house and find lodgers. Montfitchet had painted her. There was a sort of beauty about her which the artists admired. When Ridley the Academician had the small-pox, she attended him, and caught the malady. She did not mind; not she. "It won't spoil my beauty," she said. Nor did it. The disease dealt very kindly with her little modest face. I don't know who gave her the nickname, but she had a good roomy house in Thornhaugh Street, an artist on the first and second floor; and there never was a word of scandal against the Little Sister, for was not her father in permanence sipping gin-and-water in the ground-floor parlour? As we called her "the Little Sister," her father was called "the Captain" — a bragging, lazy, good-natured old man — not a reputable captain — and very cheerful, though the conduct of his children, he said, had repeatedly broken his heart.

I don't know how many years the Little Sister had been on duty when Philip Firmin had his scarlet fever. It befell him at the end of the term, just when all the boys were going home. His tutor and his tutor's wife wanted their holidays, and sent their own children out of the way. As Phil's father was absent, Dr. Goodenough came, and sent his nurse in. The case grew worse, so bad that Dr. Firmin was summoned from the Isle of Wight, and arrived one evening at Grey Friars — Grey Friars so silent now, so noisy at other times with the shouts and crowds of the playground.

Dr. Goodenough's carriage was at the door when Dr. Firmin's carriage drove up.

"How was the boy?"

"He had been very bad. He had been wrong in the head all day, talking and laughing quite wild-like," the servant said.

The father ran up the stairs.

Phil was in a great room, in which were several empty beds of boys gone home for the holidays. The windows were opened into Grey Friars Square. Goodenough heard his colleague's carriage drive up, and rightly divined that Phil's father had arrived. He came out, and met Firmin in the anteroom.

"Head has wandered a little. Better now, and quiet;" and the one doctor murmured to the other the treatment which he had pursued.

Firmin step in gently towards the patient, near whose side the Little Sister was standing.

"Who is it?" asked Phil.

"It is I, dear. Your father," said Dr. Firmin, with real tenderness in his voice.

The Little Sister turned round once, and fell down like a stone by the bedside.

"You infernal villain!" said Goodenough, with an oath, and a step forward. "You are the man!"

"Hush! The patient, if you please, Dr. Goodenough," said the other physician.



CHAPTER 4

A GENTEEL FAMILY.

Have you made up your mind on the question of seeming and being in the world? I mean, suppose you are poor, is it right for you to seem to be well off? Have people an honest right to keep up appearances? Are you justified in starving your dinner-table in order to keep a carriage; to have such an expensive house that you can't by any possibility help a poor relation; to array your daughters in costly milliners' wares because they live with girls whose parents are twice as rich? Sometimes it is hard to say where honest pride ends and hypocrisy begins. To obtrude your poverty is mean and slavish; as it is odious for a beggar to ask compassion by showing his sores. But to simulate prosperity — to be wealthy and lavish thrice a year when you ask your friends, and for the rest of the time to munch a crust and sit by one candle — are the folks who practise this deceit worthy of applause or a whipping? Sometimes it is noble pride, sometimes shabby swindling. When I see Eugenia with her dear children exquisitely neat and cheerful; not showing the slightest semblance of poverty, or uttering the smallest complaint; persisting that Squanderfield, her husband, treats her well, and is good at heart; and denying that he leaves her and her young ones in want; I admire and reverence that noble falsehood — that beautiful constancy and endurance which disdains to ask compassion. When I sit at poor Jezebella's table, and am treated to her sham bounties and shabby splendour, I only feel anger for the hospitality, and that dinner, and guest, and host, are humbugs together.

Talbot Twysden's dinner-table is large, and the guests most respectable. There is always a bigwig or two present, and a dining dowager who frequents the greatest houses. There is a butler who offers you wine; there's a menu du dîner before Mrs. Twysden; and to read it you would fancy you were at a good dinner. It tastes of chopped straw. Oh, the dreary sparkle of that feeble champagne; the audacity of that public-house sherry; the swindle of that acrid claret; the fiery twang of that clammy port! I have tried them all, I tell you! It is sham wine, a sham dinner, a sham welcome, a sham cheerfulness, among the guests assembled. I feel that that woman eyes and counts the cutlets as they are carried off the tables; perhaps watches that one which you try to swallow. She has counted and grudged each candle by which the cook prepares the meal. Does her big coachman fatten himself on purloined oats and beans, and Thorley's food for cattle? Of the rinsings of those wretched bottles the butler will have to give a reckoning in the morning. Unless you are of the very great monde, Twysden and his wife think themselves better than you are, and seriously patronize you. They consider it a privilege to be invited to those horrible meals to which they gravely ask the greatest folks in the country. I actually met Winton there — the famous Winton — the best dinner-giver in the world (ah, what a position for a man!) I watched him, and marked the sort of wonder which came over him as he tasted and sent away dish after dish, glass after glass. "Try that Château Margaux, Winton!" calls out the host. "It is some that Bottleby and I imported." Imported! I see Winton's face as he tastes the wine, and puts it down. He does not like to talk about that dinner. He has lost a day. Twysden will continue to ask him every year; will continue to expect to be asked in return, with Mrs. Twysden and one of his daughters; and will express his surprise loudly at the club, saying, "Hang Winton! Deuce take the fellow! He has sent me no game this year!" When foreign dukes and princes arrive, Twysden straightway collars them, and invites them to his house. And sometimes they go once — and then ask, "Qui donc est ce Monsieur Twysden, qui est si droôle?" And he elbows his way up to them at the Minister's assemblies, and frankly gives them his hand. And calm Mrs. Twysden wriggles, and works, and slides, and pushes, and tramples if need be, her girls following behind her, until she too has come up under the eyes of the great man, and bestowed on him a smile and a curtsy. Twysden grasps prosperity cordially by the hand. He says to success, "Bravo!" On the contrary, I never saw a man more resolute in not knowing unfortunate people, or more daringly forgetful of those whom he does not care to remember. If this Levite met a wayfarer, going down from Jerusalem, who had fallen among thieves, do you think he would stop to rescue the fallen man? He would neither give wine, nor oil, nor money. He would pass on perfectly satisfied with his own virtue, and leave the other to go, as best he might, to Jericho.

What is this? Am I angry because Twysden has left off asking me to his vinegar and chopped hay? No. I think not. Am I hurt because Mrs. Twysden sometimes patronizes my wife, and sometimes cuts her? Perhaps. Only women thoroughly know the insolence of women towards one another in the world. That is a very stale remark. They receive and deliver stabs, smiling politely. Tom Sayers could not take punishment more gaily than they do. If you could but see under the skin, you

would find their little hearts scarred all over with little lancet digs. I protest I have seen my own wife enduring the impertinence of this woman, with a face as calm and placid as she wears when old Twysden himself is talking to her, and pouring out one of his maddening long stories. Oh, no! I am not angry at all. I can see that by the way in which I am writing of these folks. By the way, whilst I am giving this candid opinion of the Twysdens, do I sometimes pause to consider what they think of me? What do I care? Think what you like. Meanwhile we bow to one another at parties. We smile at each other in a sickly way. And as for the dinners in Beaunash Street, I hope those who eat them enjoy their food.

Twysden is one of the chiefs now of the Powder and Pomatum Office (the Pigtail branch was finally abolished in 1833, after the Reform Bill, with a compensation to the retiring under-secretary), and his son is a clerk in the same office. When they came out, the daughters were very pretty — even my wife allows that. One of them used to ride in the Park with her father or brother daily; and knowing what his salary and wife's fortune were, and what the rent of his house in Beaunash Street, everybody wondered how the Twysdens could make both ends meet. They had horses, carriages, and a great house fit for at least five thousand a year; they had not half as much, as everybody knew; and it was supposed that old Ringwood must make his niece an allowance. She certainly worked hard to get it. I spoke of stabs anon, and poor little breasts and sides scarred all over. No nuns, no monks, no fakeers take whippings more kindly than some devotees of the world; and, as the punishment is one for edification, let us hope the world lays smartly on to back and shoulders, and uses the thong well.

When old Ringwood, at the close of his lifetime, used to come to visit his dear niece and her husband and children, he always brought a cat-of-nine-tails in his pocket, and administered it to the whole household. He grinned at the poverty, the pretence, the meanness of the people, as they knelt before him and did him homage. The father and mother trembling brought the girls up for punishment, and, piteously smiling, received their own boxes on the ear in presence of their children. "Ah!" the little French governess used to say, grinding her white teeth, "I like milor to come. All day you vip me. When milor come, he vip you, and you kneel down and kiss de rod."

They certainly knelt and took their whipping with the most exemplary fortitude. Sometimes the lash fell on papa's back, sometimes on mamma's: now it stung Agnes, and now it lighted on Blanche's pretty shoulders. But I think it was on the heir of the house, young Ringwood Twysden, that my lord loved best to operate. Ring's vanity was very thin-skinned, his selfishness easily wounded, and his contortions under punishment amused the old tormentor.

As my lord's brougham drives up — the modest little brown brougham, with the noble horse, the lord chancellor of a coachman, and the ineffable footman — the ladies, who know the whirr of the wheels, and may be quarrelling in the drawing-room, call a truce to the fight, and smooth down their ruffled tempers and raiment. Mamma is writing at her table in that beautiful, clear hand which we all admire; Blanche is at her book; Agnes is rising from the piano quite naturally. A quarrel between those gentle, smiling, delicate creatures! Impossible! About your most common piece of hypocrisy how men will blush and bungle: how easily, how gracefully, how consummately, women will perform it!

"Well," growls my lord, "you are all in such pretty attitudes, I make no doubt you have been sparring. I suspect, Maria, the men must know what devilish bad tempers the girls have got. Who can have seen you fighting? You're quiet enough here, you little monkeys. I tell you what it is. Ladies'-maids get about and talk to the valets in the housekeeper's room, and the men tell their masters. Upon my word I believe it was that business last year at Whipham which frightened Greenwood off. Famous match. Good house in town and country. No mother alive. Agnes might have had it her own way, but for that —"

"We are not all angels in our family, uncle!" cries Miss Agnes, reddening.

"And your mother is too sharp. The men are afraid of you, Maria. I've heard several young men say so. At White's they talk about it quite freely. Pity for the girls. Great pity. Fellows come and tell me. Jack Hall, and fellows who go about everywhere."

"I'm sure I don't care what Captain Hall says about me — odious little wretch!" cries Blanche.

"There you go off in a tantrum! Hall never has any opinion of his own. He only fetches and carries what other people say. And he says, fellows say they are frightened of your mother. La bless you! Hall has no opinion. A fellow might commit murder, and Hall would wait at the door. Quite a discreet man. But I told him to ask about you. And that's what I hear. And he says that Agnes is making eyes at the doctor's boy."

"It's a shame," cries Agnes, shedding tears under her martyrdom.

"Older than he is; but that's no obstacle. Good-looking boy, I suppose you don't object to that? Has his poor mother's

money, and his father's: must be well to do. A vulgar fellow, but a clever fellow, and a determined fellow, the doctor — and a fellow who, I suspect, is capable of anything. Shouldn't wonder at that fellow marrying some rich dowager. Those doctors get an immense influence over women; and unless I'm mistaken in my man, Maria, your poor sister got hold of a — ”

“Uncle!” cries Mrs. Twysden, pointing to her daughters, “before these — ”

“Before those innocent lambs! Hem! Well, I think Firmin is of the wolf sort:” and the old noble laughed, and showed his own fierce fangs as he spoke.

“I grieve to say, my lord, I agree with you,” remarks Mr. Twysden. I don't think Firmin a man of high principle. A clever man? Yes. An accomplished man? Yes. A good physician? Yes. A prosperous man? Yes. But what's a man without principle?”

“You ought to have been a parson, Twysden.”

“Others have said so, my lord. My poor mother often regretted that I didn't choose the Church. When I was at Cambridge, I used to speak constantly at the Union. I practised. I do not disguise from you that my aim was public life. I am free to confess I think the House of Commons would have been my sphere; and, had my means permitted, I should certainly have come forward.”

Lord Ringwood smiled, and winked to his niece —

“He means, my dear, that he would like to wag his jaws at my expense, and that I should put him in for Whipham.”

“There are, I think, worse members of Parliament,” remarked Mr. Twysden.

“If there was a box of 'em like you, what a cage it would be!” roared my lord. “By George, I'm sick of jaw. And I would like to see a king of spirit in this country, who would shut up the talking shops, and gag the whole chattering crew!”

“I am a partisan of order — but a lover of freedom,” continues Twysden. “I hold that the balance of our constitution — ”

I think my lord would have indulged in a few of those oaths with which his old-fashioned conversation was liberally garnished; but the servant, entering at this moment, announces Mr. Philip Firmin; and ever so faint a blush flutters up in Agnes' cheek, who feels that the old lord's eye is upon her.

“So, sir, I saw you at the opera last night,” says Lord Ringwood.

“I saw you, too,” says downright Phil.

The women looked terrified, and Twysden scared. The Twysdens had Lord Ringwood's box sometimes. But there were boxes in which the old man sate, and in which they never could see him.

“Why don't you look at the stage, sir, when you go to the opera, and not me? When you go to church you ought to look at the parson, oughtn't you?” growled the old man. “I'm about as good to look at as the fellow who dances first in the ballet — and very nearly as old. But if I were you, I should think looking at the Ellsler better fun.”

And now you may fancy of what old, old times we are writing — times in which those horrible old male dancers yet existed — hideous old creatures, with low dresses and short sleeves, and wreaths of flowers, or hats and feathers round their absurd old wigs — who skipped at the head of the ballet. Let us be thankful that those old apes have almost vanished off the stage, and left it in possession of the beauteous bounders of the other sex. Ah, my dear young friends, time will be when these too will cease to appear more than mortally beautiful! To Philip, at his age, they yet looked as lovely as houris. At this time the simple young fellow, surveying the ballet from his stall at the opera, mistook carmine for blushes, pearl powder for native snows, and cotton-wool for natural symmetry; and I dare say when he went into the world, he was not more clear-sighted about its rouged innocence, its padded pretension, and its painted candour.

Old Lord Ringwood had a humorous pleasure in petting and coaxing Philip Firmin before Philip's relatives of Beaunash Street. Even the girls felt a little plaintive envy at the partiality which uncle Ringwood exhibited for Phil; but the elder Twysdens and Ringwood Twysden, their son, writhed with agony at the preference which the old man sometimes showed for the doctor's boy. Phil was much taller, much handsomer, much stronger, much better tempered, and much richer, than young Twysden. He would be the sole inheritor of his father's fortune, and had his mother's thirty thousand pounds. Even when they told him his father would marry again, Phil laughed, and did not seem to care — “I wish him joy of his new wife,” was all he could be got to say: “when he gets one, I suppose I shall go into chambers. Old Parr Street is not as gay as Pall Mall.” I am not angry with Mrs. Twysden for having a little jealousy of her nephew. Her boy and girls were the

fruit of a dutiful marriage; and Phil was the son of a disobedient child. Her children were always on their best behaviour before their great uncle; and Phil cared for him no more than for any other man; and he liked Phil the best. Her boy was as humble and eager to please as any of his lordship's humblest henchmen; and Lord Ringwood snapped at him, browbeat him, and trampled on the poor darling's tenderest feelings, and treated him scarcely better than a lacquey. As for poor Mr. Twysden, my lord not only yawned unreservedly in his face (that could not be helped — poor Talbot's talk set many of his acquaintance asleep) — but laughed at him, interrupted him, and told him to hold his tongue. On this day as the family sat together, at the pleasant hour — the before dinner hour — the fireside and tea-table hour — Lord Ringwood said to Phil —

“Dine with me to-day, sir?”

“Why does he not ask me, with my powers of conversation?” thought old Twysden to himself.

“Hang him, he always asks that beggar,” writhed young Twysden, in his corner.

“Very sorry, sir, can't come. Have asked some fellows to dine at the Blue Posts,” says Phil.

“Confound you, sir, why don't you put 'em off?” cries the old lord. “You'd put 'em off, Twysden, wouldn't you?”

“Oh, sir!” The heart of father and son both beat.

“You know you would; and you quarrel with this boy for not throwing his friends over. Good-night, Firmin, since you won't come.”

And with this my lord was gone.

The two gentlemen of the house glumly looked from the window, and saw my lord's brougham drive swiftly away in the rain.

“I hate your dining at those horrid taverns,” whispered a young lady to Philip.

“It is better fun than dining at home,” Philip remarks.

“You smoke and drink too much. You come home late, and you don't live in a proper monde, sir!” continues the young lady.

“What would you have me do?”

“Oh, nothing! You must dine with those horrible men,” cries Agnes; else you might have gone to Lady Pendleton's to-night.”

“I can throw over the men easily enough, if you wish,” answered the young man.

“I? I have no wish of the sort. Have you not already refused uncle Ringwood?”

“You are not Lord Ringwood,” says Phil, with a tremor in his voice. “I don't know there is much I would refuse you.”

“You silly boy! What do I ever ask you to do that you ought to refuse? I want you to live in our world, and not with your dreadful wild Oxford and Temple bachelors. I don't want you to smoke. I want you to go into the world of which you have the entrée — and you refuse your uncle on account of some horrid engagement at a tavern!”

“Shall I stop here? Aunt, will you give me some dinner — here?” asks the young man.

“We have dined: my husband and son dine out,” said gentle Mrs. Twysden.

There was cold mutton and tea for the ladies; and Mrs. Twysden did not like to seat her nephew, who was accustomed to good fare and high living, to that meagre meal.

“You see I must console myself at the tavern,” Philip said. “We shall have a pleasant party there.”

“And pray who makes it?” asks the lady.

“There is Ridley, the painter.”

“My dear Philip! Do you know that his father was actually — ”

“In the service of Lord Todmorden? He often tells us so. He is a queer character, the old man.”

“Mr. Ridley is a man of genius, certainly. His pictures are delicious, and he goes everywhere — but — but you provoke me, Philip, by your carelessness; indeed you do. Why should you be dining with the sons of footmen, when the first houses in the country might be open to you? You pain me, you foolish boy.”

“For dining in company of a man of genius? Come, Agnes!” And the young man's brow grew dark. “Besides,” he added, with a tone of sarcasm in his voice, which Miss Agnes did not like at all — “besides, my dear, you know he dines at Lord Pendleton's.”

"What is that you are talking of Lady Pendleton, children?" asked watchful mamma from her corner.

"Ridley dines there. He is going to dine with me at a tavern to-day. And Lord Halden is coming — and Mr. Winton is coming — having heard of the famous beefsteaks."

"Winton! Lord Halden! Beefsteaks! Where? By George! I have a mind to go, too! Where do you fellows dine? au cabaret? Hang me, I'll be one," shrieked little Twysden, to the terror of Philip, who knew his uncle's awful powers of conversation. But Twysden remembered himself in good time, and to the intense relief of young Firmin. "Hang me. I forgot! Your aunt and I dine with the Bladeses. Stupid old fellow, the admiral, and bad wine — which is unpardonable; but we must go — on n'a que sa parole, hey? Tell Winton that I had meditated joining him, and that I have still some of that Château Margaux he liked. Halden's father I know well. Tell him so. Bring him here. Maria, send a Thursday card to Lord Halden! You must bring him here to dinner, Philip. That's the best way to make acquaintance, my boy!" And the little man swaggers off, waving a bed-candle, as if he was going to quaff a bumper of sparkling spermaceti.

The mention of such great personages as Lord Halden and Mr. Winton silenced the reproofs of the pensive Agnes.

"You won't care for our quiet fireside whilst you live with those fine people, Philip," she sighed. There was no talk now of his throwing himself away on bad company.

So Philip did not dine with his relatives: but Talbot Twysden took good care to let Lord Ringwood know how young Firmin had offered to dine with his aunt that day after refusing his lordship. And everything to Phil's discredit, and every act of extravagance or wildness which the young man committed, did Phil's uncle, and Phil's cousin Ringwood Twysden, convey to the old nobleman. Had not these been the informers, Lord Ringwood would have been angry; for he exacted obedience and servility from all round about him. But it was pleasanter to vex the Twysdens than to scold and browbeat Philip, and so his lordship chose to laugh and be amused at Phil's insubordination. He saw, too, other things of which he did not speak. He was a wily old man, who could afford to be blind upon occasion.

What do you judge from the fact that Philip was ready to make or break engagements at a young lady's instigation? When you were twenty years old, had no young ladies an influence over you? Were they not commonly older than yourself? Did your youthful passion lead to anything, and are you very sorry now that it did not? Suppose you had had your soul's wish and married her, of what age would she be now? And now when you go into the world and see her, do you on your conscience very much regret that the little affair came to an end? Is it that (lean, or fat, or stumpy, or tall) woman with all those children whom you once chose to break your heart about; and do you still envy Jones? Philip was in love with his cousin, no doubt, but at the university had he not been previously in love with the Tomkinsian professor's daughter, Miss Budd; and had he not already written verses to Miss Flower, his neighbour's daughter in Old Parr Street? And don't young men always begin by falling in love with ladies older than themselves? Agnes certainly was Philip's senior, as her sister constantly took care to inform him.

And Agnes might have told stories about Blanche, if she choose — as you may about me, and I about you. Not quite true stories, but stories with enough alloy of lies to make them serviceable coin; stories such as we hear daily in the world; stories such as we read in the most learned and conscientious history-books, which are told by the most respectable persons, and perfectly authentic until contradicted. It is only our histories that can't be contradicted (unless, to be sure, novelists contradict themselves, as sometimes they will). What we say about people's virtues, failings, characters, you may be sure is all true. And I defy any man to assert that my opinion of the Twysden family is malicious, or unkind, or unfounded in any particular. Agnes wrote verses, and set her own and other writers' poems to music. Blanche was scientific, and attended the Albemarle Street lectures sedulously. They are both clever women as times go; well educated and accomplished, and very well-mannered when they choose to be pleasant. If you were a bachelor, say, with a good fortune, or a widower who wanted consolation, or a lady giving very good parties and belonging to the monde, you would find them agreeable people. If you were a little Treasury clerk, or a young barrister with no practice, or a lady old or young, not quite of the monde, your opinion of them would not be so favourable. I have seen them cut, and scorn, and avoid, and caress, and kneel down and worship the same person. When Mrs. Lovel first gave parties, don't I remember the shocked countenances of the Twysden family? Were ever shoulders colder than yours, dear girls? Now they love her; they fondle her step-children; they praise her to her face and behind her handsome back; they take her hand in public; they call her by her Christian name; they fall into ecstasies over her toilettes, and would fetch coals for her dressing-room fire if she but gave them the word. She is not changed. She is the same lady who once was a governess, and no colder and no warmer since then. But you see her prosperity has brought virtues into evidence, which people did not perceive when she was poor.

Could people see Cinderella's beauty when she was in rags by the fire, or until she stepped out of her fairy coach in her diamonds? How are you to recognize a diamond in a dusthole? Only very clever eyes can do that. Whereas a lady, in a fairy coach and eight, naturally creates a sensation; and enraptured princes come and beg to have the honour of dancing with her.

In the character of infallible historian, then, I declare that if Miss Twysden at three-and-twenty feels ever so much or little attachment for her cousin who is not yet of age, there is no reason to be angry with her. A brave, handsome, blundering, downright young fellow, with broad shoulders, high spirits, and quite fresh blushes on his face, with very good talents (though he has been wofully idle, and requested to absent himself temporarily from his university), the possessor of a competent fortune and the heir of another, may naturally make some impression on a lady's heart with whom kinsmanship and circumstance bring him into daily communion. When had any sound so hearty as Phil's laugh been heard in Beaunash Street? His jolly frankness touched his aunt, a clever woman. She would smile and say, "My dear Philip, it is not only what you say, but what you are going to say next, which keeps me in such a perpetual tremor." There may have been a time once when she was frank and cordial herself: ever so long ago, when she and her sister were two blooming girls, lovingly clinging together, and just stepping forth into the world. But if you succeed in keeping a fine house on a small income; in showing a cheerful face to the world though oppressed with ever so much care; in bearing with dutiful reverence an intolerable old bore of a husband (and I vow it is this quality in Mrs. Twysden for which I most admire her); in submitting to defeats patiently; to humiliations with smiles, so as to hold your own in your darling monde; you may succeed, but you must give up being frank and cordial. The marriage of her sister to the doctor gave Maria Ringwood a great panic, for Lord Ringwood was furious when the news came. Then, perhaps, she sacrificed a little private passion of her own: then she set her cap at a noble young neighbour of my lord's, who jilted her: then she took up with Talbot Twysden, Esquire, of the Powder and Pomatum Office, and made a very faithful wife to him, and was a very careful mother to his children. But as for frankness and cordiality, my good friend, accept from a lady what she can give you — good manners, pleasant talk, and decent attention. If you go to her breakfast-table, don't ask for a roc's egg, but eat that moderately fresh hen's egg which John brings you. When Mrs. Twysden is in her open carriage in the Park, how prosperous, handsome, and jolly she looks — the girls how smiling and young (that is, you know, considering all things); the horses look fat, the coachman and footman wealthy and sleek; they exchange bows with the tenants of other carriages — well-known aristocrats. Jones and Brown, leaning over the railings, and seeing the Twysden equipage pass, have not the slightest doubt that it contains people of the highest wealth and fashion. "I say, Jones, my boy, what noble family has the motto, Wel done Twys done? and what clipping girls there were in that barouche!" B. remarks to J., "and what a handsome young swell that is riding the bay mare, and leaning over and talking to the yellow-haired girl!" And it is evident to one of those gentlemen, at least, that he has been looking at your regular first-rate tiptop people.

As for Phil Firmin on his bay mare with his geranium in his button-hole, there is no doubt that Philip looks as handsome, and as rich, and as brave as any lord. And I think Jones must have felt a little pang when his friend told him, "That a lord! Bless you, it's only a swell doctor's son." But while J. and B. fancy all the little party very happy, they do not hear Phil whisper to his cousin, "I hope you liked your partner last night?" and they do not see how anxious Mrs. Twysden is under her smiles, how she perceives Colonel Shafto's cab coming up (the dancer in question), and how she would rather have Phil anywhere than by that particular wheel of her carriage; how Lady Braglands has just passed them by without noticing them — Lady Braglands, who has a ball, and is determined not to ask that woman and her two endless girls; and how, though Lady Braglands won't see Mrs. Twysden in her great staring equipage, and the three faces which have been beaming smiles at her, she instantly perceives Lady Lovel, who is passing ensconced in her little brougham, and kisses her fingers twenty times over. How should poor J. and B., who are not, vous comprenez, du monde, understand these mysteries?

"That's young Firmin, is it, that handsome young fellow?" says Brown to Jones.

"Doctor married the Earl of Ringwood's niece — ran away with her, you know."

"Good practice?"

"Capital. First-rate. All the tiptop people. Great ladies' doctor. Can't do without him. Makes a fortune, besides what he had with his wife."

"We've seen his name — the old man's — on some very queer paper," says B. with a wink to J. By which I conclude they are city gentlemen. And they look very hard at friend Philip, as he comes to talk and shake hands with some pedestrians who are gazing over the railings at the busy and pleasant Park scene.

CHAPTER 5

THE NOBLE KINSMAN.

Having had occasion to mention a noble earl once or twice, I am sure no polite reader will consent that his lordship should push through this history along with the crowd of commoner characters, and without a special word regarding himself. If you are in the least familiar with Burke or Debrett, you know that the ancient family of Ringwood has long been famous for its great possessions, and its loyalty to the British crown.

In the troubles which unhappily agitated this kingdom after the deposition of the late reigning house, the Ringwoods were implicated with many other families, but on the accession of his Majesty George III. these differences happily ended, nor had the monarch any subject more loyal and devoted than Sir John Ringwood, Baronet, of Wingate and Whipham Market. Sir John's influence sent three members to Parliament; and during the dangerous and vexatious period of the American war, this influence was exerted so cordially and consistently in the cause of order and the crown, that his Majesty thought fit to advance Sir John to the dignity of Baron Ringwood. Sir John's brother, Sir Francis Ringwood, of Appleshaw, who followed the profession of the law, was promoted to be a Baron of his Majesty's Court of Exchequer. The first baron, dying A.D. 1786, was succeeded by the eldest of his two sons — John, second Baron and first Earl of Ringwood. His lordship's brother, the Honourable Colonel Philip Ringwood, died gloriously, at the head of his regiment and in the defence of his country, in the battle of Busaco, 1810, leaving two daughters, Louisa and Maria.

The Earl of Ringwood had but one son, Charles Viscount Cinqbars, who, unhappily, died of a decline, in his twenty-second year. And thus the descendants of Sir Francis Ringwood became heirs to the earl's great estates of Wingate and Whipham Market, though not of the peerages which had been conferred on the earl and his father.

Lord Ringwood had, living with him, two nieces, daughters of his late brother Colonel Philip Ringwood, who fell in the Peninsular War. Of these ladies, the youngest, Louisa, was his lordship's favourite; and though both the ladies had considerable fortunes of their own, it was supposed their uncle would further provide for them, especially as he was on no very good terms with his cousin, Sir John of the Shaw, who took the Whig side in politics, whilst his lordship was a chief of the Tory party.

Of these two nieces, the eldest, Maria, never any great favourite with her uncle, married, 1824, Talbot Twysden, Esq., a Commissioner of Powder and Pomatum Tax; but the youngest, Louisa, incurred my lord's most serious anger by eloping with George Brand Firmin, Esq., M.D., a young gentleman of Cambridge University, who had been with Lord Cinqbars when he died at Naples, and had brought home his body to Wingate Castle.

The quarrel with the youngest niece, and the indifference with which he generally regarded the elder (whom his lordship was in the habit of calling an old schemer), occasioned at first a little rapprochement between Lord Ringwood and his heir, Sir John of Appleshaw; but both gentlemen were very firm, not to say obstinate, in their natures. They had a quarrel with respect to the cutting off of a small entailed property, of which the earl wished to dispose; and they parted with much rancour and bad language on his lordship's part, who was an especially free-spoken nobleman, and apt to call a spade a spade, as the saying is.

After this difference, and to spite his heir, it was supposed that the Earl of Ringwood would marry. He was little more than seventy years of age, and had once been of a very robust constitution. And though his temper was violent and his person not at all agreeable (for even in Sir Thomas Lawrence's picture his countenance is very ill-favoured), there is little doubt he could have found a wife for the asking among the young beauties of his own county, or the fairest of May Fair.

But he was a cynical nobleman, and perhaps morbidly conscious of his own ungainly appearance. "Of course, I can buy a wife" (his lordship would say). "Do you suppose people won't sell their daughters to a man of my rank and means? Now look at me, my good sir, and say whether any woman alive could fall in love with me? I have been married, and once was enough. I hate ugly women, and your virtuous women, who tremble and cry in private, and preach at a man, bore me. Sir John Ringwood of Appleshaw is an ass, and I hate him; but I don't hate him enough to make myself miserable for the rest of my days, in order to spite him. When I drop, I drop. Do you suppose I care what comes after me?" And with much sardonical humour this old lord used to play off one good dowager after another who would bring her girl in his way. He

would send pearls to Emily, diamonds to Fanny, opera-boxes to lively Kate, books of devotion to pious Selinda, and, at the season's end, drive back to his lonely great castle in the west. They were all the same, such was his lordship's opinion. I fear, a wicked and corrupt old gentleman, my dears. But ah, would not a woman submit to some sacrifices to reclaim that unhappy man; to lead that gifted but lost being into the ways of right; to convert to a belief in woman's purity that erring soul? They tried him with high-church altar-cloths for his chapel at Wingate; they tried him with low-church tracts; they danced before him; they jumped fences on horseback; they wore bandeaux, or ringlets, according as his taste dictated; they were always at home when he called, and poor you and I were gruffly told they were engaged; they gushed in gratitude over his bouquets; they sang for him, and their mothers, concealing their sobs, murmured, "What an angel that Cecilia of mine is!" Every variety of delicious chaff they flung to that old bird. But he was uncaught at the end of the season: he winged his way back to his western hills. And if you dared to say that Mrs. Netley had tried to take him, or Lady Trapboys had set a snare for him, you know you were a wicked, gross calumniator, and notorious everywhere for your dull and vulgar abuse of women.

In the year 1830, this great nobleman was seized with a fit of the gout, which had very nearly consigned his estates to his kinsman the Baronet of Appleshaw. A revolution took place in a neighbouring State. An illustrious reigning family was expelled from its country, and projects of reform (which would pretty certainly end in revolution) were rife in ours. The events in France, and those pending at home, so agitated Lord Ringwood's mind, that he was attacked by one of the severest fits of gout under which he ever suffered. His shrieks, as he was brought out of his yacht at Ryde to a house taken for him in the town, were dreadful; his language to all persons about him was frightfully expressive, as Lady Quamley and her daughter, who had sailed with him several times, can vouch. An ill return that rude old man made for all their kindness and attention to him. They had danced on board his yacht; they had dined on board his yacht; they had been out sailing with him, and cheerfully braved the inconveniences of the deep in his company. And when they ran to the side of his chair — as what would they not do to soothe an old gentleman in illness and distress? — when they ran up to his chair as it was wheeled along the pier, he called mother and daughter by the most

vulgar and opprobrious names, and roared out to them to go to a place which I certainly shall not more particularly mention.

Now it happened, at this period, that Dr. and Mrs. Firmin were at Ryde with their little boy, then some three years of age. The doctor was already taking his place as one of the most fashionable physicians then in London, and had begun to be celebrated for the treatment of this especial malady. (Firmin on Gout and Rheumatism was, you remember, dedicated to his Majesty George IV.) Lord Ringwood's valet bethought him of calling the doctor in, and mentioned how he was present in the town. Now Lord Ringwood was a nobleman who never would allow his angry feelings to stand in the way of his present comforts or ease. He instantly desired Mr. Firmin's attendance, and submitted to his treatment; a part of which was a hauteur to the full as great as that which the sick man exhibited. Firmin's appearance was so tall and grand, that he looked vastly more noble than a great many noblemen. Six feet, a high manner, a polished forehead, a flashing eye, a snowy shirt-frill, a rolling velvet collar, a beautiful hand appearing under a velvet cuff — all these advantages he possessed and used. He did not make the slightest allusion to by-gones, but treated his patient with a perfect courtesy and an impenetrable self-possession.

This defiant and darkling politeness did not always displease the old man. He was so accustomed to slavish compliance and eager obedience from all people round about him, that he sometimes wearied of their servility, and relished a little independence. Was it from calculation, or because he was a man of high spirit, that Firmin determined to maintain an independent course with his lordship? From the first day of their meeting he never departed from it, and had the satisfaction of meeting with only civil behaviour from his noble relative and patient, who was notorious for his rudeness and brutality to almost every person who came in his way.

From hints which his lordship gave in conversation, he showed the doctor that he was acquainted with some particulars of the latter's early career. It had been wild and stormy. Firmin had incurred debts; had quarrelled with his father; had left the university and gone abroad; had lived in a wild society, which used dice and cards every night, and pistols sometimes in the morning; and had shown a fearful dexterity in the use of the latter instrument, which he employed against the person of a famous Italian adventurer, who fell under his hand at Naples. When this century was five-and-twenty years younger, the crack of the pistol-shot might still occasionally be heard in the suburbs of London in the very early morning; and the dice-box went round in many a haunt of pleasure. The knights of the Four Kings travelled from

capital to capital, and engaged each other, or made prey of the unwary. Now, the times are changed. The cards are confined in their boxes. Only sous-officiers, brawling in their provincial cafés over ther dominos, fight duels. “Ah, dear me,” I heard a veteran punter sigh the other day, at Bays’s, “isn’t it a melancholy thing to think, that if I wanted to amuse myself with a fifty-pound note, I don’t know the place in London where I could go and lose it?” And he fondly recounted the names of twenty places where he could have cheerfully staked and lost his money in his young time.

After a somewhat prolonged absence abroad, Mr. Firmin came back to this country, was permitted to return to the university, and left it with the degree of Bachelor of Medicine. We have told how he ran away with Lord Ringwood’s niece, and incurred the anger of that nobleman. Beyond abuse and anger his lordship was powerless. The young lady was free to marry whom she liked, and her uncle to disown or receive him; and accordingly she was, as we have seen, disowned by his lordship, until he found it convenient to forgive her. What were Lord Ringwood’s intentions regarding his property, what were his accumulations, and who his heirs would be, no one knew. Meanwhile, of course, there were those who felt a very great interest on the point. Mrs. Twysden and her husband and children were hungry and poor. If uncle Ringwood had money to leave, it would be very welcome to those three darlings, whose father had not a great income like Dr. Firmin. Philip was a dear, good, frank, amiable, wild fellow, and they all loved him. But he had his faults — that could not be concealed — and so poor Phil’s faults were pretty constantly canvassed before uncle Ringwood, by dear relatives who knew them only too well. The dear relatives! How kind they are! I don’t think Phil’s aunt abused him to my lord. That quiet woman calmly and gently put forward the claims of her own darlings, and affectionately dilated on the young man’s present prosperity, and magnificent future prospects. The interest of thirty thousand pounds now, and the inheritance of his father’s great accumulations! What young man could want for more? Perhaps he had too much already. Perhaps he was too rich to work. The sly old peer acquiesced in his niece’s statements, and perfectly understood the point towards which they tended. “A thousand a year! What’s a thousand a year,” growled the old lord. “Not enough to make a gentleman, more than enough to make a fellow idle.”

“Ah, indeed, it was but a small income,” sighed Mrs. Twysden. “With a large house, a good establishment, and Mr. Twysden’s salary from his office — it was but a pittance.”

“Pittance! Starvation,” growls my lord, with his usual frankness. “Don’t I know what housekeeping costs, and see how you screw? Butlers and footmen, carriages and job-horses, rent and dinners — though yours, Maria, are not famous.”

“Very bad — I know they are very bad,” says the contrite lady, “I wish we could afford any better.”

“Afford any better? Of course you can’t. You are the crockery pots, and you swim down-stream with the brass pots. I saw Twysden the other day walking down St. James’s Street with Rhodes — that tall fellow.” (Here my lord laughed, and showed many fangs, the exhibition of which gave a peculiarly fierce air to his lordship when in good-humour.) “If Twysden walks with a big fellow, he always tries to keep step with him. You know that.” Poor Maria naturally knew her husband’s peculiarities; but she did not say that she had no need to be reminded of them.

“He was so blown he could hardly speak,” continued uncle Ringwood; “but he would stretch his little legs, and try and keep up. He has a little body, le cher mari, but a good pluck. Those little fellows often have. I’ve seen him half dead out shooting, and plunging over the ploughed fields after fellows with twice his stride. Why don’t men sink in the world, I want to know? Instead of a fine house, and a parcel of idle servants, why don’t you have a maid and a leg of mutton, Maria? You go half crazy in trying to make both ends meet. You know you do. It keeps you awake of nights; I know that very well. You’ve got a house fit for people with four times your money. I lend you my cook and so forth; but I can’t come and dine with you unless I send the wine in. Why don’t you have a pot of porter, and a joint, or some tripe? — tripe’s a famous good thing. The miseries which people entail on themselves in trying to live beyond their means are perfectly ridiculous, by George! Look at that fellow who opened the door to me; he’s as tall as one of my own men. Go and live in a quiet little street in Belgravia somewhere, and have a neat little maid. Nobody will think a penny the worse of you — and you will be just as well off as if you lived here with an extra couple of thousand a year. The advice I am giving you is worth half that, every shilling of it.”

“It is very good advice; but I think, sir, I should prefer the thousand pounds,” said the lady.

“Of course you would. That is the consequence of your false position. One of the good points about that doctor is, that he is as proud as Lucifer, and so is his boy. They are not always hungering after money. They keep their independence; though he’ll have his own too, the fellow will. Why, when I first called him in, I thought, as he was a relation, he’d doctor

me for nothing; but he wouldn't. He would have his fee, by George! and wouldn't come without it. Confounded independent fellow Firmin is. And so is the young one."

But when Twysden and his son (perhaps inspirited by Mrs. Twysden) tried once or twice to be independent in the presence of this lion, he roared, and he rushed at them, and he rent them, so that they fled from him howling. And this reminds me of an old story I have heard — quite an old, old story, such as kind old fellows at clubs love to remember — of my lord, when he was only Lord Cinqbars, insulting a half-pay lieutenant, in his own country, who horsewhipped his lordship in the most private and ferocious manner. It was said Lord Cinqbars had had a *rencontre* with poachers; but it was my lord who was poaching and the lieutenant who was defending his own dovecote. I do not say that this was a model nobleman; but that, when his own passions or interests did not mislead him, he was a nobleman of very considerable acuteness, humour, and good sense; and could give quite good advice on occasion. If men would kneel down and kiss his boots, well and good. There was the blacking, and you were welcome to embrace toe and heel. But those who would not, were free to leave the operation alone. The Pope himself does not demand the ceremony from Protestants; and if they object to the slipper, no one thinks of forcing it into their mouths. Phil and his father probably declined to tremble before the old man, not because they knew he was a bully who might be put down, but because they were men of spirit, who cared not whether a man was bully or no.

I have told you I like Philip Firmin, though it must be confessed that the young fellow had many faults, and that his career, especially his early career, was by no means exemplary. Have I ever excused his conduct to his father, or said a word in apology of his brief and inglorious university life? I acknowledge his shortcomings with that candour which my friends exhibit in speaking of mine. Who does not see a friend's weaknesses, and is so blind that he cannot perceive that enormous beam in his neighbour's eye? Only a woman or two, from time to time. And even they are undeceived some day. A man of the world, I write about my friends as mundane fellow-creatures. Do you suppose there are many angels here? I say again, perhaps a woman or two. But as for you and me, my good sir, are there any signs of wings sprouting from our shoulder-blades? Be quiet. Don't pursue your snarling, cynical remarks, but go on with your story.

As you go through life, stumbling, and slipping, and staggering to your feet again, ruefully aware of your own wretched weakness, and praying, with a contrite heart let us trust, that you may not be led into temptation, have you not often looked at other fellow-sinners, and speculated with an awful interest on their career? Some there are on whom, quite in their early lives, dark Ahrimanes has seemed to lay his dread mark: children, yet corrupt, and wicked of tongue; tender of age, yet cruel; who should be truth-telling and generous yet (they were at their mothers' bosoms yesterday), but are false, and cold, and greedy before their time. Infants almost, they practise the art and selfishness of old men. Behind their candid faces are wiles and wickedness, and a hideous precocity of artifice. I can recal such, and in the vista of far-off, unforgotten boyhood, can see marching that sad little procession of *enfants perdus*. May they be saved, pray heaven! Then there is the doubtful class, those who are still on trial; those who fall and rise again; those who are often worsted in life's battle; beaten down, wounded, imprisoned; but escape and conquer sometimes. And then there is the happy class about whom there seems no doubt at all: the spotless and white-robed ones, to whom virtue is easy; in whose pure bosoms faith nestles, and cold doubt finds no entrance; who are children, and yet good; young men, and good; husbands and fathers, and yet good. Why could the captain of our school write his Greek Iambics without an effort, and without an error? Others of us blistered the page with unavailing tears and blots, and might toil ever so, and come in lag last at the bottom of the form. Our friend Philip belongs to the middle class, in which you and I probably are, my dear sir — not yet, I hope, irredeemably consigned to that awful third class whereof mention has been made.

But, being homo, and liable to err, there is no doubt Mr. Philip exercised his privilege, and there was even no little fear at one time that he should overdraw his account. He went from school to the university, and there distinguished himself certainly, but in a way in which very few parents would choose that their sons should excel. That he should hunt, that he should give parties, that he should pull a good oar in one of the best boats on the river, that he should speak at the Union — all these were very well. But why should he speak such awful radicalism and republicanism — he with noble blood in his veins, and the son of a parent whose interest at least it was to keep well with people of high station?

"Why, Pendennis," said Dr. Firmin to me, with tears in his eyes, and much genuine grief exhibited on his handsome pale face — "why should it be said that Philip Firmin — both of whose grandfathers fought nobly for their king — should be forgetting the principles of his family, and — and, I haven't words to tell you how deeply he disappoints me. Why, I actually heard of him at that horrible Union advocating the death of Charles the First! I was wild enough myself when I was at the

university, but I was a gentleman.”

“Boys, sir, are boys,” I urged. “They will advocate anything for an argument: and Philip would have taken the other side quite as readily.”

“Lord Axminster and Lord St. Dennis told me of it at the club. I can tell you it has made a most painful impression,” cried the father. “That my son should be a radical and a republican, is a cruel thought for a father; and I, who had hoped for Lord Ringwood’s borough for him — who had hoped — who had hoped very much better things for him and from him — He is not a comfort to me. You saw how he treated me one night? A man might live on different terms, I think, with his only son!” And with a breaking voice, a pallid cheek, and a real grief at his heart, the unhappy physician moved away.

How had the doctor bred his son, that the young man should be thus unruly? Was the revolt the boy’s fault, or the father’s? Dr. Firmin’s horror seemed to be because his noble friends were horrified by Phil’s radical doctrine. At that time of my life, being young and very green, I had a little mischievous pleasure in infuriating Squaretoes, and causing him to pronounce that I was “a dangerous man.” Now, I am ready to say that Nero was a monarch with many elegant accomplishments, and considerable natural amiability of disposition. I praise and admire success wherever I meet it. I make allowance for faults and shortcomings, especially in my superiors; and feel that, did we know all, we should judge them very differently. People don’t believe me, perhaps, quite so much as formerly. But I don’t offend: I trust I don’t offend. Have I said anything painful? Plague on my blunders! I recal the expression. I regret it. I contradict it flat.

As I am ready to find excuses for everybody, let poor Philip come in for the benefit of this mild amnesty; and if he vexed his father, as he certainly did, let us trust — let us be thankfully sure — he was not so black as the old gentleman depicted him. Phil was unruly because he was bold, and wild, and young. His father was hurt, naturally hurt, because of the boy’s extravagances and follies. They will come together again, as father and son should. These little differences of temper will be smoothed and equalized anon. The boy has led a wild life. He has been obliged to leave college. He has given his father hours of anxiety and nights of painful watching. But stay, father, what of you? Have you shown to the boy the practice of confidence, the example of love and honour? Did you accustom him to virtue, and teach truth to the child at your knee? “Honour your father and mother.” Amen. May his days be long who fulfils the command: but implied, though unwritten on the table, is there not the order, “Honour your son and daughter?” Pray heaven that we, whose days are already not few in the land, may keep this ordinance too.

What had made Philip wild, extravagant, and insubordinate? Cured of that illness in which we saw him, he rose up, and from school went his way to the university, and there entered on a life such as wild young men will lead. From that day of illness his manner towards his father changed, and regarding the change the elder Firmin seemed afraid to question his son. He used the house as if his own, came and absented himself at will, ruled the servants, and was spoilt by them; spent the income which was settled on his mother and her children, and gave of it liberally to poor acquaintances. To the remonstrances of old friends he replied that he had a right to do as he chose with his own; that other men who were poor might work, but that he had enough to live on, without grinding over classics and mathematics. He was implicated in more rows than one; his tutors saw him not, but he and the proctors became a great deal too well acquainted. If I were to give a history of Mr. Philip Firmin at the university, it would be the story of an Idle Apprentice, of whom his pastors and masters were justified in prophesying evil. He was seen on lawless London excursions, when his father and tutor supposed him unwell in his rooms in college. He made acquaintance with jolly companions, with whom his father grieved that he should be intimate. He cut the astonished uncle Twysden in London street, and blandly told him that he must be mistaken — he one Frenchman, he no speak English. He stared the master of his own college out of countenance, dashed back to college with a Turpin-like celerity, and was in rooms with a ready proved alibi when inquiries were made. I am afraid there is no doubt that Phil screwed up his tutor’s door; Mr. Okes discovered him in the fact. He had to go down, the young prodigal. I wish I could say he was repentant. But he appeared before his father with the utmost nonchalance; said that he was doing no good at the university, and should be much better away, and then went abroad on a dashing tour to France and Italy, whither it is by no means our business to follow him. Something had poisoned the generous blood. The once kindly, honest lad was wild and reckless. He had money in sufficiency, his own horses and equipage, and free quarters in his father’s house. But father and son scarce met, and seldom took a meal together. “I know his haunts, but I don’t know his friends, Pendennis,” the elder man said. “I don’t think they are vicious, so much as low. I do not charge him with vice, mind you; but with idleness, and a fatal love of low company, and a frantic, suicidal determination to fling his chances in life away. Ah, think where he might be, and where he is!”

Where he was? Do not be alarmed. Philip was only idling. Philip might have been much more industriously, more profitably, and a great deal more wickedly employed. What is now called Bohemia had no name in Philip's young days, though many of us knew the country very well. A pleasant land, not fenced with drab stucco, like Tyburnia or Belgravia; not guarded by a huge standing army of footmen; not echoing with noble chariots; not replete with polite chintz drawing-rooms and neat tea-tables; a land over which hangs an endless fog, occasioned by much tobacco; a land of chambers, billiard-rooms, supper-rooms, oysters; a land of song; a land where soda-water flows freely in the morning; a land of tin dish-covers from taverns, and frothing porter; a land of lotos-eating (with lots of cayenne pepper), of pulls on the river, of delicious reading of novels, magazines, and saunterings in many studios; a land where men call each other by their Christian names; where most are poor, where almost all are young, and where if a few oldsters do enter, it is because they have preserved more tenderly and carefully than other folks their youthful spirits, and the delightful capacity to be idle. I have lost my way to Bohemia now, but it is certain that Prague is the most picturesque city in the world.

Having long lived there, and indeed only lately quitted the Bohemian land at the time whereof I am writing, I could not quite participate in Dr. Firmin's indignation at his son persisting in his bad courses and wild associates. When Firmin had been wild himself, he had fought, intrigued, and gambled in good company. Phil chose his friends amongst a banditti never heard of in fashionable quarters. Perhaps he liked to play the prince in the midst of these associates, and was not averse to the flattery which a full purse brought him among men most of whose pockets had a meagre lining. He had not emigrated to Bohemia, and settled there altogether. At school and in his brief university career he had made some friends who lived in the world, and with whom he was still familiar. "These come and knock at my front door, my father's door," he would say, with one of his old laughs; "the Bandits, who have the signal, enter only by the dissecting-room. I know which are the most honest, and that it is not always the poor Freebooters who best deserve to be hanged."

Like many a young gentleman who has no intention of pursuing legal studies seriously, Philip entered at an inn of court, and kept his terms duly, though he vowed that his conscience would not allow him to practise (I am not defending the opinions of this squeamish moralist — only stating them). His acquaintance here lay amongst the Temple Bohemians. He had part of a set of chambers in Parchment Buildings, to be sure, and you might read on a door, "Mr. Cassidy, Mr. P. Firmin, Mr. Vanjohn;" but were these gentlemen likely to advance Philip in life? Cassidy was a newspaper reporter, and young Vanjohn a betting man who was always attending races. Dr. Firmin had a horror of newspaper men, and considered they belonged to the dangerous classes, and treated them with a distant affability.

"Look at the governor, Pen," Philip would say to the present chronicler. "He always watches you with a secret suspicion, and has never got over his wonder at your being a gentleman. I like him when he does the Lord Chatham business, and condescends towards you, and gives you his hand to kiss. He considers he is your better, don't you see? Oh, he is a paragon of a père noble, the governor is! and I ought to be a young Sir Charles Grandison." And the young scapegrace would imitate his father's smile, and the doctor's manner of laying his hand to his breast and putting out his neat right leg, all of which movements or postures were, I own, rather pompous and affected.

Whatever the paternal faults were, you will say that Philip was not the man to criticize them; nor in this matter shall I attempt to defend him. My wife has a little pensioner whom she found wandering in the street, and singing a little artless song. The child could not speak yet — only warble its little song; and had thus strayed away from home, and never once knew of her danger. We kept her for a while, until the police found her parents. Our servants bathed her, and dressed her, and sent her home in such neat clothes as the poor little wretch had never seen until fortune sent her in the way of those good-natured folks. She pays them frequent visits. When she goes away from us, she is always neat and clean; when she comes to us, she is in rags and dirty. A wicked little slattern! And, pray, whose duty is it to keep her clean? and has not the parent in this case forgotten to honour her daughter? Suppose there is some reason which prevents Philip from loving his father — that the doctor has neglected to cleanse the boy's heart, and by carelessness and indifference has sent him erring into the world. If so, woe be to that doctor! If I take my little son to the tavern to dinner, shall I not assuredly pay? If I suffer him in tender youth to go astray, and harm comes to him, whose is the fault?

Perhaps the very outrages and irregularities of which Phil's father complained, were in some degree occasioned by the elder's own faults. He was so laboriously obsequious to great men, that the son in a rage defied and avoided them. He was so grave, so polite, so complimentary, so artificial, that Phil, in revolt at such hypocrisy, chose to be frank, cynical, and familiar. The grave old bigwigs whom the doctor loved to assemble, bland and solemn men of the ancient school, who dined solemnly with each other at their solemn old houses — such men as Lord Botley, Baron Bumpsher, Cricklade (who

published Travels in Asia Minor, 4to, 1804), the Bishop of St. Bees, and the like — wagged their old heads sadly when they colloqued in clubs, and talked of poor Firmin's scapegrace of a son. He would come to no good; he was giving his good father much pain; he had been in all sorts of rows and disturbances at the university, and the Master of Boniface reported most unfavourably of him. And at the solemn dinners in Old Parr Street — the admirable, costly, silent dinners — he treated these old gentlemen with a familiarity which caused the old heads to shake with surprise and choking indignation. Lord Botley and Baron Bumpsher had proposed and seconded Firmin's boy at the Megatherium club. The pallid old boys toddled away in alarm when he made his appearance there. He brought a smell of tobacco-smoke with him. He was capable of smoking in the drawing-room itself. They trembled before Philip, who, for his part, used to relish their senile anger; and loved, as he called it, to tie all their pigtailed together.

In no place was Philip seen or heard to so little advantage as in his father's house. "I feel like a humbug myself amongst those old humbugs," he would say to me. "Their old jokes, and their old compliments, and their virtuous old conversation sicken me. Are all old men humbugs, I wonder?" It is not pleasant to hear misanthropy from young lips, and to find eyes that are scarce twenty years old already looking out with distrust on the world.

In other houses than his own I am bound to say Philip was much more amiable, and he carried with him a splendour of gaiety and cheerfulness which brought sunshine and welcome into many a room which he frequented. I have said that many of his companions were artists and journalists, and their clubs and haunts were his own. Ridley the Academician had Mrs. Brandon's rooms in Thornhaugh Street, and Philip was often in J. J.'s studio, or in the widow's little room below. He had a very great tenderness and affection for her; her presence seemed to purify him; and in her company the boisterous, reckless young man was invariably gentle and respectful. Her eyes used to fill with tears when she spoke about him; and when he was present, followed and watched him with sweet motherly devotion. It was pleasant to see him at her homely little fireside, and hear his jokes and prattle, with a fatuous old father, who was one of Mrs. Brandon's lodgers. Philip would play cribbage for hours with this old man, frisk about him with a hundred harmless jokes, and walk out by his invalid chair, when the old captain went to sun himself in the New Road. He was an idle fellow, Philip, that's the truth. He had an agreeable perseverance in doing nothing, and would pass half a day in perfect contentment over his pipe, watching Ridley at his easel. J. J. painted that charming head of Philip, which hangs in Mrs. Brandon's little room — with the fair hair, the tawny beard and whiskers, and the bold blue eyes.

Phil had a certain after-supper song of "Garryowen na Gloria," which it did you good to hear, and which, when sung at his full pitch, you might hear for a mile round. One night I had been to dine in Russell Square, and was brought home in his carriage by Dr. Firmin, who was of the party. As we came through Soho, the windows of a certain club-room called the "Haunt" were open, and we could hear Philip's song booming through the night, and especially a certain wild Irish war-whoop with which it concluded, amidst universal applause and enthusiastic battering of glasses.

The poor father sank back in the carriage as though a blow had struck him. "Do you hear his voice?" he groaned out. "Those are his haunts. My son, who might go anywhere, prefers to be captain in a pothouse, and sing songs in a taproom!"

I tried to make the best of the case. I knew there was no harm in the place; that clever men of considerable note frequented it. But the wounded father was not to be consoled by such commonplaces; and a deep and natural grief oppressed him, in consequence of the faults of his son.

What ensued by no means surprised me. Among Dr. Firmin's patients was a maiden lady of suitable age and large fortune, who looked upon the accomplished doctor with favourable eyes. That he should take a companion to cheer him in his solitude was natural enough, and all his friends concurred in thinking that he should marry. Every one had cognizance of the quiet little courtship, except the doctor's son, between whom and his father there were only too many secrets.

Some man in a club asked Philip whether he should condole with him or congratulate him on his father's approaching marriage? His what? The younger Firmin exhibited the greatest surprise and agitation on hearing of this match. He ran home: he awaited his father's return. When Dr. Firmin came home and betook himself to his study, Philip confronted him there. "This must be a lie, sir, which I have heard to-day," the young man said, fiercely.

"A lie! what lie, Philip?" asked the father. They were both very resolute and courageous men.

"That you are going to marry Miss Benson."

"Do you make my house so happy, that I don't need any other companion?" asked the father.

"That's not the question," said Philip, hotly. "You can't and mustn't marry that lady, sir."

“And why not, sir?”

“Because in the eyes of God and heaven you are married already, sir. And I swear I will tell Miss Benson the story to-morrow, if you persist in your plan.”

“So you know that story?” groaned the father.

“Yes. God forgive you,” said the son.

“It was a fault of my youth that has been bitterly repented.”

“A fault! — a crime!” said Philip.

“Enough, sir! Whatever my fault, it is not for you to charge me with it.”

“If you won’t guard your own honour, I must. I shall go to Miss Benson now.”

“If you go out of this house, you don’t pretend to return to it?”

“Be it so. Let us settle our accounts, and part, sir.”

“Philip, Philip! you break my heart,” cried the father.

“You don’t suppose mine is very light, sir?” said the son.

Philip never had Miss Benson for a mother-in-law. But father and son loved each other no better after their dispute.



CHAPTER 6

BRANDON'S.

Thornhaugh Street is but a poor place now, and the houses look as if they had seen better days: but that house with the cut centre drawing-room window, with the name of Brandon on the door, was as neat as any house in the quarter, and the brass plate always shone like burnished gold. About Easter time many fine carriages stop at that door, and splendid people walk in, introduced by a tidy little maid, or else by an athletic Italian, with a glossy black beard and gold earrings, who conducts them to the drawing-room floor, where Mr. Ridley, the painter, lives, and where his pictures are privately exhibited before they go to the Royal Academy.

As the carriages drive up, you will often see a red-faced man, in an olive-green wig, smiling blandly over the blinds of the parlour, on the ground-floor. That is Captain Gann, the father of the lady who keeps the house. I don't know how he came by the rank of captain, but he has borne it so long and gallantly that there is no use in any longer questioning the title. He does not claim it, neither does he deny it. But the wags who call upon Mrs. Brandon can always, as the phrase is, "draw" her father, by speaking of Prussia, France, Waterloo, or battles in general, until the Little Sister says, "Now, never mind about the battle of Waterloo, papa" (she says Pa — her h's are irregular — I can't help it) — "Never mind about Waterloo, papa; you've told them all about it. And don't go on, Mr. Beans, don't, please, go on in that way."

Young Beans has already drawn "Captain Gann (assisted by Shaw, the Life-Guardsman) killing twenty-four French cuirassiers at Waterloo." "Captain Gann defending Hugoumont." "Captain Gann, called upon by Napoleon Buonaparte to lay down his arms, saying, 'A captain of militia dies, but never surrenders.'" "The Duke of Wellington pointing to the advancing Old Guard, and saying, 'Up, Gann, and at them.'" And these sketches are so droll, that even the Little Sister, Gann's own daughter, can't help laughing at them. To be sure, she loves fun, the Little Sister; laughs over droll books; laughs to herself, in her little quiet corner at work; laughs over pictures; and, at the right place, laughs and sympathizes too. Ridley says, he knows few better critics of pictures than Mrs. Brandon. She has a sweet temper, a merry sense of humour, that makes the cheeks dimple and the eyes shine; and a kind heart, that has been sorely tried and wounded, but is still soft and gentle. Fortunate are they whose hearts, so tried by suffering, yet recover their health. Some have illnesses from which there is no recovery, and drag through life afterwards, maimed and invalided.

But this Little Sister, having been subjected in youth to a dreadful trial and sorrow, was saved out of them by a kind Providence, and is now so thoroughly restored as to own that she is happy, and to thank God that she can be grateful and useful. When poor Montfitchet died, she nursed him through his illness as tenderly as his good wife herself. In the days of her own chief grief and misfortune, her father, who was under the domination of his wife, a cruel and blundering woman, thrust out poor little Caroline from his door, when she returned to it the broken-hearted victim of a scoundrel's seduction; and when the old captain was himself in want and houseless, she had found him, sheltered and fed him. And it was from that day her wounds had begun to heal, and, from gratitude for this immense piece of good fortune vouchsafed to her, that her happiness and cheerfulness returned. Returned? There was an old servant of the family, who could not stay in the house because she was so abominably disrespectful to the captain, and this woman, said she had never known Miss Caroline so cheerful, nor so happy, nor so good-looking, as she was now.

So Captain Gann came to live with his daughter, and patronized her with much dignity. He had a very few yearly pounds, which served to pay his club expenses, and a portion of his clothes. His club, I need not say, was at the "Admiral Byng," Tottenham Court Road, and here the captain met frequently a pleasant little society, and bragged unceasingly about his former prosperity.

I have heard that the country-house in Kent, of which he boasted, was a shabby little lodging-house at Margate, of which the furniture was sold in execution; but if it had been a palace the captain would not have been out of place there, one or two people still rather fondly thought. His daughter, amongst others, had tried to fancy all sorts of good of her father, and especially that he was a man of remarkably good manners. But she had seen one or two gentlemen since she knew the poor old father — gentlemen with rough coats and good hearts, like Dr. Goodenough; gentlemen with superfine coats and superfine double-milled manners, like Dr. Firmin, and hearts — well, never mind about that point; gentlemen of no h's, like the good, dear, faithful benefactor who had rescued her at the brink of despair; men of genius, like Ridley;

great, hearty, generous, honest gentlemen, like Philip; — and this illusion about Pa, I suppose, had vanished along with some other fancies of her poor little maiden youth. The truth is, she had an understanding with the “Admiral Byng;” the landlady was instructed as to the supplies to be furnished to the captain; and as for his stories, poor Caroline knew them a great deal too well to believe in them any more.

I would not be understood to accuse the captain of habitual inebriety. He was a generous officer, and his delight was, when in cash, to order “glasses round” for the company at the club, to whom he narrated the history of his brilliant early days, when he lived in some of the tiptop society of this city, sir — a society in which, we need not say, the custom always is for gentlemen to treat other gentlemen to rum-and-water. Never mind — I wish we were all as happy as the captain. I see his jolly face now before me as it blooms through the window in Thornhaugh Street, and the wave of the somewhat dingy hand which sweeps me a gracious recognition.

The clergyman of the neighbouring chapel was a very good friend of the Little Sister, and has taken tea in her parlour; to which circumstance the captain frequently alluded, pointing out the very chair on which the divine sate. Mr. Gann attended his ministrations regularly every Sunday, and brought a rich, though somewhat worn, bass voice to bear upon the anthems and hymns at the chapel. His style was more florid than is general now among church singers, and, indeed, had been acquired in a former age and in the performance of rich Bacchanalian chants, such as delighted the contemporaries of our Incledon and Brahmams. With a very little entreaty, the captain could be induced to sing at the club; and I must own that Phil Firmin would draw the captain out, and extract from him a song of ancient days; but this must be in the absence of his daughter, whose little face wore an air of such extreme terror and disturbance when her father sang, that he presently ceased from exercising his musical talents in her hearing. He hung up his lyre, whereof it must be owned that time had broken many of the once resounding chords.

With a sketch or two contributed by her lodgers — with a few gimcracks from the neighbouring Wardour Street presented by others of her friends — with the chairs, tables, and bureaux as bright as bees'-wax and rubbing could make them — the Little Sister's room was a cheery little place, and received not a little company. She allowed Pa's pipe. “It's company to him,” she said. “A man can't be doing much harm when he is smoking his pipe.” And she allowed Phil's cigar. Anything was allowed to Phil, the other lodgers declared, who professed to be quite jealous of Philip Firmin. She had a very few books. “When I was a girl I used to be always reading novels,” she said; “but, la, they're mostly nonsense. There's Mr. Pendennis, who comes to see Mr. Ridley. I wonder how a married man can go on writing about love, and all that stuff!” And, indeed, it is rather absurd for elderly fingers to be still twanging Dan Cupid's toy bow and arrows. Yesterday is gone — yes, but very well remembered; and we think of it the more now we know that To-morrow is not going to bring us much.

Into Mrs. Brandon's parlour Mr. Ridley's old father would sometimes enter of evenings, and share the bit of bread and cheese, or the modest supper of Mrs. Brandon and the captain. The homely little meal has almost vanished out of our life now, but in former days it assembled many a family round its kindly board. A little modest supper-tray — a little quiet prattle — a little kindly glass that cheered and never inebriated. I can see friendly faces smiling round such a meal, at a period not far gone, but how distant! I wonder whether there are any old folks now in old quarters of old country towns, who come to each other's houses in sedan-chairs, at six o'clock, and play at quadrille until supper-tray time? Of evenings Ridley and the captain, I say, would have a solemn game at cribbage, and the Little Sister would make up a jug of something good for the two oldsters. She liked Mr. Ridley to come, for he always treated her father so respectful, and was quite the gentleman. And as for Mrs. Ridley, Mr. R.'s “good lady,” — was she not also grateful to the Little Sister for having nursed her son during his malady? Through their connection they were enabled to procure Mrs. Brandon many valuable friends; and always were pleased to pass an evening with the captain, and were as civil to him as they could have been had he been at the very height of his prosperity and splendour. My private opinion of the old captain, you see, is that he was a worthless old captain, but most fortunate in his early ruin, after which he had lived very much admired and comfortable, sufficient whisky being almost always provided for him.

Old Mr. Ridley's respect for her father afforded a most precious consolation to the Little Sister. Ridley liked to have the paper read to him. He was never quite easy with print, and to his last days, many words to be met with in newspapers and elsewhere used to occasion the good butler much intellectual trouble. The Little Sister made his lodger's bills out for him (Mr. R., as well as the captain's daughter, strove to increase a small income by the letting of furnished apartments), or the captain himself would take these documents in charge; he wrote a noble mercantile hand, rendered now somewhat shaky by time, but still very fine in flourishes and capitals, and very much at worthy Mr. Ridley's service. Time was, when his son

was a boy, that J. J. himself had prepared these accounts, which neither his father nor his mother were very competent to arrange. "We were not in our young time, Mr. Gann," Ridley remarked to his friend, "brought up to much scholarship; and very little book learning was given to persons in my rank of life. It was necessary and proper for you gentlemen, of course, sir." "Of course, Mr. Ridley," winks the other veteran over his pipe. "But I can't go and ask my son John James to keep his old father's books now as he used to do — which to do so is, on the part of you and Mrs. Brandon, the part of true friendship, and I value it, sir, and so do my son John James reckonize and value it, sir." Mr. Ridley had served gentlemen of the *bonne école*. No nobleman could be more courtly and grave than he was. In Mr. Gann's manner there was more humorous playfulness, which in no way, however, diminished the captain's high-breeding. As he continued to be intimate with Mr. Ridley, he became loftier and more majestic. I think each of these elders acted on the other, and for good; and I hope Ridley's opinion was correct, that Mr. Gann was ever the gentleman. To see these two good fogies together was a spectacle for edification. Their tumblers kissed each other on the table. Their elderly friendship brought comfort to themselves, and their families. A little matter of money once created a coolness between the two old gentlemen. But the Little Sister paid the outstanding account between her father and Mr. Ridley; there never was any further talk of pecuniary loans between them; and when they went to the "Admiral Byng," each paid for himself.

Phil often heard of that nightly meeting at the "Admiral Byng," and longed to be of the company. But even when he saw the old gentlemen in the Little Sister's parlour, they felt dimly that he was making fun of them. The captain would not have been able to brag so at ease had Phil been continually watching him. "I have'ad the honour of waiting on your worthy father at my Lord Todmorden's table. Our little club ain't no place for you, Mr. Philip, nor for my son, though he's a good son, and proud me and his mother is of him, which he have never gave us a moment's pain, except when he was ill, since he have came to man's estate, most thankful am I, and with my hand on my heart, for to be able to say so. But what is good for me and Mr. Gann, won't suit you young gentlemen. You ain't a tradesman, sir, else I'm mistaken in the family, which I thought the Ringwoods one of the best in England, and the Firmins, a good one likewise." Mr. Ridley loved the sound of his own voice. At the festive meetings of the club, seldom a night passed in which he did not compliment his brother Byngs and air his own oratory. Under this reproof Phil blushed, and hung his conscious head with shame. "Mr. Ridley," says he, "you shall find I won't come where I am not welcome; and if I come to annoy you at the 'Admiral Byng,' may I be taken out on the quarterdeck and shot." On which Mr. Ridley pronounced Philip to be a "most sing'lar, astronary, and asentric young man. A good heart, sir. Most generous to relieve distress. Fine talent, sir; but I fear — I fear it won't come to much good, Mr. Gann — saving your presence, Mrs. Brandon, m'm, which, of course, you always stand up for him."

When Philip Firmin had had his pipe and his talk with the Little Sister in her parlour, he would ascend, and smoke his second, third, tenth pipe in J. J. Ridley's studio. He would pass hours before J. J.'s easel, pouring out talk about politics, about religion, about poetry, about women, about the dreadful slavishness and meanness of the world; — unwearied in talk and idleness, as placid J. J. was in listening and labour. The painter had been too busy in life over his easel to read many books. His ignorance of literature smote him with a frequent shame. He admired book-writers, and young men of the university who quoted their Greek and their Horace glibly. He listened with deference to their talk on such matters; no doubt got good hints from some of them; was always secretly pained and surprised when the university gentlemen were beaten in argument, or loud and coarse in conversation, as sometimes they would be. "J. J. is a very clever fellow of course," Mr. Jarman would say of him, "and the luckiest man in Europe. He loves painting, and he is at work all day. He loves toadying fine people, and he goes to a tea-party every night." You all knew Jarman of Charlotte Street, the miniature-painter? He was one of the kings of the Haunt. His tongue spared no one. He envied all success, and the sight of prosperity made him furious: but to the unsuccessful he was kind; to the poor eager with help and prodigal of compassion; and that old talk about nature's noblemen and the glory of labour was very fiercely and eloquently waged by him. His friends admired him: he was the soul of independence, and thought most men sneaks who wore clean linen and frequented gentlemen's society: but it must be owned his landlords had a bad opinion of him, and I have heard of one or two of his pecuniary transactions which certainly were not to Mr. Jarman's credit. Jarman was a man of remarkable humour. He was fond of the widow, and would speak of her goodness, usefulness, and honesty with tears in his eyes. She was poor and struggling yet. Had she been wealthy and prosperous, Mr. Jarman would not have been so alive to her merit.

We ascended to the room on the first-floor, where the centre window has been heightened, so as to afford an upper light, and under that stream of radiance we behold the head of an old friend, Mr. J. J. Ridley, the R. Academician. Time has somewhat thinned his own copious locks, and prematurely streaked the head with silver. His face is rather wan; the eager,

sensitive hand which poises brush and palette, and quivers over the picture, is very thin: round his eyes are many lines of ill-health and, perhaps, care, but the eyes are as bright as ever, and when they look at the canvas, or the model which he transfers to it, clear, and keen, and happy. He has a very sweet singing voice, and warbles at his work, or whistles at it, smiling. He sets his hand little feats of skill to perform, and smiles with a boyish pleasure at his own matchless dexterity. I have seen him, with an old pewter mustard-pot for a model, fashion a splendid silver flagon in one of his pictures; paint the hair of an animal, the folds and flowers of a bit of brocade, and so forth, with a perfect delight in the work he was performing; a delight lasting from morning till sun-down, during which time he was too busy to touch the biscuit and glass of water which was prepared for his frugal luncheon. He is greedy of the last minute of light, and never can be got from his darling pictures without a regret. To be a painter, and to have your hand in perfect command, I hold to be one of life's summa bona. The happy mixture of hand and head work must render the occupation supremely pleasant. In the day's work must occur endless delightful difficulties and occasions for skill. Over the details of that armour, that drapery, or what not, the sparkle of that eye, the downy blush of that cheek, the jewel on that neck, there are battles to be fought and victories to be won. Each day there must occur critical moments of supreme struggle and triumph, when struggle and victory must be both invigorating and exquisitely pleasing — as a burst across country is to a fine rider perfectly mounted, who knows that his courage and his horse will never fail him. There is the excitement of the game, and the gallant delight in winning it. Of this sort of admirable reward for their labour, no men, I think, have a greater share than painters (perhaps a violin-player perfectly and triumphantly performing his own beautiful composition may be equally happy). Here is occupation: here is excitement: here is struggle and victory: and here is profit. Can man ask more from fortune? Dukes and Rothschilds may be envious of such a man.

Though Ridley has had his trials and troubles, his art has mastered them all. Black care may have sat in crupper on that Pegasus, but has never unhorsed the rider. In certain minds, art is dominant and superior to all beside — stronger than love, stronger than hate, or care, or penury. As soon as the fever leaves the hand free, it is seizing and fondling the pencil. Love may frown and be false, but the other mistress never will. She is always true: always new: always the friend, companion, inestimable consoler. So John James Ridley sat at his easel from breakfast till sun-down, and never left his work quite willingly. I wonder are men of other trades so enamoured of theirs; whether lawyers cling to the last to their darling reports; or writers prefer their desk and inkstands to society, to friendship, to dear idleness? I have seen no men in life loving their profession so much as painters, except, perhaps, actors, who, when not engaged themselves, always go to the play.

Before this busy easel Phil would sit for hours, and pour out endless talk and tobacco-smoke. His presence was a delight to Ridley's soul; his face a sunshine; his voice a cordial. Weakly himself, and almost infirm of body, with sensibilities tremulously keen, the painter most admired amongst men strength, health, good spirits, good breeding. Of these, in his youth, Philip had a wealth of endowment; and I hope these precious gifts of fortune have not left him in his maturer age. I do not say that with all men Philip was so popular. There are some who never can pardon good fortune, and in the company of gentlemen are on the watch for offence; and, no doubt, in his course through life, poor downright Phil trampled upon corns enough of those who met him in his way. "Do you know why Ridley is so fond of Firmin?" asked Jarman. "Because Firmin's father hangs on to the nobility by the pulse, whilst Ridley, you know, is connected with them through the sideboard." So Jarman had the double horn for his adversary: he could despise a man for not being a gentleman, and insult him for being one. I have met with people in the world with whom the latter offence is an unpardonable crime — a cause of ceaseless doubt, division, and suspicion. What more common or natural, Bufo, than to hate another for being what you are not? The story is as old as frogs, bulls, and men.

Then, to be sure, besides your enviers in life, there are your admirers. Beyond wit, which he understood — beyond genius which he had — Ridley admired good looks and manners, and always kept some simple hero whom he loved secretly to cherish and worship. He loved to be amongst beautiful women and aristocratical men. Philip Firmin, with his republican notions, and downright bluntness of behaviour to all men of rank superior to him, had a grand high manner of his own; and if he had scarce twopence in his pocket, would have put his hands in them with as much independence as the greatest dandy who ever sauntered on Pall Mall pavement. What a coolness the fellow had! Some men may, not unreasonably, have thought it impudence. It fascinated Ridley. To be such a man; to have such a figure and manner; to be able to look society in the face, slap it on the shoulder, if you were so minded, and hold it by the button — what would not Ridley give for such powers and accomplishments? You will please to bear in mind, I am not saying that J. J. was right,

only that he was as he was. I hope we shall have nobody in this story without his little faults and peculiarities. Jarman was quite right when he said Ridley loved fine company. I believe his pedigree gave him secret anguishes. He would rather have been gentleman than genius ever so great; but let you and me, who have no weaknesses of our own, try and look charitably on this confessed foible of my friend.

J. J. never thought of rebuking Philip for being idle. Phil was as the lilies of the field, in the painter's opinion. He was not called upon to toil or spin; but to take his ease, and grow and bask in sunshine, and be arrayed in glory. The little clique of painters knew what Firmin's means were. Thirty thousand pounds of his own. Thirty thousand pounds down, sir; and the inheritance of his father's immense fortune! A splendour emanated from this gifted young man. His opinions, his jokes, his laughter, his song, had the weight of thirty thousand down, sir; and What call had he to work? Would you set a young nobleman to be an apprentice? Philip was free to be as idle as any lord, if he liked. He ought to wear fine clothes, ride fine horses, dine off plate, and drink champagne every day. J. J. would work quite cheerfully till sunset, and have an eightpenny plate of meat in Wardour Street and a glass of porter for his humble dinner. At the Haunt, and similar places of Bohemian resort, a snug place near the fire was always found for Firmin. Fierce republican as he was, Jarman had a smile for his lordship, and used to adopt particularly dandified airs when he had been invited to Old Parr Street to dinner. I daresay Philip liked flattery. I own that he was a little weak in this respect, and that you and I, my dear sir, are, of course, far his superiors. J. J., who loved him, would have had him follow his aunt's and cousin's advice, and live in better company; but I think the painter would not have liked his pet to soil his hands with too much work, and rather admired Mr. Phil for being idle.

The Little Sister gave him advice, to be sure, both as to the company he should keep and the occupation which was wholesome for him. But when others of his acquaintance hinted that his idleness would do him harm, she would not hear of their censure. "Why should he work if he don't choose?" she asked. "He has no call to be scribbling and scrabbling. You wouldn't have him sitting all day painting little dolls' heads on canvas, and working like a slave. A pretty idea, indeed! His uncle will get him an appointment. That's the thing he should have. He should be secretary to an ambassador abroad, and he will be!" In fact, Phil, at this period, used to announce his wish to enter the diplomatic service, and his hope that Lord Ringwood would further his views in that respect. Meanwhile he was the king of Thornhaugh Street. He might be as idle as he chose, and Mrs. Brandon had always a smile for him. He might smoke a great deal too much, but she worked dainty little cigar cases for him. She hemmed his fine cambric pocket-handkerchiefs, and embroidered his crest at the corners. She worked him a waistcoat so splendid that he almost blushed to wear it, gorgeous as he was in apparel at this period, and sumptuous in chains, studs, and haberdashery. I fear Dr. Firmin, sighing out his disappointed hopes in respect of his son, has rather good cause for his dissatisfaction. But of these remonstrances the Little Sister would not hear. "Idle, why not? Why should he work? Boys will be boys. I daresay his grumbling old Pa was not better than Philip when he was young!" And this she spoke with a heightened colour in her little face, and a defiant toss of her head, of which I did not understand all the significance then; but attributed her eager partisanship to that admirable injustice which belongs to all good women, and for which let us be daily thankful. I know, dear ladies, you are angry at this statement. But, even at the risk of displeasing you, we must tell the truth. You would wish to represent yourselves as equitable, logical, and strictly just. So, I daresay, Dr. Johnson would have liked Mrs. Thrale to say to him, "Sir, your manners are graceful; your person elegant, cleanly, and eminently pleasing; your appetite small (especially for tea), and your dancing equal to the Violetta's;" which, you perceive, is merely ironical. Women equitable, logical, and strictly just! Mercy upon us! If they were, population would cease, the world would be a howling wilderness. Well, in a word, this Little Sister petted and coaxed Philip Firmin in such an absurd way, that every one remarked it — those who had no friends, no sweethearts, no mothers, no daughters, no wives, and those who were petted, and coaxed, and spoiled at home themselves; as I trust, dearly beloved, is your case.

Now, again, let us admit that Philip's father had reason to be angry with the boy, and deplore his son's taste for low company; but excuse the young man, on the other hand, somewhat for his fierce revolt and profound distaste at much in his home circle which annoyed him. "By heaven!" (he would roar out, pulling his hair and whiskers, and with many fierce ejaculations, according to his wont,) "the solemnity of those humbugs sickens me so, that I should like to crown the old bishop with the soup tureen, and box Baron Bumpsher's ears with the saddle of mutton. At my aunt's, the humbug is just the same. It's better done, perhaps; but, O Pendennis! if you could but know the pangs which tore into my heart, sir, the vulture which gnawed at this confounded liver, when I saw women — women who ought to be pure — women who ought to be like angels — women who ought to know no art but that of coaxing our griefs away and soothing our sorrows — fawning,

and cringing, and scheming; cold to this person, humble to that, flattering to the rich, and indifferent to the humble in station. I tell you I have seen all this, Mrs. Pendennis! I won't mention names, but I have met with those who have made me old before my time — a hundred years old! The zest of life is passed from me" (here Mr. Phil would gulp a bumper from the nearest decanter at hand). "But if I like what your husband is pleased to call low society, it is because I have seen the other. I have dangled about at fine parties, and danced at fashionable balls. I have seen mothers bring their virgin daughters up to battered old rakes, and ready to sacrifice their innocence for fortune or a title. The atmosphere of those polite drawing-rooms stifles me. I can't bow the knee to the horrible old Mammon. I walk about in the crowds as lonely as if I was in a wilderness; and don't begin to breathe freely until I get some honest tobacco to clear the air. As for your husband" (meaning the writer of this memoir), "he cannot help himself; he is a worldling, of the earth, earthy. If a duke were to ask him to dinner to-morrow, the parasite owns that he would go. Allow me, my friends, my freedom, my rough companions, in their work-day clothes. I don't hear such lies and flatteries come from behind pipes, as used to pass from above whitechokers when I was in the world." And he would tear at his cravat, as though the mere thought of the world's conventionality well nigh strangled him.

This, to be sure, was in a late stage of his career, but I take up the biography here and there, so as to give the best idea I may of my friend's character. At this time — he is out of the country just now, and besides, if he saw his own likeness staring him in the face, I am confident he would not know it — Mr. Philip, in some things, was as obstinate as a mule, and in others as weak as a woman. He had a childish sensibility for what was tender, helpless, pretty, or pathetic; and a mighty scorn of imposture, wherever he found it. He had many good purposes, which were often very vacillating, and were but seldom performed. He had a vast number of evil habits, whereof, you know, idleness is said to be the root. Many of these evil propensities he coaxed and cuddled with much care; and though he roared out peccavi most frankly, when charged with his sins, this criminal would fall to peccation very soon after promising amendment. What he liked he would have. What he disliked he could with the greatest difficulty be found to do. He liked good dinners, good wine, good horses, good clothes, and late hours; and in all these comforts of life (or any others which he fancied, or which were within his means) he indulged himself with perfect freedom. He hated hypocrisy on his own part, and hypocrites in general. He said everything that came into his mind about things and people; and, of course, was often wrong and often prejudiced, and often occasioned howls of indignation or malignant whispers of hatred by his free speaking. He believed everything that was said to him until his informant had misled him once or twice, after which he would believe nothing. And here you will see that his impetuous credulity was as absurd as the subsequent obstinacy of his unbelief. My dear young friend, the profitable way in life is the middle way. Don't quite believe anybody, for he may mislead you; neither disbelieve him, for that is uncomplimentary to your friend. Black is not so very black; and as for white, *bon Dieu!* in our climate, what paint will remain white long? If Philip was self-indulgent, I suppose other people are self-indulgent likewise: and besides, you know, your faultless heroes have ever so long gone out of fashion. To be young, to be good-looking, to be healthy, to be hungry three times a day, to have plenty of money, a great alacrity of sleeping, and nothing to do — all these, I daresay, are very dangerous temptations to a man, but I think I know some who would like to undergo the dangers of the trial. Suppose there be holidays, is there not work-time too? Suppose to-day is feast-day; may not tears and repentance come to-morrow? Such times are in store for Master Phil, and so please to let him have rest and comfort for a chapter or two.



CHAPTER 7

IMPLETUR VETERIS BACCHI.

That time, that merry time, of Brandon's, of Bohemia, of oysters, of idleness, of smoking, of song at night and profuse soda-water in the morning, of a pillow, lonely and bachelor it is true, but with few cares for bed-fellows, of plenteous pocket-money, of ease for to-day and little heed for to-morrow, was often remembered by Philip in after days. Mr. Phil's views of life were not very exalted, were they? The fruits of this world, which he devoured with such gusto, I must own were of the common kitchen-garden sort; and the lazy rogue's ambition went no farther than to stroll along the sunshiny wall, eat his fill, and then repose comfortably in the arbour under the arched vine. Why did Phil's mother's parents leave her thirty thousand pounds? I daresay some misguided people would be glad to do as much for their sons; but, if I have ten, I am determined they shall either have a hundred thousand apiece, or else bare bread and cheese. "Man was made to labour, and to be lazy," Phil would affirm, with his usual energy of expression. "When the Indian warrior goes on the hunting path, he is sober, active, indomitable. No dangers fright him, and no labours tire. He endures the cold of the winter; he couches on the forest leaves; he subsists on frugal roots or the casual spoil of his bow. When he returns to his village, he gorges to repletion; he sleeps, perhaps, to excess. When the game is devoured, and the fire-water exhausted, again he sallies forth into the wilderness; he outclimbs the possum and he throttles the bear. I am the Indian: and this haunt is my wigwam! Barbara, my squaw, bring me oysters; bring me a jug of the frothing black beer of the palefaces, or I will hang up thy scalp on my tent-pole?" And old Barbara, the good old attendant of this Haunt of Bandits, would say, "Law, Mr. Philip, how you do go on, to be sure!" Where is the Haunt now? and where are the merry men all who there assembled? The sign is down; the song is silent; the sand is swept from the floor; the pipes are broken, and the ashes are scattered.

A little more gossip about his merry days, and we have done. He, Philip, was called to the bar in due course, and at his call-supper we assembled a dozen of his elderly and youthful friends. The chambers in Parchment Buildings were given up to him for this day. Mr. Vanjohn, I think, was away attending a steeplechase; but Mr. Cassidy was with us, and several of Philip's acquaintances of school, college, and the world. There was Philip's father, and Philip's uncle Twysden, and I, Phil's revered and respectable school senior, and others of our ancient seminary. There was Burroughs, the second wrangler of his year, great in metaphysics, greater with the knife and fork. There was Stackpole, Eblana's favourite child — the glutton of all learning, the master of many languages, who stuttered and blushed when he spoke his own. There was Pinkerton, who, albeit an ignoramus at the university, was already winning prodigious triumphs at the Parliamentary bar, and investing in Consols to the admiration of all his contemporaries. There was Rosebury the beautiful, the May Fair pet and delight of Almack's, the cards on whose mantelpiece made all men open the eyes of wonder, and some of us dart the scowl of envy. There was my Lord Ascot, Lord Egham of former days. There was Tom Dale, who, having carried on his university career too splendidly, had come to grief in the midst of it, and was now meekly earning his bread in the Reporters' Gallery, alongside of Cassidy. There was Macbride, who, having thrown up his Fellowship and married his cousin, was now doing a brave battle with poverty, and making literature feed him until law should reward him more splendidly. There was Haythorn, the country gentleman, who ever remembered his old college chums and kept the memory of that friendship up by constant reminders of pheasants and game in the season. There were Raby and Maynard from the Guards' Club (Maynard sleeps now under Crimean snows), who preferred arms to the toga; but carried into their military life the love of their old books, the affection of their old friends. Most of these must be mute personages in our little drama. Could any chronicler remember the talk of all of them?

Several of the guests present were members of the Inn of Court (the Upper Temple), which had conferred on Philip the degree of Barrister-at-Law. He had dined in his wig and gown (Blackmore's wig and gown) in the hall that day, in company with other members of his inn; and, dinner over, we adjourned to Phil's chambers in Parchment Buildings, where a dessert was served, to which Mr. Firmin's friends were convoked.

The wines came from Dr. Firmin's cellar. His servants were in attendance to wait upon the company. Father and son both loved splendid hospitalities, and, as far as creature comforts went, Philip's feast was richly provided. "A supper, I love a supper, of all things! And in order that I might enjoy yours, I only took a single mutton-chop for dinner!" cried Mr.

Twysden, as he greeted Philip. Indeed, we found him, as we arrived from Hall, already in the chambers, and eating the young barrister's dessert. "He's been here ever so long," says Mr. Brice, who officiated as butler, "pegging away at the olives and maccaroons. Shouldn't wonder if he has pocketed some." There was small respect on the part of Brice for Mr. Twysden, whom the worthy butler frankly pronounced to be a stingy 'umbug. Meanwhile, Talbot believed that the old man respected him, and always conversed with Brice, and treated him with a cheerful cordiality.

The outer Philistines quickly arrived, and but that the wine and men were older, one might have fancied oneself at a college wine-party. Mr. Twysden talked for the whole company. He was radiant. He felt himself in high spirits. He did the honours of Philip's table. Indeed, no man was more hospitable with other folk's wine. Philip himself was silent and nervous. I asked him if the awful ceremony, which he had just undergone, was weighing on his mind?

He was looking rather anxiously towards the door; and, knowing somewhat of the state of affairs at home, I thought that probably he and his father had had one of the disputes which of late days had become so frequent between them.

The company were nearly all assembled and busy with their talk, and drinking the doctor's excellent claret, when Brice entering, announced Dr. Firmin and Mr. Tufton Hunt.

"Hang Mr. Tufton Hunt," Philip grumbled; but he started up, went forward to his father, and greeted him very respectfully. He then gave a bow to the gentleman introduced as Mr. Hunt, and they found places at the table, the doctor taking his with his usual handsome grace.

The conversation, which had been pretty brisk until Dr. Firmin came, drooped a little after his appearance. "We had an awful row two days ago," Philip whispered to me. "We shook hands and are reconciled, as you see. He won't stay long. He will be sent for in half an hour or so. He will say he has been sent for by a duchess, and go and have tea at the club."

Dr. Firmin bowed, and smiled sadly at me, as Philip was speaking. I daresay I blushed somewhat, and felt as if the doctor knew what his son was saying to me. He presently engaged in conversation with Lord Ascot; he hoped his good father was well?

"You keep him so, doctor. You don't give a fellow a chance," says the young lord.

"Pass the bottle, you young men! Hey! We intend to see you all out!" cries Talbot Twysden, on pleasure bent and of the frugal mind.

"Well said, sir," says the stranger introduced as Mr. Hunt; "and right good wine. Ha, Firmin! I think I know the tap!" and he smacked his lips over the claret. "It's your twenty-five, and no mistake."

"The red-nosed individual seems a connoisseur," whispered Rosebury at my side.

The stranger's nose, indeed, was somewhat rosy. And to this I may add that his clothes were black, his face pale, and not well shorn, his white neckcloth dingy, and his eyes bloodshot.

"He looks as if he had gone to bed in his clothes, and carries a plentiful flue about his person. Who is your father's esteemed friend?" continues the wag, in an under voice.

"You heard his name, Rosebury," says the young barrister, gloomily.

"I should suggest that your father is in difficulties, and attended by an officer of the sheriff of London, or perhaps subject to mental aberration, and placed under the control of a keeper."

"Leave me alone, do!" groaned Philip. And here Twysden, who was longing for an opportunity to make a speech, bounced up from his chair, and stopped the facetious barrister's further remarks by his own eloquence. His discourse was in praise of Philip, the

new-made barrister. "What! if no one else will give that toast, your uncle will, and many a heartfelt blessing go with you too, my boy!" cried the little man. He was prodigal of benedictions. He dashed aside the teardrop of emotion. He spoke with perfect fluency, and for a considerable period. He really made a good speech, and was greeted with deserved cheers when at length he sat down.

Phil stammered a few words in reply to his uncle's voluble compliments; and then Lord Ascot, a young nobleman of much familiar humour, proposed Phil's father, his health, and song. The physician made a neat speech from behind his ruffled shirt. He was agitated by the tender feelings of a paternal heart, he said, glancing benignly at Phil, who was cracking filberts. To see his son happy; to see him surrounded by such friends; to know him embarked this day in a profession which gave the greatest scope for talents, the noblest reward for industry, was a proud and happy moment to him, Dr.

Firmin. What had the poet observed? "Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes" (hear, hear!) "emollit mores," — yes, "emollit mores." He drank a bumper to the young barrister (he waved his ring, with a thimbleful of wine in his glass). He pledged the young friends whom he saw assembled to cheer his son on his onward path. He thanked them with a father's heart! He passed his emerald ring across his eyes for a moment, and lifted them to the ceiling, from which quarter he requested a blessing on his boy. As though spirits (of whom, perhaps, you have read in the Cornhill Magazine) approved of his invocation, immense thumps came from above, along with the plaudits which saluted the doctor's speech from the gentlemen round the table. But the upper thumps were derisory, and came from Mr. Buffers, of the third floor, who chose this method of mocking our harmless little festivities.

I think these cheers from the facetious Buffers, though meant in scorn of our party, served to enliven it and make us laugh. Spite of all the talking, we were dull; and I could not but allow the force of my neighbour's remark, that we were sate upon and smothered by the old men. One or two of the younger gentlemen chafed at the licence for tobacco-smoking not being yet accorded. But Philip interdicted this amusement as yet.

"Don't," he said; "my father don't like it. He has to see patients to-night; and they can't bear the smell of tobacco by their bedsides."

The impatient youths waited with their cigar-cases by their sides. They longed for the withdrawal of the obstacle to their happiness.

"He won't go, I tell you. He'll be sent for," growled Philip to me.

The doctor was engaged in conversation to the right and left of him, and seemed not to think of a move. But, sure enough, at a few minutes after ten o'clock, Dr. Firmin's footman entered the room with a note, which Firmin opened and read, as Philip looked at me, with a grim humour in his face. I think Phil's father knew that we knew he was acting. However, he went through the comedy quite gravely.

"A physician's time is not his own," he said, shaking his handsome melancholy head. "Good-by, my dear lord! Pray remember me at home! Good-night, Philip, my boy, and good speed to you in your career! Pray, pray don't move."

And he is gone, waving the fair hand and the broad-brimmed hat, with the beautiful white lining. Phil conducted him to the door, and heaved a sigh as it closed upon his father — a sigh of relief, I think, that he was gone.

"Exit Governor. What's the Latin for Governor?" says Lord Ascot, who possessed much native humour, but not very profound scholarship. "A most venerable old parent, Firmin. That hat and appearance would command any sum of money."

"Excuse me," lisps Rosebury, "but why didn't he take his elderly friend with him — the dilapidated clerical gentleman who is drinking claret so freely? And also, why did he not remove your avuncular orator? Mr. Twysden, your interesting young neophyte has provided us with an excellent specimen of the cheerful produce of the Gascon grape."

"Well, then, now the old gentleman is gone, let us pass the bottle and make a night of it. Hey, my lord?" cries Twysden. "Philip, your claret is good! I say, do you remember some Château Margaux I had, which Winton liked so? It must be good if he praised it, I can tell you. I imported it myself, and gave him the address of the Bordeaux merchant; and he said he had seldom tasted any like it. Those were his very words. I must get you fellows to come and taste it some day."

"Some day! What day? Name it, generous Amphitryon!" cries Rosebury.

"Some day at seven o'clock. With a plain, quiet dinner — a clear soup, a bit of fish, a couple of little entrées, a and a nice little roast. That's my kind of dinner. And we'll taste that claret, young men. It is not a heavy wine. It is not a first-class wine. I don't mean even to say it is a dear wine, but it has a bouquet and a pureness. What, you will smoke, you fellows?"

"We will do it, Mr. Twysden. Better do as the rest of us do. Try one of these."

The little man accepts the proffered cigar from the young nobleman's box, lights it, hems and hawks, and lapses into silence.

"I thought that would do for him," murmurs the facetious Ascot. "It is strong enough to blow his old head off, and I wish it would. That cigar," he continues, "was given to my father by the Duke of Medina Sidonia, who had it out of the Queen of Spain's own box. She smokes a good deal, but naturally likes 'em mild. I can give you a stronger one."

"Oh, no. I dare say this is very fine. Thank you!" says poor Talbot.

"Leave him alone, can't you?" says Philip. "Don't make a fool of him before the young men, Ascot."

Philip still looked very dismal in the midst of the festivity. He was thinking of his differences with his absent parent.

We might all have been easily consoled, if the doctor had taken away with him the elderly companion whom he had introduced to Phil's feast. He could not have been very welcome to our host, for Phil scowled at his guest, and whispered, "Hang Hunt!" to his neighbour.

"Hang Hunt" — the Reverend Tufton Hunt was his name — was in nowise disconcerted by the coolness of his reception. He drank his wine very freely; addressed himself to his neighbours affably; and called out a loud "Hear, hear," to Twysden, when that gentleman announced his intention of making a night of it. As Mr. Hunt warmed with wine he spoke to the table. He talked a great deal about the Ringwood family, had been very intimate at Wingate, in old days, as he told Mr. Twysden, and an intimate friend of poor Cinqbars, Lord Ringwood's only son. Now, the memory of the late Lord Cinqbars was not an agreeable recollection to the relatives of the house of Ringwood. He was in life a dissipated and disreputable young lord. His name was seldom mentioned in his family; never by his father, with whom he had had many quarrels.

"You know I introduced Cinqbars to your father, Philip?" calls out the dingy clergyman.

"I have heard you mention the fact," says Philip.

"They met at a wine in my rooms in Corpus. Brummell Firmin we used to call your father in those days. He was the greatest buck in the university — always a dressy man, kept hunters, gave the best dinners in Cambridge. We were a wild set. There was Cinqbars, Brand Firmin, Beryl, Toplady, about a dozen of us, almost all noblemen or fellow-commoners — fellows who all kept their horses and had their private servants."

This speech was addressed to the company, who yet did not seem much edified by the college recollections of the dingy elderly man.

"Almost all Trinity men, sir! We dined with each other week about. Many of them had their tandems. Desperate fellow across country your father was. And, but we won't tell tales out of school, hey?"

"No; please don't sir," said Philip, clenching his fists, and biting his lips. The shabby, ill-bred, swaggering man was eating Philip's salt; Phil's lordly ideas of hospitality did not allow him to quarrel with the guest under his tent.

"When he went out in medicine, we were all of us astonished. Why, sir, Brand Firmin, at one time, was the greatest swell in the university," continued Mr. Hunt, "and such a plucky fellow! So was poor Cinqbars, though he had no stamina. He, I, and Firmin, fought for twenty minutes before Caius' Gate with about twenty bargemen, and you should have seen your father hit out! I was a handy one in those days, too, with my fingers. We learned the noble art of self-defence in my time, young gentlemen! We used to have Glover, the boxer, down from London, who gave us lessons. Cinqbars was a pretty sparrer — but no stamina. Brandy killed him, sir — brandy killed him! Why, this is some of your governor's wine! He and I have been drinking it to-night in Parr Street, and talking over old times."

"I am glad, sir, you found the wine to your taste," says Philip, gravely.

"I did, Philip, my boy! And when your father said he was coming to your wine, I said I'd come to."

"I wish somebody would fling him out of window," groaned Philip.

"A most potent, grave, and reverend senior," whispered Rosebury to me. "I read billards, Boulogne, gambling-houses, in his noble lineaments. Has he long adorned your family circle, Firmin?"

"I found him at home about a month ago, in my father's ante-room, in the same clothes, with a pair of mangy moustaches on his face; and he has been at our house every day since."

"Échappé de Toulon," says Rosebury, blandly, looking towards the stranger. "Cela se voit. Homme parfaitement distingué. You are quite right, sir. I was speaking of you; and asking our friend Philip where it was I had the honour of meeting you abroad last year? This courtesy," he gently added, "will disarm tigers."

"I was abroad, sir, last year," said the other, nodding his head.

"Three to one he was in Boulogne gaol, or perhaps officiating chaplain at a gambling-house. Stop, I have it! Baden Baden, sir?"

"I was there, safe enough," says the clergyman. "It is a very pretty place; but the air of the Après kills you. Ha! ha! Your father used to shake his elbow when he was a youngster, too, Philip! I can't help calling you Philip. I've known your father these thirty years. We were college chums, you know."

“Ah! what would I give,” sighs Rosebury, “if that venerable being would but address me by my Christian name! Philip, do something to make your party go. The old gentlemen are throttling it? Sing something, somebody! or let us drown our melancholy in wine. You expressed your approbation of this claret, sir, and claimed a previous acquaintance with it?”

“I’ve drunk two dozen of it in the last month,” says Mr. Hunt, with a grin.

“Two dozen and four, sir,” remarks Mr. Brice, putting a fresh bottle on the table.

“Well said, Brice! I make the Firmin Arms my head-quarters; and honour the landlord with a good deal of my company,” remarks Mr. Hunt.

“The Firmin Arms are honoured by having such supporters!” says Phil, glaring and with a heaving chest. At each moment he was growing more and more angry with that parson.

At a certain stage of conviviality Phil was fond of talking of his pedigree; and, though a professor of very liberal opinions, was not a little proud of some of his ancestors.

“Oh, come, I say! Sink the heraldry!” cries Lord Ascot.

“I am very sorry! I would do anything to oblige you, but I can’t help being a gentleman!” growls Philip.

“Oh, I say! If you intend to come King Richard III. over us — ” breaks out my lord.

“Ascot! your ancestors were sweeping counters when mine stood by King Richard in that righteous fight!” shouts Philip.

That monarch had conferred lands upon the Ringwood family. Richard III. was Philip’s battle-horse; when he trotted it after dinner he was splendid in his chivalry.

“Oh, I say! If you are to saddle White Surrey, fight Bosworth Field, and murder the kids in the Tower!” continues Lord Ascot.

“Serve the little brutes right!” roars Phil. “They were no more heirs of the blood royal of England than — ”

“I daresay! Only I’d rather have a song now the old boy is gone. I say; you fellows; chant something, — do now! Bar all this row about Bosworth Field and Richard the Third! Always does it when he’s beer on board — always does it, give you my honour!” whispers the young nobleman to his neighbour.

“I am a fool! I am a fool!” cries Phil, smacking his forehead. “There are moments when the wrongs of my race will intervene. It’s not your fault, Mr. What-d’ye-call-’em, that you alluded to my arms in a derisive manner. I bear you no malice! Nay, I ask your pardon! Nay! I pledge you in this claret, which is good, though it’s my governor’s. In our house everything isn’t, hum — Bosh! it’s twenty-five claret, sir! Ascot’s father gave him a pipe of it for saving a life which might be better spent; and I believe the apothecary would have pulled you through, Ascot, just as well as my governor. But the wine’s good! Good! Brice, some more claret! A song! Who spoke of a song? Warble us something, Tom Dale! A song, a song, a song!”

Whereupon the exquisite ditty of “Moonlight on the Tiles” was given by Tom Dale with all his accustomed humour. Then politeness demanded that our host should sing one of his songs, and as I have heard him perform it many times, I have the privilege of here reprinting it: premising that the tune and chorus were taken from a German song-book, which used to delight us melodious youth in bygone days. Philip accordingly lifted up his great voice and sang:—

DOCTOR LUTHER.

“For the souls’ edification Of this decent congregation, Worthy people! by your grant, I will sing a holy chant, I will sing a holy chant. If the ditty sound but oddly, ’Twas a father, wise and godly, Sang it so long ago. Then sing as Doctor Luther sang, As Doctor Luther sang, Who loves not wine, woman, and song, He is a fool his whole life long.

“He, by custom patriarchal, Loved to see the beaker sparkle, And he thought the wine improved, Tasted by the wife he loved, By the kindly lips he loved. Friends! I wish this custom pious Duly were adopted by us, To combine love, song, wine; And sing as Doctor Luther sang, As Doctor Luther sang, Who loves not wine, woman, and song, He is a fool his whole life long.

“Who refuses this our credo, And demurs to drink as we do, Were he holy as John Knox, I’d pronounce him heterodox, I’d pronounce him heterodox. And from out this congregation, With a solemn commination, Banish quick the heretic, Who would not sing as Luther sang, As Doctor Luther sang, Who loves not wine, woman, and song, He is a fool his whole life long.” The reader’s humble servant was older than most of the party assembled at this symposium; but as I listened to the

noise, the fresh laughter, the songs remembered out of old university days, the talk and cant phrases of the old school of which most of us had been disciples, dear me, I felt quite young again, and when certain knocks came to the door about midnight, enjoyed quite a refreshing pang of anxious interest for a moment, deeming the proctors were rapping, having heard our shouts in the court below. The late comer, however, was only a tavern waiter, bearing a supper-tray; and we were free to speechify, shout, quarrel, and be as young as we liked, with nobody to find fault, except, perchance, the benchman below, who, I daresay, was kept awake with our noise.

When that supper arrived, poor Talbot Twysden, who had come so far to enjoy it, was not in a state to partake of it. Lord Ascot's cigar had proved too much for him; and the worthy gentleman had been lying on a sofa, in a neighbouring room, for some time past in a state of hopeless collapse. He had told us, whilst yet capable of speech, what a love and regard he had for Philip; but between him and Philip's father there was but little love. They had had that worst and most irremediable of quarrels, a difference about twopence half-penny in the division of the property of their late father-in-law. Firmin still thought Twysden a shabby curmudgeon; and Twysden considered Firmin an unprincipled man. When Mrs. Firmin was alive, the two poor sisters had had to regulate their affections by the marital orders, and to be warm, cool, moderate, freezing, according to their husbands' state for the time being. I wonder are there many real reconciliations? Dear Tomkins and I are reconciled, I know. We have met and dined at Jones's. And ah! how fond we are of each other! Oh, very! So with Firmin and Twysden. They met, and shook hands with perfect animosity. So did Twysden junior and Firmin junior. Young Twysden was the elder, and thrashed and bullied Phil as a boy, until the latter arose and pitched his cousin downstairs. Mentally, they were always kicking each other downstairs. Well, poor Talbot could not partake of the supper when it came, and lay in a piteous state on the neighbouring sofa of the absent Mr. Vanjohn.

Who would go home with him, where his wife must be anxious about him? I agreed to convoy him, and the parson said he was going our way, and would accompany us. We supported this senior through the Temple, and put him on the front seat of a cab. The cigar had disgracefully overcome him; and any lecturer on the evils of smoking might have pointed his moral on the helpless person of this wretched gentleman.

The evening's feasting had only imparted animation to Mr. Hunt, and occasioned an agreeable abandon in his talk. I had seen the man before in Dr. Firmin's house, and own that his society was almost as odious to me as to doctor's son Philip. On all subjects and persons, Phil was accustomed to speak his mind out a great deal too openly; and Mr. Hunt had been an object of special dislike to him ever since he had known Hunt. I tried to make the best of the matter. Few men of kindly feeling and good station are without a dependent or two. Men start together in the race of life; and Jack wins, and Tom falls by his side. The successful man succours and reaches a friendly hand to the unfortunate competitor. Remembrance of early times gives the latter a sort of right to call on his luckier comrade; and a man finds himself pitying, then enduring, then embracing a companion for whom, in old days, perhaps, he never had had any regard or esteem. A prosperous man ought to have followers: if he has none, he has a hard heart.

This philosophizing was all very well. It was good for a man not to desert the friends of his boyhood. But to live with such a cad as that — with that creature, low, servile, swaggering, besotted — How could his father, who had fine tastes, and loved grand company, put up with such a fellow? asked Phil. "I don't know when the man is the more odious, when he is familiar or when he is respectful; when he is paying compliments to my father's guests in Parr Street, or telling hideous old stale stories, as he did at my call-supper."

The wine of which Mr. Hunt freely partook on that occasion made him, as I have said, communicative. "Not a bad fellow, our host," he remarked, on his part, when we came away together. "Bumptious, goodlooking, speaks his mind, hates me, and I don't care. He must be well to do in the world, Master Philip."

I said I hoped and thought so.

"Brummell Firmin must make four or five thousand a year. He was a wild fellow in my time, I can tell you — in the days of the wild Prince and Poyns — stuck at nothing, spent his own money, ruined himself, fell on his legs somehow, and married a fortune. Some of us have not been so lucky. I had nobody to pay my debts. I missed my Fellowship by idling and dissipating with those confounded hats and silver-laced gowns. I liked good company in those days — always did when I could get it. If you were to write my adventures, now, you would have to tell some queer stories. I've been everywhere; I've seen high and low — 'specially low. I've tried schoolmastering, bear-leading, newspapering, America, West Indies. I've been in every city in Europe. I haven't been as lucky as Brummell Firmin. He rolls in his coach, he does, and I walk in my highlows. Guineas drop into his palm every day, and are uncommonly scarce in mine, I can tell you; and poor old Tufton

Hunt is not much better off at fifty odd than he was when he was an undergraduate at eighteen. How do you do, old gentleman? Air do you good? Here we are at Beaunash Street; hope you've got the key, and missis won't see you." A large butler, too well bred to express astonishment at any event which occurred out of doors, opened Mr. Twysden's and let in that lamentable gentleman. He was very pale and solemn. He gasped out a few words, intimating his intention to fix a day to ask us to come and dine soon, and taste that wine that Winton liked so. He waved an unsteady hand to us. If Mrs. Twysden was on the stairs to see the condition of her lord, I hope she took possession of the candle. Hunt grumbled as we came out: "He might have offered us some refreshment after bringing him all that way home. It's only half-past one. There's no good in going to bed so soon as that. Let us go and have a drink somewhere. I know a very good crib close by. No, you wont? I say" (here he burst into a laugh which startled the sleeping street), "I know what you've been thinking all the time in the cab. You are a swell, — you are, too! You have been thinking, 'This dreary old parson will try and borrow money from me.' But I won't, my boy. I've got a banker. Look here! Fee, faw, fum. You understand. I can get the sovereigns out of my medical swell in Old Parr Street. I prescribe bleeding for him — I drew him to-night. He is a very kind fellow, Brummell Firmin is. He can't deny such a dear old friend anything. Bless him!" And as he turned away to some midnight haunt of his own, he tossed up his hand in the air. I heard him laughing through the silent street, and policeman X, tramping on his beat, turned round and suspiciously eyed him.

Then I thought of Dr. Firmin's dark, melancholy face and eyes. Was a benevolent remembrance of old times the bond of union between these men? All my house had long been asleep, when I opened and gently closed my house door. By the twinkling night-lamp I could dimly see child and mother softly breathing. Oh, blessed they on whose pillow no remorse sits! Happy you who have escaped temptation!

I may have been encouraged in my suspicions of the dingy clergyman by Philip's own surmises regarding him, which were expressed with the speaker's usual candour. "The fellow calls for what he likes at the Firmin Arms," said poor Phil; "and when my father's bigwigs assemble, I hope the reverend gentleman dines with them. I should like to see him hobnobbing with old Bumpsher, or slapping the bishop on the back. He lives in Sligo Street, round the corner, so as to be close to our house and yet preserve his own elegant independence. Otherwise, I wonder he has not installed himself in Old Parr Street, where my poor mother's bedroom is vacant. The doctor does not care to use that room. I remember now how silent they were when together, and how terrified she always seemed before him. What has he done? I know of one affair in his early life. Does this Hunt know of any more. They have been accomplices in some conspiracy, sir; I daresay with that young Cinqbars, of whom Hunt is for ever bragging: the worthy son of the worthy Ringwood. I say, does wickedness run in the blood? My grandfathers, I have heard, were honest men. Perhaps they were only not found out; and the family taint will show in me some day. There are times when I feel the devil so strong within me, that I think some day he must have the mastery. I'm not quite bad yet: but I tremble lest I should go. Suppose I were to drown, and go down? It's not a jolly thing, Pendennis, to have such a father as mine. Don't humbug me with your charitable palliations and soothing surmises. You put me in mind of the world then, by Jove, you do! I laugh, and I drink, and I make merry, and sing, and smoke endless tobacco; and I tell you I always feel as if a little sword was dangling over my skull which will fall some day and split it. Old Parr Street is mined, sir, — mined! And some morning we shall be blown into blazes — into blazes, sir; mark my words! That's why I'm so careless and so idle, for which you fellows are always bothering and scolding me. There's no use in settling down until the explosion is over, don't you see? Incedo per ignes suppositos, and, by George! sir, I feel my bootsoles already scorching. Poor thing! poor mother" (he apostrophized his mother's picture which hung in the room where we were talking,) "were you aware of the secret, and was it the knowledge of that which made your poor eyes always look so frightened! She was always fond of you, Pen. Do you remember how pretty and graceful she used to look as she lay on her sofa upstairs, or smiled out of her carriage as she kissed her hand to us boys? I say, what if a woman marries, and is coaxed and wheedled by a soft tongue, and runs off, and afterwards finds her husband has a cloven foot?"

"Ah, Philip!"

"What is to be the lot of the son of such a man? Is my hoof cloven, too?" It was on the stove, as he talked, extended in American fashion. "Suppose there's no escape for me, and I inherit my doom, as another man does gout or consumption? Knowing this fate, what is the use, then, of doing anything in particular? I tell you, sir, the whole edifice of our present life will crumble in and smash." (Here he flings his pipe to the ground with an awful shatter.) "And until the catastrophe comes, what on earth is the use of setting to work, as you call it? You might as well have told a fellow, at Pompeii, to select a profession the day before the eruption."

“If you know that Vesuvius is going to burst over Pompeii,” I said, somewhat alarmed, “why not go to Naples, or farther, if you will?”

“Were there not men in the sentry-boxes at the city gates,” asked Philip, “who might have run, and yet remained to be burned there? Suppose, after all, the doom isn’t hanging over us, — and the fear of it is only a nervous terror of mine? Suppose it comes, and I survive it? The risk of the game gives a zest to it, old boy. Besides, there is Honour: and some One Else is in the case, from whom a man could not part in an hour of danger.” And here he blushed a fine red, heaved a great sigh, and emptied a bumper of claret.



CHAPTER 8

WILL BE PRONOUNCED TO BE CYNICAL BY THE BENEVOLENT.

Gentle readers will not, I trust, think the worse of their most obedient, humble servant for the confession that I talked to my wife on my return home regarding Philip and his affairs. When I choose to be frank, I hope no man can be more open than myself: when I have a mind to be quiet, no fish can be more mute. I have kept secrets so ineffably, that I have utterly forgotten them, until my memory was refreshed by people who also knew them. But what was the use of hiding this one from the being to whom I open all, or almost all — say all, excepting just one or two — of the closets of this heart? So I say to her, “My love; it is as I suspected. Philip and his cousin Agnes are carrying on together.”

“Is Agnes the pale one, or the very pale one?” asks the joy of my existence.

“No, the elder is Blanche. They are both older than Mr. Firmin: but Blanche is the elder of the two.”

“Well, I am not saying anything malicious, or contrary to the fact, am I, sir?”

No. Only I know by her looks, when another lady’s name is mentioned, whether my wife likes her or not. And I am bound to say, though this statement may meet with a denial, that her countenance does not vouchsafe smiles at the mention of all ladies’ names.

“You don’t go to the house? You and Mrs. Twysden have called on each other, and there the matter has stopped? Oh, I know! It is because poor Talbot brags so about his wine, and gives such abominable stuff, that you have such an un-Christian feeling for him!”

“That is the reason, I daresay,” says the lady.

“No. It is no such thing. Though you do know sherry from port, I believe upon my conscience you do not avoid the Twysdens because they give bad wine. Many others sin in that way, and you forgive them. You like your fellow-creatures better than wine — some fellow-creatures — and you dislike some fellow-creatures worse than medicine. You swallow them, madam. You say nothing, but your looks are dreadful. You make wry faces: and when you have taken them, you want a piece of sweetmeat to take the taste out of your mouth.”

The lady, thus wittily addressed, shrugs her lovely shoulders. My wife exasperates me in many things; in getting up at insane hours to go to early church, for instance; in looking at me in a particular way at dinner, when I am about to eat one of those entrées which Dr. Goodenough declares disagree with me; in nothing more than in that obstinate silence, which she persists in maintaining sometimes when I am abusing people, whom I do not like, whom she does not like, and who abuse me. This reticence makes me wild. What confidence can there be between a man and his wife, if he can’t say to her, “Confound So-and-so, I hate him;” or, “What a prig What-d’-you-call-em is!” or, “What a bloated aristocrat Thingamy has become, since he got his place!” or what you will?

“No,” I continue, “I know why you hate the Twysdens, Mrs. Pendennis. You hate them because they move in a world which you can only occasionally visit. You envy them because they are hand in glove with the great: because they possess an easy grace, and a frank and noble elegance with which common country people and apothecaries’ sons are not endowed.”

“My dear Arthur, I do think you are ashamed of being an apothecary’s son. You talk about it so often,” says the lady. Which was all very well: but you see she was not answering my remarks about the Twysdens.

“You are right, my dear,” I say then. “I ought not to be censorious, being myself no more virtuous than my neighbour.”

“I know people abuse you, Arthur; but I think you are a very good sort of man,” says the lady, over her little tea-tray.

“And so are the Twysdens very good people — very nice, artless, unselfish, simple, generous, well-bred people. Mr. Twysden is all heart: Twysden’s conversational powers are remarkable and pleasing; and Philip is eminently fortunate in getting one of those charming girls for a wife.”

“I’ve no patience with them,” cries my wife, losing that quality to my great satisfaction: for then I knew I had found the crack in Madam Pendennis’s armour of steel, and had smitten her in a vulnerable little place.

“No patience with them? Quiet, lady-like young women!” I cry.

“Ah,” sighs my wife, “what have they got to give Philip in return for — ”

“In return for his thirty thousand? They will have ten thousand pounds a piece when their mother dies.”

“Oh! I wouldn’t have our boy marry a woman like one of those, not if she had a million. I wouldn’t, my child and my blessing!” (This is addressed to a little darling who happens to be eating sweet cakes, in a high chair, off the little table by his mother’s side, and who, though he certainly used to cry a good deal at the period, shall be a mute personage in this history.)

“You are alluding to Blanche’s little affair with — ”

“No, I am not, sir!”

“How do you know which one I meant, then? — Or that notorious disappointment of Agnes, when Lord Farintosh became a widower? If he wouldn’t, she couldn’t, you know, my dear. And I am sure she tried her best: at least, everybody said so.”

“Ah! I have no patience with the way in which you people of the world treat the most sacred of subjects — the most sacred, sir. Do you hear me? Is a woman’s love to be pledged, and withdrawn every day? Is her faith and purity only to be a matter of barter, and rank, and social consideration? I am sorry, because I don’t wish to see Philip, who is good, and honest, and generous, and true as yet — however great his faults may be — because I don’t wish to see him given up to — Oh! it’s shocking, shocking!”

Given up to what? to anything dreadful in this world, or the next? Don’t imagine that Philip’s relations thought they were doing Phil any harm by condescending to marry him, or themselves any injury. A doctor’s son, indeed! Why, the Twysdens were far better placed in the world than their kinsmen of Old Parr Street; and went to better houses. The year’s levée and drawing-room would have been incomplete without Mr. and Mrs. Twysden. There might be families with higher titles, more wealth, higher positions; but the world did not contain more respectable folks than the Twysdens: of this every one of the family was convinced, from Talbot himself down to his heir. If somebody or some Body of savans would write the history of the harm that has been done in the world by people who believe themselves to be virtuous, what a queer, edifying book it would be, and how poor oppressed rogues might look up! Who burns the Protestants? — the virtuous Catholics to be sure. Who roasts the Catholics? — the virtuous Reformers. Who thinks I am a dangerous character, and avoids me at the club? — the virtuous Squaretoes. Who scorns? who persecutes? who doesn’t forgive? — the virtuous Mrs. Grundy. She remembers her neighbour’s peccadilloes to the third and fourth generation; and, if she finds a certain man fallen in her path, gathers up her affrighted garments with a shriek, for fear the muddy, bleeding wretch should contaminate her, and passes on.

I do not seek to create even surprises in this modest history, or condescend to keep candid readers in suspense about many matters which might possibly interest them. For instance, the matter of love has interested novel-readers for hundreds of years past, and doubtless will continue so to interest them. Almost all young people read love books and histories with eagerness, as oldsters read books of medicine, and whatever it is — heart complaint, gout, liver, palsy — cry, “Exactly so, precisely my case!” Phil’s first love affair, to which we are now coming, was a false start. I own it at once. And in this commencement of his career I believe he was not more or less fortunate than many and many a man and woman in this world. Suppose the course of true love always did run smooth, and everybody married his or her first love. Ah! what would marriage be?

A generous young fellow comes to market with a heart ready to leap out of his waistcoat, for ever thumping and throbbing, and so wild that he can’t have any rest till he has disposed of it. What wonder if he falls upon a wily merchant in Vanity Fair, and barter his all for a stale bauble not worth sixpence? Phil chose to fall in love with his cousin; and I warn you that nothing will come of that passion, except the influence which it had upon the young man’s character. Though my wife did not love the Twysdens, she loves sentiment, she loves love affairs — all women do. Poor Phil used to bore me after dinner with endless rodomontades about his passion and his charmer; but my wife was never tired of listening. “You are a selfish, heartless, blasé man of the world, you are,” he would say. “Your own immense and undeserved good fortune in the matrimonial lottery has rendered you hard, cold, crass, indifferent. You have been asleep, sir, twice to-night, whilst I was talking. I will go up and tell madam everything. She has a heart.” And presently engaged with my book or my after-dinner doze, I would hear Phil striding and creaking overhead, and plunging energetic pokers in the drawing-room fire.

Thirty thousand pounds to begin with; a third part of that sum coming to the lady from her mother; all the doctor’s

savings and property; — here certainly was enough in possession and expectation to satisfy many young couples; and as Phil is twenty-two, and Agnes (must I own it?) twenty-five, and as she has consented to listen to the warm outpourings of the eloquent and passionate youth, and exchange for his fresh, new-minted, golden sovereign heart, that used little three-penny-piece, her own — why should they not marry at once, and so let us have an end of them and this history? They have plenty of money to pay the parson and the postchaise; they may drive off to the country, and live on their means, and lead an existence so humdrum and tolerably happy that Phil may grow quite too fat, lazy, and unfit for his present post of hero of a novel. But stay — there are obstacles; coy, reluctant, amorous delays. After all, Philip is a dear, brave, handsome, wild, reckless, blundering boy, treading upon everybody's dress skirts, smashing the little Dresden ornaments and the pretty little decorous gimcracks of society, life, conversation; — but there is time yet. Are you so very sure about that money of his mother's? and how is it that his father the doctor has not settled accounts with him yet! *C'est louche*. A family of high position and principle must look to have the money matters in perfect order, before they consign a darling accustomed to every luxury to the guardianship of a confessedly wild and eccentric, though generous and amiable, young man. Besides — ah! besides — besides!

. . . “It's horrible, Arthur! It's cruel, Arthur! It's a shame to judge a woman, or Christian people so! Oh! my loves! my blessings! would I sell you?” says this young mother, clutching a little belaced, befurbelowed being to her heart, infantine, squalling, with blue shoulder-ribbons, a mottled little arm that has just been vaccinated, and the sweetest red shoes. “Would I sell you?” says mamma. Little Arty, I say, squalls; and little Nelly looks up from her bricks with a wondering, whimpering expression.

Well, I am ashamed to say what the “besides” is; but the fact is, that young Woolcomb of the Life Guards Green, who has inherited immense West India property, and, we will say, just a teaspoonful of that dark blood which makes a man naturally partial to blonde beauties, has cast his opal eyes very warmly upon the golden-haired Agnes of late; has danced with her not a little; and when Mrs. Twysden's barouche appears by the Serpentine, you may not unfrequently see a pair of the neatest little yellow kid gloves just playing with the reins, a pair of the prettiest little boots just touching the stirrup, a magnificent horse dancing, and tittupping, and tossing, and performing the most graceful caracoles and gambadoes, and on the magnificent horse a neat little man with a blazing red flower in his bosom, and glancing opal eyes, and a dark complexion, and hair so very black and curly, that I really almost think in some of the Southern States of America he would be likely to meet with rudeness in a railway car.

But in England we know better. In England Grenville Woolcomb is a man and a brother. Half of Arrowroot Island, they say, belongs to him; besides Mangrove Hall, in Hertfordshire; ever so much property in other counties, and that fine house in Berkeley Square. He is called the Black Prince behind the scenes of many theatres: ladies nod at him from those broughams which, you understand, need not be particularized. The idea of his immense riches is confirmed by the known fact that he is a stingy black Prince, and most averse to parting with his money except for his own adornment or amusement. When he receives at his country house, his entertainments are, however, splendid. He has been flattered, followed, caressed all his life, and allowed by a fond mother to have his own way; and as this has never led him to learning, it must be owned that his literary acquirements are small, and his writing defective. But in the management of his pecuniary affairs he is very keen and clever. His horses cost him less than any young man's in England who is so well mounted. No dealer has ever been known to get the better of him; and, though he is certainly close about money, when his wishes have very keenly prompted him, no sum has been known to stand in his way.

Witness the purchase of the — . But never mind scandal. Let bygones be bygones. A young doctor's son, with a thousand a year for a fortune, may be considered a catch in some circles, but not, *vous concevez*, in the upper regions of society. And dear woman — dear, angelic, highly accomplished, respectable woman — does she not know how to pardon many failings in our sex? Age? psha! She will crown my bare old poll with the roses of her youth. Complexion? What contrast is sweeter and more touching than Desdemona's golden ringlets on swart Othello's shoulder. A past life of selfishness and bad company? Come out from among the swine, my prodigal, and I will purify thee!

This is what is called cynicism, you know. Then I suppose my wife is a cynic, who clutches her children to her pure heart, and prays gracious heaven to guard them from selfishness, from worldliness, from heartlessness, from wicked greed.



CHAPTER 9

CONTAINS ONE RIDDLE WHICH IS SOLVED, AND PERHAPS SOME MORE.

Mine is a modest muse, and as the period of the story arrives when a description of love-making is justly due, my Mnemosyne turns from the young couple, drops a little curtain over the embrasure where they are whispering, heaves a sigh from her elderly bosom, and lays a finger on her lip. Ah, Mnemosyne dear! we will not be spies on the young people. We will not scold them. We won't talk about their doings much. When we were young, we too, perhaps, were taken in under Love's tent; we have eaten of his salt, and partaken of his bitter, his delicious bread. Now we are padding the hoof lonely in the wilderness, we will not abuse our host, will we? We will couch under the stars, and think fondly of old times, and to-morrow resume the staff and the journey.

And yet, if a novelist may chronicle any passion, its flames, its raptures, its whispers, its assignations, its sonnets, its quarrels, sulks, reconciliations, and so on, the history of such a love as this first of Phil's may be excusable in print, because I don't believe it was a real love at all, only a little brief delusion of the senses, from which I give you warning that our hero will recover before many chapters are over. What! my brave boy, shall we give your heart away for good and all, for better or for worse, till death do you part? What! my Corydon and sighing swain, shall we irrevocably bestow you upon Phyllis, who, all the time you are piping and paying court to her, has Meliboeus in the cupboard, and ready to be produced should he prove to be a more eligible shepherd than t'other? I am not such a savage towards my readers or hero, as to make them undergo the misery of such a marriage.

Philip was very little of a club or society man. He seldom or ever entered the Megatherium, or when there stared and scowled round him savagely, and laughed strangely at the ways of the inhabitants. He made but a clumsy figure in the world, though, in person, handsome, active, and proper enough; but he would for ever put his great foot through the World's flounced skirts, and she would stare, and cry out, and hate him. He was the last man who was aware of the Woolcomb flirtation, when hundreds of people, I dare say, were simpering over it.

"Who is that little man who comes to your house, and whom I sometimes see in the park, aunt — that little man with the very white gloves and the very tawny complexion?" asks Philip.

"That is Mr. Woolcomb, of the Life Guards Green," aunt remembers.

"An officer, is he?" says Philip, turning round to the girls. "I should have thought he would have done better for the turban and cymbals." And he laughs, and thinks he has said a very clever thing. Oh, those good things about people and against people! Never, my dear young friend, say them to anybody — not to a stranger, for he will go away and tell; not to the mistress of your affections, for you may quarrel with her, and then she will tell; not to your son, for the artless child will return to his schoolfellows and say: "Papa says Mr. Blenkinsop is a muff." My child, or what not, praise everybody: smile on everybody: and everybody will smile on you in return, a sham smile, and hold you out a sham hand; and, in a word, esteem you as you deserve. No. I think you and I will take the ups and the downs, the roughs and the smooths of this daily existence and conversation. We will praise those whom we like, though nobody repeat our kind sayings; and say our say about those whom we dislike, though we are pretty sure our words will be carried by tale-bearers, and increased, and multiplied, and remembered long after we have forgotten them. We drop a little stone — a little stone that is swallowed up, and disappears, but the whole pond is set in commotion, and ripples in continually-widening circles long after the original little stone has popped down and is out of sight. Don't your speeches of ten years ago — maimed, distorted, bloated, it may be out of all recognition — come strangely back to their author?

Phil, five minutes after he had made the joke, so entirely forgot his saying about the Black Prince and the cymbals, that, when Captain Woolcomb scowled at him with his fiercest eyes, young Firmin thought that this was the natural expression of the captain's swarthy countenance, and gave himself no further trouble regarding it. "By George! sir," said Phil afterwards, speaking of this officer, "I remarked that he grinned, and chattered, and showed his teeth; and remembering it was the nature of such baboons to chatter and grin, had no idea that this chimpanzee was more angry with me than with any other gentleman. You see, Pen, I am a white-skinned man, I am pronounced even red-whiskered by the ill-natured. It is not the prettiest colour. But I had no idea that I was to have a Mulatto for a rival. I am not so rich,

certainly, but I have enough. I can read and spell correctly, and write with tolerable fluency. I could not, you know, could I, reasonably suppose that I need fear competition, and that the black horse would beat the bay one? Shall I tell you what she used to say to me? There is no kissing and telling, mind you. No, by George. Virtue and prudence were for ever on her lips! She warbled little sermons to me; hinted gently that I should see to safe investments of my property, and that no man, not even a father, should be the sole and uncontrolled guardian of it. She asked me, sir, scores and scores of little sweet, timid, innocent questions about the doctor's property, and how much did I think it was, and how had he laid it out? What virtuous parents that angel had! How they brought her up, and educated her dear blue eyes to the main chance! She knows the price of housekeeping, and the value of railway shares; she invests capital for herself in this world and the next. She mayn't do right always, but wrong? O fie, never! I say, Pen, an undeveloped angel with wings folded under her dress, not perhaps your mighty, snow-white, flashing pinions that spread out and soar up to the highest stars, but a pair of good, serviceable, drab, dove-coloured wings, that will support her gently and equably just over our heads, and help to drop her softly when she condescends upon us. When I think, sir, that I might have been married to a genteel angel, and am single still, — oh! it's despair, it's despair!"

But Philip's little story of disappointed hopes and bootless passion must be told in terms less acrimonious and unfair than the gentleman would use, naturally of a sanguine swaggering talk, prone to exaggerate his own disappointments, and call out, roar — I daresay swear — if his own corn was trodden upon, as loudly as some men who may have a leg taken off.

This I can vouch for Miss Twysden, Mrs. Twysden, and all the rest of the family:— that if they, what you call, jilted Philip, they did so without the slightest hesitation or notion that they were doing a dirty action. Their actions never were dirty or mean: they were necessary, I tell you, and calmly proper. They ate cheese-parings with graceful silence: they cribbed from board-wages; they turned hungry servants out of doors; they remitted no chance in their own favour; they slept gracefully under scanty coverlids; they lighted niggard fires; they locked the caddy with the closest lock, and served the teapot with the smallest and least frequent spoon. But you don't suppose they thought they were mean, or that they did wrong? Ah! it is admirable to think of many, many, ever so many respectable families of your acquaintance and mine, my dear friend, and how they meet together and humbug each other! "My dear, I have cribbed half an inch of plush out of James's small-clothes." "My love, I have saved a half-penny out of Mary's beer. Isn't it time to dress for the duchess's; and don't you think John might wear that livery of Thomas's who only had it a year, and died of the small-pox? It's a little tight for him, to be sure, but," What is this? I profess to be an impartial chronicler of poor Phil's fortunes, misfortunes, friendships, and what-nots, and am getting almost as angry with these Twysdens as Philip ever was himself.

Well, I am not mortally angry with poor Traviata tramping the pavement, with the gas-lamp flaring on her poor painted smile, else my indignant virtue and squeamish modesty would never walk Piccadilly, or get the air. But Lais, quite moral, and very neatly, primly, and straitly laced; — Phryne, not the least dishevelled, but with a fixture for her hair, and the best stays, fastened by mamma; — your High Church or Evangelical Aspasia, the model of all proprieties, and owner of all virgin purity blooms, ready to sell her cheek to the oldest old fogey who has money and a title; — these are the Unfortunates, my dear brother and sister sinners, whom I should like to see repentant and specially trounced first. Why, some of these are put into reformatories in Grosvenor Square. They wear a prison dress of diamonds and Chantilly lace. Their parents cry, and thank heaven as they sell them; and all sorts of revered bishops, clergy, relations, dowagers, sign the book, and ratify the ceremony. Come! let us call a midnight meeting of those who have been sold in marriage, I say; and what a respectable, what a genteel, what a fashionable, what a brilliant, what an imposing, what a multitudinous assembly we will have; and where's the room in all Babylon big enough to hold them?

Look into that grave, solemn, dingy, somewhat naked but elegant drawing-room, in Beaunash Street, and with a little fanciful opera-glass you may see a pretty little group or two engaged at different periods of the day. It is after lunch, and before Rotten Row ride time (this story, you know, relates to a period ever so remote, and long before folks thought of riding in the park in the forenoon). After lunch, and before Rotten Row time, saunters into the drawing-room a fair-haired young fellow with large feet and chest, careless of gloves, with auburn whiskers blowing over a loose collar, and — must I confess it? — a most undeniable odour of cigars about his person. He breaks out regarding the debate of the previous night, or the pamphlet of yesterday, or the poem of the day previous, or the scandal of the week before, or upon the street-sweeper at the corner, or the Italian and monkey before the door — upon whatever, in a word, moves his mind for the moment. If Philip has had a bad dinner yesterday (and happens to remember it), he growls, grumbles, nay, I daresay, uses the most blasphemous language against the cook, against the waiters, against the steward, against the committee, against

the whole society of the club where he has been dining. If Philip has met an organ girl with pretty eyes and a monkey in the street, he has grinned and wondered over the monkey; he has wagged his head, and sung all the organ's tunes; he has discovered that the little girl is the most ravishing beauty eyes ever looked on, and that her scoundrelly Savoyard father is most likely an Alpine miscreant who has bartered away his child to a pedlar of the beggarly cheesy valleys, who has sold her to a friend *qui fait la traite des hurdigurdies*, and has disposed of her in England. If he has to discourse on the poem, pamphlet, magazine article — it is written by the greatest genius, or the greatest numskull that the world now exhibits. He write! A man who makes fire rhyme with Marire! This vale of tears and world which we inhabit does not contain such an idiot. Or have you seen Dobbins's poem? Agnes, mark my words for it, there is a genius in Dobbins which some day will show what I have always surmised, what I have always imagined possible, what I have always felt to be more than probable, what, by George, I feel to be perfectly certain, and any man is a humbug who contradicts it, and a malignant miscreant, and the world is full of fellows who will never give another man credit, and I swear that to recognize and feel merit in poetry, painting, music, rope-dancing, anything, is the greatest delight and joy of my existence. I say — what was I saying?

"You were saying, Philip, that you love to recognize the merits of all men whom you see," says gentle Agnes, "and I believe you do."

"Yes!" cries Phil, tossing about the fair locks. "I think I do. Thank heaven, I do. I know fellows who can do many things better than I do — everything better than I do."

"Oh, Philip!" sighs the lady.

"But I don't hate 'em for it."

"You never hated any one, sir. You are too brave! Can you fancy Philip hating any one, mamma?"

Mamma is writing, "Mr. and Mrs. Talbot Twysden request the honour of Admiral and Mrs. Davis Locker's company at dinner on Thursday the so-and-so." "Philip what?" says mamma, looking up from her card. "Philip hating any one! Philip eating any one! Philip! we have a little dinner on the 24th. We shall ask your father to dine. We must not have too many of the family. Come in afterwards, please."

"Yes, aunt," says downright Phil, "I'll come, if you and the girls wish. You know tea is not my line; and I don't care about dinners, except in my own way, and with —"

"And with your own horrid set, sir!"

"Well," says Sultan Philip, flinging himself out on the sofa, and lording on the ottoman, "I like mine ease and mine inn."

"Ah, Philip! you grow more selfish every day. I mean men do," sighed Agnes.

You will suppose mamma leaves the room at this juncture. She has that confidence in dear Philip and the dear girls, that she sometimes does leave the room when Agnes and Phil are together. She will leave Reuben, the eldest born, with her daughters: but my poor dear little younger son of a Joseph, if you suppose she will leave the room and you alone in it — O my dear Joseph, you may just jump down the well at once! Mamma, I say, has left the room at last, bowing with a perfect sweetness and calm grace and gravity; and she has slipped down the stairs, scarce more noisy than the shadow that slants over the faded carpet — (oh! the faded shadow, the faded sunshine!) — mamma is gone, I say, to the lower regions, and with perfect good breeding is torturing the butler on his bottle-rack — is squeezing the housekeeper in her jam-closet — is watching the three cold cutlets, shuddering in the larder behind the wires — is blandly glancing at the kitchen-maid until the poor wench fancies the piece of bacon is discovered which she gave to the crossing-sweeper — and calmly penetrating John until he feels sure his inmost heart is revealed to her, as it throbs within his worsted-laced waistcoat, and she knows about that pawning of master's old boots (beastly old highlows!), and — and, in fact, all the most intimate circumstances of his existence. A wretched maid, who has been ironing collars, or what not, gives her mistress a shuddering curtsey, and slinks away with her laces; and meanwhile our girl and boy are prattling in the drawing-room.

About what? About everything on which Philip chooses to talk. There is nobody to contradict him but himself, and then his pretty hearer vows and declares he has not been so very contradictory. He spouts his favourite poems. "Delightful! Do, Philip, read us some Walter Scott! He is, as you say, the most fresh, the most manly, the most kindly of poetic writers — not of the first class, certainly; in fact, he has written most dreadful bosh, as you call it so drolly; and so has Wordsworth, though he is one of the greatest of men, and has reached sometimes to the very greatest height and sublimity of poetry; but

now you put it, I must confess he is often an old bore, and I certainly should have gone to sleep during the Excursion, only you read it so nicely. You don't think the new composers as good as the old ones, and love mamma's old-fashioned playing? Well, Philip, it is delightful, so ladylike, so feminine!" Or, perhaps, Philip has just come from Hyde Park, and says, "As I passed by Apsley House, I saw the Duke come out, with his old blue frock and white trousers and clear face. I have seen a picture of him in an old European Magazine, which I think I like better than all — gives me the idea of one of the brightest men in the world. The brave eyes gleam at you out of the picture; and there's a smile on the resolute lips, which seems to ensure triumph. Agnes, Assaye must have been glorious!"

"Glorious, Philip!" says Agnes, who had never heard of Assaye before in her life. "Arbela, perhaps; Salamis, Marathon, Agincourt, Blenheim, Busaco — where dear grandpapa was killed — Waterloo, Armageddon; but Assaye? What on earth is Assaye?"

"Think of that ordinarily prudent man, and how greatly he knew how to dare when occasion came! I should like to have died after winning such a game. He has never done anything so exciting since."

"A game? I thought it was a battle just now," murmurs Agnes in her mind; but there may be some misunderstanding. "Ah, Philip," she says, "I fear excitement is too much the life of all young men now. When will you be quiet and steady, sir?"

"And go to an office every day, like my uncle and cousin; and read the newspaper for three hours, and trot back and see you."

"Well, sir! that ought not to be such very bad amusement," says one of the ladies.

"What a clumsy wretch I am! My foot is always trampling on something or somebody!" groans Phil.

"You must come to us, and we will teach you to dance, Bruin!" says gentle Agnes, smiling on him. I think, when very much agitated, her pulse must have gone up to forty. Her blood must have been a light pink. The heart that beat under that pretty white chest, which she exposed so liberally, may have throbbed pretty quickly once or twice with waltzing, but otherwise never rose or fell beyond its natural gentle undulation. It may have had throbs of grief at a disappointment occasioned by the milliner not bringing a dress home; or have felt some little fluttering impulse of youthful passion when it was in short frock, and Master Grimsby at the dancing-school showed some preference for another young pupil out of the nursery. But feelings, and hopes, and blushes, and passions, now? Psha! They pass away like nursery dreams. Now there are only proprieties. What is love, young heart? It is two thousand a year, at the very lowest computation; and with the present rise in wages and house-rent, that calculation can't last very long. Love? Attachment? Look at Frank Maythorn, with his vernal blushes, his leafy whiskers, his sunshiny, laughing face, and all the birds of spring carolling in his jolly voice; and old General Pinwood hobbling in on his cork leg, with his stars and orders, and leering round the room from under his painted eyebrows. Will my modest nymph go to Maythorn, or to yonder leering Satyr, who totters towards her in his white and rouge? Nonsense. She gives her garland to the old man, to be sure. He is ten times as rich as the young one. And so they went on in Arcadia itself, really. Not in that namby-pamby ballet and idyll world, where they tripped up to each other in rhythm, and talked hexameters; but in the real, downright no-mistake country — Arcadia — where Tityrus, fluting to Amaryllis in the shade, had his pipe very soon put out when Meliboeus (the great grazier) performed on his melodious, exquisite, irresistible cow-horn; and where Daphne's mother dressed her up with ribbons and drove her to market, and sold her, and swapped her, and bartered her like any other lamb in the fair. This one has been trotted to the market so long now that she knows the way herself. Her baa has been heard for — do not let us count how many seasons. She has nibbled out of countless hands; frisked in many thousand dances; come quite harmless away from goodness knows how many wolves. Ah! ye lambs and raddled innocents of our Arcadia! Ah, old Ewe! Is it of your ladyship this fable is narrated? I say it is as old as Cadmus, and man-and-muttonkind.

So, when Philip comes to Beaunash Street, Agnes listens to him most kindly, sweetly, gently, and affectionately. Her pulse goes up very nearly half a beat when the echo of his horse's heels is heard in the quiet street. It undergoes a corresponding depression when the daily grief of parting is encountered and overcome. Blanche and Agnes don't love each other very passionately. If I may say as much regarding those two lambkins, they butt at each other — they quarrel with each other — but they have secret understandings. During Phil's visits the girls remain together, you understand, or mamma is with the young people. Female friends may come in to call on Mrs. Twysden, and the matrons whisper together, and glance at the cousins, and look knowing. "Poor orphan boy!" mamma says to a sister matron. "I am like a mother to him since my dear sister died. His own home is so blank, and ours so merry, so affectionate! There may be intimacy, tender

regard, the utmost confidence between cousins — there may be future and even closer ties between them — but you understand, dear Mrs. Matcham, no engagement between them. He is eager, hot-headed, impetuous, and imprudent, as we all know. She has not seen the world enough — is not sure of herself, poor dear child. Therefore, every circumspection, every caution, is necessary. There must be no engagement — no letters between them. My darling Agnes does not write to ask him to dinner without showing the note to me or her father. My dearest girls respect themselves.”

“Of course, my dear Mrs. Twysden, they are admirable, both of them. Bless you, darlings! Agnes, you look radiant! Ah, Rosa, my child, I wish you had dear Blanche’s complexion!”

“And isn’t it monstrous keeping that poor boy hanging on until Mr. Woolcomb has made up his mind about coming forward?” says dear Mrs. Matcham to her own daughter, as her brougham-door closes on the pair. Here he comes! Here is his cab. Maria Twysden is one of the smartest women in England — that she is.”

“How odd it is, mamma, that the beau cousin and Captain Woolcomb are always calling, and never call together!” remarks the ingénue.

“They might quarrel if they met. They say young Mr. Firmin is very quarrelsome and impetuous!” says mamma.

“But how are they kept apart?”

“Chance, my dear! mere chance!” says mamma. And they agree to say it is chance — and they agree to pretend to believe one another. And the girl and the mother know everything about Woolcomb’s property, everything about Philip’s property and expectations, everything about all the young men in London, and those coming on. And Mrs. Matcham’s girl fished for Captain Woolcomb last year in Scotland, at Lochhookey; and stalked him to Paris; and they went down on their knees to Lady Banbury when they heard of the theatricals at the Cross; and pursued that man about until he is forced to say, “Confound me! hang me! it’s too bad of that woman and her daughter, it is now, I give you my honour it is! And all the fellows chaff me! And she took a house in Regent’s Park, opposite our barracks, and asked for her daughter to learn to ride in our school — I’m blest if she didn’t, Mrs. Twysden! and I thought my black mare would have kicked her off one day — I mean the daughter — but she stuck on like grim death; and the fellows call them Mrs. Grim Death and her daughter. Our surgeon called them so, and a doocid rum fellow — and they chaff me about it, you know — ever so many of the fellows do — and I’m not going to be had in that way by Mrs. Grim Death and her daughter! No, not as I knows, if you please!”

“You are a dreadful man, and you gave her a dreadful name, Captain Woolcomb!” says mamma.

“It wasn’t me. It was the surgeon, you know, Miss Agnes: a doocid funny and witty fellow, Nixon is — and sent a thing once to Punch, Nixon did. I heard him make the riddle in Albany Barracks, and it riled Foker so! You’ve no idea how it riled Foker, for he’s in it!”

“In it?” asks Agnes, with the gentle smile, the candid blue eyes — the same eyes, expression, lips, that smile and sparkle at Philip.

“Here it is! Captain! Took it down. Wrote it into my pocket-book at once as Nixon made it. ‘All doctors like my first, that’s clear!’ Doctor Firmin does that. Old Parr Street party! Don’t you see, Miss Agnes? Fee! Don’t you see?”

“Fee! Oh, you droll thing!” cries Agnes, smiling, radiant, very much puzzled.

“‘My second,’” goes on the young officer — “‘My second gives us Foker’s beer!’”

“‘My whole’s the shortest month in all the year!’ Don’t you see, Mrs. Twysden? Fee-Brewery, don’t you see? February! A doocid good one, isn’t it now? and I wonder Punch never put it in. And upon my word, I used to spell it Febuary before, I did; and I daresay ever so many fellows do still. And I know the right way now, and all from that riddle which Nixon made.”

The ladies declare he is a droll man, and full of fun. He rattles on, artlessly telling his little stories of sport, drink, adventure, in which the dusky little man himself is a prominent figure. Not honey-mouthed Plato would be listened to more kindly by those three ladies. A bland, frank smile shines over Talbot Twysden’s noble face, as he comes in from his office, and finds the creole prattling. “What! you here, Woolcomb? Hey! Glad to see you!” And the gallant hand goes out and meets and grasps Woolcomb’s tiny kid glove.

“He has been so amusing, papa! He has been making us die with laughing! Tell papa that riddle you made, Captain Woolcomb?”

“That riddle I made? That riddle Nixon, our surgeon, made. ‘All doctors like my first, that’s clear,’”

And da capo. And the family, as he expounds this admirable rebus, gather round the young officer in a group, and the curtain drops.

As in a theatre booth at a fair there are two or three performances in a day, so in Beaunash Street a little genteel comedy is played twice:— at four o'clock with Mr. Firmin, at five o'clock with Mr. Woolcomb; and for both young gentlemen same smiles, same eyes, same voice, same welcome. Ah, bravo! ah, encore!



CHAPTER 10

IN WHICH WE VISIT THE “ADMIRAL BYNG.”

From long residence in Bohemia, and fatal love of bachelor ease and habits, Master Philip's pure tastes were so destroyed, and his manners so perverted, that he was actually indifferent to the pleasures of the refined home he have just been describing; and, when Agnes was away, sometimes even when she was at home, was quite relieved to get out of Beaunash Street. He is hardly twenty yards from the door, when out of his pocket there comes a case; out of the case there jumps an aromatic cigar, which is scattering fragrance around as he is marching briskly northwards to his next house of call. The pace is even more lively now than when he is hastening on what you call the wings of love to Beaunash Street. At the house whither he is now going, he and the cigar are always welcome. There is no need of munching orange chips, or chewing scented pills, or flinging your weed away half a mile before you reach Thornhaugh Street — the low, vulgar place. I promise you Phil may smoke at Brandon's, and find others doing the same. He may set the house on fire, if so minded, such a favourite is he there; and the Little Sister, with her kind, beaming smile, will be there to bid him welcome. How that woman loved Phil, and how he loved her, is quite a curiosity; and both of them used to be twitted with this attachment by their mutual friends, and blush as they acknowledged it. Ever since the little nurse had saved his life as a schoolboy, it was *à la vie à la mort* between them. Phil's father's chariot used to come to Thornhaugh Street sometimes — at rare times — and the doctor descend thence and have colloquies with the Little Sister. She attended a patient or two of his. She was certainly very much better off in her money matters in these late years, since she had known Dr. Firmin. Do you think she took money from him? As a novelist, who knows everything about his people, I am constrained to say, Yes. She took enough to pay some little bills of her weak-minded old father, and send the bailiff's hand from his old collar. But no more. “I think you owe him as much as that,” she said to the doctor. But as for compliments between them — “Dr. Firmin, I would die rather than be beholden to you for anything,” she said, with her little limbs all in a tremor, and her eyes flashing anger. “How dare you, sir, after old days, be a coward, and pay compliments to me; I will tell your son of you, sir!” and the little woman looked as if she could have stabbed the elderly libertine there as he stood. And he shrugged his handsome shoulders: blushed a little too, perhaps: gave her one of his darkling looks, and departed. She had believed him once. She had married him as she fancied. He had tired of her; forsaken her: left her — left her even without a name. She had not known his for long years after her trust and his deceit. “No, sir, I wouldn't have your name now, not if it were a lord's, I wouldn't, and a coronet on your carriage. You are beneath me now, Mr. Brand Firmin!” she had said.

How came she to love the boy so? Years back, in her own horrible extremity of misery, she could remember a week or two of a brief, strange, exquisite happiness, which came to her in the midst of her degradation and desertion, and for a few days a baby in her arms, with eyes like Philip's. It was taken from her, after a few days — only sixteen days. Insanity came upon her, as her dead infant was carried away:— insanity, and fever, and struggle — ah! who knows how dreadful? She never does. There is a gap in her life which she never can recal quite. But George Brand Firmin, Esq., M.D., knows how very frequent are such cases of mania, and that women who don't speak about them often will cherish them for years after they appear to have passed away. The Little Sister says, quite gravely, sometimes, “They are allowed to come back. They do come back. Else what's the good of little cherubs bein' born, and smilin', and happy, and beautiful — say, for sixteen days, and then an end? I've talked about it to many ladies in grief sim'lar to mine was, and it comforts them. And when I saw that child on his sick bed, and he lifted his eyes, I knew him, I tell you, Mrs. Ridley. I don't speak about it; but I knew him, ma'am; my angel came back again. I know him by the eyes. Look at 'em. Did you ever see such eyes? They look as if they had seen heaven. His father's don't.” Mrs. Ridley believes this theory solemnly, and I think I know a lady, nearly connected with myself, who can't be got quite to disown it. And this secret opinion to women in grief and sorrow over their new-born lost infants Mrs. Brandon persists in imparting. “I know a case,” the nurse murmurs, “of a poor mother who lost her child at sixteen days old; and sixteen years after, on the very day, she saw him again.”

Philip knows so far of the Little Sister's story, that he is the object of this delusion, and, indeed, it very strangely and tenderly affects him. He remembers fitfully the illness through which the Little Sister tended him, the wild paroxysms of his fever, his head throbbing on her shoulders — cool tamarind drinks which she applied to his lips — great gusty night shadows flickering through the bare school dormitory — the little figure of the nurse gliding in and out of the dark. He

must be aware of the recognition, which we know of, and which took place at his bedside, though he has never mentioned it — not to his father, not to Caroline. But he clings to the woman and shrinks from the man. Is it instinctive love and antipathy? The special reason for his quarrel with his father the junior Firmin has never explicitly told me then or since. I have known sons much more confidential, and who, when their fathers tripped and stumbled, would bring their acquaintances to jeer at the patriarch in his fall.

One day, as Philip enters Thornhaugh Street, and the Sister's little parlour there, fancy his astonishment on finding his father's dingy friend, the Rev. Tufton Hunt, at his ease by the fireside.

"Surprised to see me here, eh?" says the dingy gentleman, with a sneer at Philip's lordly face of wonder and disgust. "Mrs. Brandon and I turn out to be very old friends."

"Yes, sir, old acquaintances," says the Little Sister, very gravely.

"The captain brought me home from the club at the Byngs. Jolly fellows the Byngs. My service to you, Mr. Gann and Mrs. Brandon." And the two persons addressed by the gentleman, who is "taking some refreshment," as the phrase is, make a bow, in acknowledgment of this salutation.

"You should have been at Mr. Philip's call supper, Captain Gann," the divine resumes. "That was a night! Tiptop swells — noblemen — first-rate claret. That claret of your father's, Philip, is pretty nearly drunk down. And your song was famous. Did you ever hear him sing, Mrs. Brandon?"

"Who do you mean by him?" says Philip, who always boiled with rage before this man.

Caroline divines the antipathy. She lays a little hand on Philip's arm. "Mr. Hunt has been having too much, I think," she says. "I did know him ever so long ago, Philip!"

"What does he mean by Him?" again says Philip, snorting at Tufton Hunt.

"Him? — Dr. Luther's hymn! 'Wein, Weiber und Gesang,' to be sure!" cries the clergyman, humming the tune. "I learned it in Germany myself — passed a good deal of time in Germany, Captain Gann — six months in a specially shady place — Quod Strasse, in Frankfort-on-the-Maine — being persecuted by some wicked Jews there. And there was another poor English chap in the place, too, who used to chirp that song behind the bars, and died there and disappointed the Philistines. I've seen a deal of life, I have; and met with a precious deal of misfortune; and borne it pretty stoutly, too, since your father and I were at college together, Philip. You don't do anything in this way? Not so early, eh? It's good rum, Gann, and no mistake." And again the chaplain drinks to the captain, who waves the dingy hand of hospitality towards his dark guest.

For several months past Hunt had now been a resident in London, and a pretty constant visitor to Dr. Firmin's house. He came and went at his will. He made the place his house of call; and in the doctor's trim, silent, orderly mansion, was perfectly free, talkative, dirty, and familiar. Philip's loathing for the man increased till it reached a pitch of frantic hatred. Mr. Phil, theoretically a Radical, and almost a Republican (in opposition, perhaps, to his father, who of course held the highly-respectable line of politics) — Mr. Sansculotte Phil was personally one of the most aristocratic and overbearing of young gentlemen; and had a contempt and hatred for mean people, for base people, for servile people, and especially for too familiar people, which was not a little amusing sometimes, which was provoking often, but which he never was at the least pains of disguising. His uncle and cousin Twysden, for example, he treated not half so civilly as their footmen. Little Talbot humbled himself before Phil, and felt not always easy in his company. Young Twysden hated him, and did not disguise his sentiments at the club, or to their mutual acquaintance behind Phil's broad back. And Phil, for his part, adopted towards his cousin a kick-me-down-stairs manner, which I own must have been provoking to that gentleman, who was Phil's senior by three years, a clerk in a public office, a member of several good clubs, and altogether a genteel member of society. Phil would often forget Ringwood Twysden's presence, and pursue his own conversation entirely regardless of Ringwood's observations. He was very rude, I own. We have all of us our little failings, and one of Philip's was an ignorant impatience of bores, parasites, and pretenders.

So no wonder my young gentleman was not very fond of his father's friend, the dingy gaol chaplain. I, who am the most tolerant man in the world, as all my friends know, liked Hunt little better than Phil did. The man's presence made me uneasy. His dress, his complexion, his teeth, his leer at women — *Que sais-je?* — everything was unpleasant about this Mr. Hunt, and his gaiety and familiarity more specially disgusting than even his hostility. The wonder was that battle had not taken place between Philip and the gaol clergyman, who, I suppose, was accustomed to be disliked, and laughed with

cynical good-humour at the other's disgust.

Hunt was a visitor of many tavern parlours; and one day, strolling out of the "Admiral Byng," he saw his friend Dr. Firmin's well-known equipage stopping at a door in Thornhaugh Street, out of which the doctor presently came. "Brandon" was on the door. Brandon, Brandon! Hunt remembered a dark transaction of more than twenty years ago — of a woman deceived by this Firmin, who then chose to go by the name of Brandon. He lives with her still, the old hypocrite, or he has gone back to her, thought the parson. Oh, you old sinner! And the next time he called in Old Parr Street on his dear old college friend, Mr. Hunt was specially jocular, and frightfully unpleasant and familiar.

"Saw your trap Tottenham Court Road way," says the slang parson, nodding to the physician.

"Have some patients there. People are ill in Tottenham Court Road," remarks the doctor.

"Pallida mors æquo pede — hey, doctor? What used Flaccus to say, when we were undergrads?"

"Æquo pede," sighs the doctor, casting up his fine eyes to the ceiling.

"Sly old fox! Not a word will he say about her!" thinks the clergyman. "Yes, yes, I remember. And, by Jove! Gann was the name."

Gann was also the name of that queer old man who frequented the "Admiral Byng," where the ale was so good — the old boy whom they called the Captain. Yes; it was clear now. That ugly business was patched up. The astute Hunt saw it all. The doctor still kept up a connection with the — the party. And that is her old father, sure enough. "The old fox, the old fox! I've earthed him, have I? This is a good game. I wanted a little something to do, and this will excite me," thinks the clergyman.

I am describing what I never could have seen or heard, and can guarantee only verisimilitude, not truth, in my report of the private conversation of these worthies. The end of scores and scores of Hunt's conversations with his friend was the same — an application for money. If it rained when Hunt parted from his college chum, it was, "I say, doctor, I shall spoil my new hat, and I am blest if I have any money to take a cab. Thank you, old boy. Au revoir." If the day was fine, it was, "My old blacks show the white seams so, that you must out of your charity rig me out with a new pair. Not your tailor: he is too expensive. Thank you — a couple of sovereigns will do." And the doctor takes two from the mantelpiece, and the divine retires, jingling the gold in his greasy pocket.

The doctor is going after the few words about pallida mors, and has taken up that well-brushed broad hat with that ever-fresh lining, which we all admire in him — "Oh, I say, Firmin!" breaks out the clergyman. "Before you go out, you must lend me a few sovs, please. They've cleaned me out in Air Street. That confounded roulette! It's a madness with me."

"By George!" cries the other, with a strong execration, "you are too bad, Hunt. Every week of my life you come to me for money. You have had plenty. Go elsewhere. I won't give it you."

"Yes, you will, old boy," says the other, looking at him a terrible look; "for —"

"For what?" says the doctor, the veins of his tall forehead growing very full.

"For old times' sake," says the clergyman. "There's seven of 'em on the table in bits of paper — that'll do nicely." And he sweeps the fees with a dirty hand into a dirty pouch. "Halloa! Swearin' and cursin' before a clergyman. Don't cut up rough, old fellow! Go and take the air. It'll cool you."

"I don't think I would like that fellow to attend me, if I was sick," says Hunt, shuffling away, rolling the plunder in his greasy hand. "I don't think I'd like to meet him by moonlight alone, in a very quiet lane. He's a determined chap. And his eyes mean miching malecho, his eyes do. Phew!" And he laughs, and makes a rude observation about Dr. Firmin's eyes.

That afternoon the gents who used the "Admiral Byng" remarked the reappearance of the party who looked in last evening, and who now stood glasses round, and made himself uncommon agreeable to be sure. Old Mr. Ridley says he is quite the gentleman. "Hevident have been in forin parts a great deal, and speaks the languages. Probly have 'ad misfortunes, which many 'av 'ad them. Drinks rum-and-water tremenjous. 'Ave scarce no heppytyte. Many get into this way from misfortunes. A plesn man, most well informed on almost every subjeck. Think he's a clergyman. He and Mr. Gann have made quite a friendship together, he and Mr. Gann 'ave. Which they talked of Watloo, and Gann is very fond of that, Gann is, most certny." I imagine Ridley delivering these sentences, and alternate little volleys of smoke, as he sits behind his sober calumet and prattles in the tavern parlour.

After Dr. Firmin has careered through the town, standing by sick-beds with his sweet sad smile; fondled and blessed

by tender mothers who hail him as the saviour of their children; touching ladies' pulses with a hand as delicate as their own; patting little fresh cheeks with courtly kindness — little cheeks that owe their roses to his marvellous skill; after he has soothed and comforted my lady, shaken hands with my lord, looked in at the club, and exchanged courtly salutations with brother bigwigs, and driven away in the handsome carriage with the noble horses — admired, respecting, respectful, saluted, saluting — so that every man says, "Excellent man, Firmin. Excellent doctor, excellent man. Safe man. Sound man. Man of good family. Married a rich wife. Lucky man." And so on — After the day's triumphant career, I fancy I see the doctor driving homeward, with those sad, sad eyes, that haggard smile.

He comes whirling up Old Parr Street just as Phil saunters in from Regent Street, as usual, cigar in mouth. He flings away the cigar as he sees his father, and they enter the house together.

"Do you dine at home, Philip?" the father asks.

"Do you, sir? I will if you do," says the son, "and if you are alone."

"Alone? Yes. That is, there'll be Hunt, I suppose, whom you don't like. But the poor fellow has few places to dine at. What? D— Hunt? That's a strong expression about a poor fellow in misfortune, and your father's old friend."

I am afraid Philip had used that wicked monosyllable whilst his father was speaking, and at the mention of the clergyman's detested name. "I beg your pardon, father. It slipped out in spite of me. I can't help it. I hate the fellow."

"You don't disguise your likes or dislikes, Philip," says, or rather groans, the safe man, the sound man, the prosperous man, the lucky man, the miserable man. For years and years he has known that his boy's heart has revolted from him, and detected him, and gone from him; and with shame, and remorse, and sickening feeling, he lies awake in the night-watches, and thinks how he is alone — alone in the world. Ah! Love your parents, young ones! O Father Beneficent! strengthen our hearts: strengthen and purify them, so that we may not have to blush before our children!

"You don't disguise your likes and dislikes, Philip," says the father then, with a tone that smites strangely and keenly on the young man.

There is a great tremor in Philip's voice, as he says, "No, father, I can't bear that man, and I can't disguise my feelings. I have just parted from the man. I have just met him."

"Where?"

"At — at Mrs. Brandon's, father." He blushes like a girl as he speaks.

At the next moment he is scared by the execration which hisses from his father's lips, and the awful look of hate which the elder's face assumes — that fatal, forlorn, fallen, lost look which, man and boy, has often frightened poor Phil. Philip did not like that look, nor indeed that other one, which his father cast at Hunt, who presently swaggered in.

"What, you dine here? We rarely do papa the honour of dining with him," says the parson, with his knowing leer. "I suppose, doctor, it is to be fatted-calf day now the prodigal has come home. There's worse things than a good fillet of veal; eh?"

Whatever the meal might be, the greasy chaplain leered and winked over it as he gave it his sinister blessing. The two elder guests tried to be lively and gay, as Philip thought, who took such little trouble to disguise his own moods of gloom or merriment. Nothing was said regarding the occurrences of the morning when my young gentleman had been rather rude to Mr. Hunt; and Philip did not need his father's caution to make no mention of his previous meeting with their guest. Hunt, as usual, talked to the butler, made side-long remarks to the footman, and garnished his conversation with slippery double-entendre and dirty old-world slang. Betting-houses, gambling-houses, Tattersall's, fights, and their frequenters, were his cheerful themes, and on these he descanted as usual. The doctor swallowed this dose, which his friend poured out, without the least expression of disgust. On the contrary, he was cheerful: he was for an extra bottle of claret — it never could be in better order than it was now.

The bottle was scarce put on the table, and tasted and pronounced perfect, when — oh! disappointment! the butler reappears with a note for the doctor. One of his patients. He must go. She has little the matter with her. She lives hard by, in May Fair. "You and Hunt finish this bottle, unless I am back before it is done; and if it is done, we'll have another," says Dr. Firmin, jovially. "Don't stir, Hunt" — and Dr. Firmin is gone, leaving Philip alone with the guest to whom he had certainly been rude in the morning.

"The doctor's patients often grow very unwell about claret time," growls Mr. Hunt, some few minutes after. "Never mind. The drink's good — good! as somebody said at your famous call supper, Mr. Philip — won't call you Philip, as you

don't like it. You were uncommon crusty to me in the morning, to be sure. In my time there would have been bottles broke, or worse, for that sort of treatment."

"I have asked your pardon," Philip said. "I was annoyed about — no matter what — and had no right to be rude to Mrs. Brandon's guest."

"I say, did you tell the governor that you saw me in Thornhaugh Street?" asks Hunt.

"I was very rude and ill-tempered, and again I confess I was wrong," says Phil, boggling and stuttering, and turning very red. He remembered his father's injunction.

"I say again, sir, did you tell your father of our meeting this morning?" demands the clergyman.

"And pray, sir, what right have you to ask me about my private conversation with my father?" asks Philip, with towering dignity.

"You won't tell me? Then you have told him. He's a nice man, your father is, for a moral man."

"I am not anxious for your opinion about my father's morality, Mr. Hunt," says Philip, gasping in a bewildered manner, and drumming the table. "I am here to replace him in his absence, and treat his guest with civility."

"Civility! Pretty civility!" says the other, glaring at him.

"Such as it is, sir, it is my best, and — I — I have no other," groans the young man.

"Old friend of your father's, a university man, a Master of Arts, a gentleman born, by Jove! a clergyman — though I sink that — "

"Yes, sir, you do sink that," says Philip.

"Am I a dog," shrieks out the clergyman, "to be treated by you in this way? Who are you? Do you know who you are?"

"Sir, I am striving with all my strength to remember," says Philip.

"Come! I say! don't try any of your confounded airs on me!" shrieks Hunt, with a profusion of oaths, and swallowing glass after glass from the various decanters before him. "Hang me, when I was a young man, I would have sent one — two at your nob, though you were twice as tall! Who are you, to patronize your senior, your father's old pal — a university man: — you confounded, supercilious — "

"I am here to pay every attention to my father's guest," says Phil; "but, if you have finished your wine, I shall be happy to break up the meeting, as early as you please."

"You shall pay me; I swear you shall," said Hunt.

"Oh, Mr. Hunt!" cried Philip, jumping up, and clenching his great fists, "I should desire nothing better."

The man shrank back, thinking Philip was going to strike him (as Philip told me in describing the scene), and made for the bell. But when the butler came, Philip only asked for coffee; and Hunt, uttering a mad oath or two, staggered out of the room after the servant. Brice said he had been drinking before he came. He was often so. And Phil blessed his stars that he had not assaulted his father's guest then and there, under his own roof-tree.

He went out into the air. He gasped and cooled himself under the stars. He soothed his feelings by his customary consolation of tobacco. He remembered that Ridley in Thornhaugh Street held a divan that night; and jumped into a cab, and drove to his old friend.

The maid of the house, who came to the door as the cab was driving away, stopped it; and as Phil entered the passage, he found the Little Sister and his father talking together in the hall. The doctor's broad hat shaded his face from the hall-lamp, which was burning with an extra brightness, but Mrs. Brandon's was very pale, and she had been crying.

She gave a little scream when she saw Phil. "Ah! is it you, dear?" she said. She ran up to him: seized both his hands: clung to him, and sobbed a thousand hot tears on his hand. "I never will. Oh, never, never, never!" she murmured.

The doctor's broad chest heaved as with a great sigh of relief. He looked at the woman and at his son with a strange smile; — not a sweet smile.

"God bless you, Caroline," he said, in his pompous, rather theatrical, way.

"Good-night, sir," said Mrs. Brandon, still clinging to Philip's hand, and making the doctor a little humble curtsy. And when he was gone, again she kissed Philip's hand, and dropped her tears on it, and said, "Never, my dear; no, never, never!"

CHAPTER 11

IN WHICH PHILIP IS VERY ILL-TEMPERED.

Philip had long divined a part of his dear little friend's history. An uneducated young girl had been found, cajoled, deserted by a gentleman of the world. And poor Caroline was the victim, and Philip's own father the seducer. He easily guessed as much as this of the sad little story. Dr. Firmin's part in it was enough to shock his son with a thrill of disgust, and to increase the mistrust, doubt, alienation, with which the father had long inspired the son. What would Philip feel, when all the pages of that dark book were opened to him, and he came to hear of a false marriage, and a ruined and outcast woman, deserted for years by the man to whom he himself was most bound? In a word, Philip had considered this as a mere case of early libertinism, and no more: and it was as such, in the very few words which he may have uttered to me respecting this matter, that he had chosen to regard it. I knew no more than my friend had told me of the story as yet; it was only by degrees that I learned it, and as events, now subsequent, served to develop and explain it.

The elder Firmin, when questioned by his old acquaintance, and, as it appeared, accomplice of former days, regarding the end of a certain intrigue at Margate, which had occurred some four or five and twenty years back, and when Firmin, having reason to avoid his college creditors, chose to live away and bear a false name, had told the clergyman a number of falsehoods, which appeared to satisfy him. What had become of that poor little thing about whom he had made such a fool of himself? Oh, she was dead, dead ever so many years before. He had pensioned her off. She had married, and died in Canada — yes, in Canada. Poor little thing! Yes, she was a good little thing, and, at one time, he had been very soft about her. I am sorry to have to state of a respectable gentleman, that he told lies, and told lies habitually and easily. But, you see, if you commit a crime, and break a seventh commandment let us say, or an eighth, or choose any number you will — you will probably have to back the lie of action by the lie of the tongue, and so you are fairly warned, and I have no help for you. If I murder a man, and the policeman inquires, "Pray, sir, did you cut this here gentleman's throat?" I must bear false witness, you see, out of self-defence, though I may be naturally a most reliable, truth-telling man. And so with regard to many crimes which gentlemen commit — it is painful to have to say respecting gentlemen, but they become neither more nor less than habitual liars, and have to go lying on through life to you, to me, to the servants, to their wives, to their children, to — oh, awful name! I bow and humble myself. May we kneel, may we kneel, nor strive to speak our falsehoods before Thee!

And so, my dear sir, seeing that after committing any infraction of the moral laws, you must tell lies in order to back yourself out of your scrape, let me ask you, as a man of honour and a gentleman, whether you had not better forego the crime, so as to avoid the unpleasant, and daily-recurring necessity of the subsequent perjury? A poor young girl of the lower orders, cajoled, or ruined, more or less, is of course no great matter. The little baggage is turned out of doors — worse luck for her — or she gets a place, or she marries one of her own class, who does not care to remember by-gones, — and there is an end of her. But if you marry her privately and irregularly yourself, and then throw her off, and then marry somebody else, you are brought to book in all sorts of unpleasant ways. I am writing of quite an old story, be pleased to remember. The first part of the history, I myself printed some twenty years ago; and if you fancy I allude to any more modern period, madam, you are entirely out in your conjecture.

It must have been a most unpleasant duty for a man of fashion, honour, and good family, to lie to a poor tipsy, disreputable bankrupt merchant's daughter, such as Caroline Gann; but George Brand Firmin, Esq., M.D., had no other choice, and when he lied, — as in severe cases, when he administered calomel — he thought it best to give the drug freely. Thus he lied to Hunt, saying that Mrs. Brandon was long since dead in Canada; and he lied to Caroline, prescribing for her the very same pill, as it were, and saying that Hunt was long since dead in Canada too. And I can fancy few more painful and humiliating positions for a man of rank and fashion and reputation, than to have to demean himself so far as to tell lies to a little low-bred person, who gets her bread as nurse of the sick, and has not the proper use of her h's.

"Oh, yes, Hunt!" Firmin had said to the Little Sister, in one of those sad little colloquies which sometimes took place between him and his victim, his wife of old days. "A wild, bad man, Hunt was — in days when I own I was little better! I have deeply repented since, Caroline; of nothing more than of my conduct to you; for you were worthy of a better fate, and you loved me truly — madly."

“Yes,” says Caroline.

“I was wild, then! I was desperate! I had ruined my fortunes, estranged my father from me, was hiding from my creditors under an assumed name — that under which I saw you. Ah, why did I ever come to your house, my poor child? The mark of the demon was upon me. I did not dare to speak of marriage before my father. You have yours, and tend him with your ever constant goodness. Do you know that my father would not see me when he died? Oh, it’s a cruel thing to think of!” And the suffering creature slaps his tall forehead with his trembling hand; and some of his grief about his own father, I dare say, is sincere, for he feels the shame and remorse of being alienated from his own son.

As for the marriage — that it was a most wicked and unjustifiable deceit, he owned; but he was wild when it took place, wild with debt and with despair at his father’s estrangement from him — but the fact was, it was no marriage.

“I am glad of that!” sighed the poor Little Sister.

“Why?” asked the other eagerly. His love was dead, but his vanity was still hale and well. “Did you care for somebody else, Caroline? Did you forget your George, whom you used to — ”

“No!” said the little woman, bravely. “But I couldn’t live with a man who behaved to any woman so dishonest as you behaved to me. I liked you because I thought you was a gentleman. My poor painter was, whom you used to despise and trample to hearth — and my dear, dear Philip is, Mr. Firmin. But gentlemen tell the truth! Gentlemen don’t deceive poor innocent girls, and desert ’em without a penny!”

“Caroline! I was driven by my creditors. I— ”

“Never mind. It’s over now. I bear you no malice, Mr. Firmin, but I wouldn’t marry you, no, not to be doctor’s wife to the queen!”

This had been the Little Sister’s language when there was no thought of the existence of Hunt, the clergyman who had celebrated their marriage; and I don’t know whether Firmin was most piqued or pleased at the divorce which the little woman pronounced of her own decree. But when the ill-omened Hunt made his appearance, doubts and terrors filled the physician’s mind. Hunt was needy, greedy, treacherous, unscrupulous, desperate. He could hold this marriage over the doctor. He could threaten, extort, expose, perhaps invalidate Philip’s legitimacy. The first marriage, almost certainly, was null, but the scandal would be fatal to Firmin’s reputation and practice. And the quarrel with his son entailed consequences not pleasant to think of. You see George Firmin, Esq., M.D., was a man with a great development of the back head; when he willed a thing, he willed it so fiercely that he must have it, never mind the consequences. And so he had willed to make himself master of poor little Caroline: and so he had willed, as a young man, to have horses, splendid entertainments, roulette and écarté, and so forth; and the bill came at its natural season, and George Firmin, Esq., did not always like to pay. But for a grand, prosperous, highly-bred gentleman in the best society — with a polished forehead and manners, and universally looked up to — to have to tell lies to a poor little timid, un-complaining, sick-room nurse, it was humiliating, wasn’t it? And I can feel for Firmin.

To have to lie to Hunt was disgusting; but somehow not so exquisitely mean and degrading as to have to cheat a little trusting, humble, houseless creature, over the bloom of whose gentle young life his accursed foot had already trampled. But then this Hunt was such a cad and ruffian that there need be no scruple about humbugging him; and if Firmin had had any humour he might have had a grim sort of pleasure in leading the dirty clergyman a dance thoro’ bush thoro’ briar. So, perhaps (of course I have no means of ascertaining the fact), the doctor did not altogether dislike the duty which now devolved on him of hoodwinking his old acquaintance and accomplice. I don’t like to use such a vulgar phrase regarding a man in Doctor Firmin’s high social position, as to say of him and the gaol-chaplain that it was “thief catch thief,” but at any rate Hunt is such a low, graceless, friendless vagabond, that if he comes in for a few kicks, or is mystified, we need not be very sorry. When Mr. Thurtell is hung we don’t put on mourning. His is a painful position for the moment; but, after all, he has murdered Mr. William Weare.

Firmin was a bold and courageous man, hot in pursuit, fierce in desire, but cool in danger, and rapid in action. Some of his great successes as a physician arose from his daring and successful practice in sudden emergency. While Hunt was only lurching about the town an aimless miscreant, living from dirty hand to dirty mouth, and as long as he could get drink, cards, and shelter, tolerably content, or at least pretty easily appeased by a guinea-dose or two — Firmin could adopt the palliative system; soothe his patient with an occasional bounty; set him to sleep with a composing draught of claret or brandy; and let the day take care of itself. He might die; he might have a fancy to go abroad again; he might be transported

for forgery or some other rascaldom, Dr. Firmin would console himself; and he trusted to the chapter of accidents to get rid of his friend. But Hunt, aware that the woman was alive whom he had actually, though unlawfully, married to Firmin, became an enemy whom it was necessary to subdue, to cajole, or to bribe, and the sooner the doctor put himself on his defence the better. What should the defence be? Perhaps the most effectual was a fierce attack on the enemy; perhaps it would be better to bribe him. The course to be taken would be best ascertained after a little previous reconnoitring.

"He will try and inflame Caroline," the doctor thought, "by representing her wrongs and her rights to her. He will show her that, as my wife, she has a right to my name and a share of my income. A less mercenary woman never lived than this poor little creature. She disdains money, and, except for her father's sake, would have taken none of mine. But to punish me for certainly rather shabby behaviour; to claim and take her own right and position in the world as an honest woman, may she not be induced to declare war against me, and stand by her marriage? After she left home, her two Irish half-sisters deserted her and spat upon her; and when she would have returned, the heartless women drove her from the door. Oh, the vixens! And now to drive by them in her carriage, to claim a maintenance from me, and to have a right to my honourable name, would she not have her dearest revenge over her sisters by so declaring her marriage?"

Firmin's noble mind misgave him very considerably on this point. He knew women, and how those had treated their little sister. Was it in human nature not to be revenged? These thoughts rose straightway in Firmin's mind, when he heard that the much dreaded meeting between Caroline and the chaplain had come to pass.

As he ate his dinner with his guest, his enemy, opposite to him, he was determining on his plan of action. The screen was up, and he was laying his guns behind it, so to speak. Of course he was as civil to Hunt as the tenant to his landlord when he comes with no rent. So the doctor laughed, joked, bragged, talked his best, and was thinking the while what was to be done against the danger.

He had a plan which might succeed. He must see Caroline immediately. He knew the weak point of her heart, and where she was most likely to be vulnerable. And he would act against her as barbarians of old acted against their enemies, when they brought the captive wives and children in front of the battle, and bade the foe strike through them. He knew how Caroline loved his boy. It was through that love he would work upon her. As he washes his pretty hands for dinner, and bathes his noble brow, he arranges his little plan. He orders himself to be sent for soon after the second bottle of claret — and it appears the doctor's servants were accustomed to the delivery of these messages from their master to himself. The plan arranged, now let us take our dinner and our wine, and make ourselves comfortable until the moment of action. In his wild-oats days, when travelling abroad with wild and noble companions, Firmin had fought a duel or two, and was always remarkable for his gaiety of conversation and the fine appetite which he showed at breakfast before going on to the field. So, perhaps, Hunt, had he not been stupefied by previous drink, might have taken the alarm by remarking Firmin's extra courtesy and gaiety, as they dined together. It was *nunc vinum, cras æquor*.

When the second bottle of claret was engaged, Dr. Firmin starts. He has an advance of half-an-hour at least on his adversary, or on the man who may be his adversary. If the Little Sister is at home, he will see her — he will lay bare his candid heart to her, and make a clean breast of it. The Little Sister was at home.

"I want to speak to you very particularly about that case of poor Lady Humandhaw," says he, dropping his voice.

"I will step out, my dear, and take a little fresh air," says Captain Gann; meaning that he will be off to the "Admiral Byng," and the two are together.

"I have had something on my conscience. I have deceived you, Caroline," says the doctor, with the beautiful shining forehead and hat.

"Ah, Mr. Firmin," says she, bending over her work; "you've used me to that."

"A man whom you knew once, and who tempted me for his own selfish ends to do a very wrong thing by you — a man whom I thought dead is alive:— Tufton Hunt, who performed that — that illegal ceremony at Margate, of which so often and often on my knees I have repented, Caroline!"

The beautiful hands are clasped, the beautiful deep voice thrills lowly through the room; and if a tear or two can be squeezed out of the beautiful eyes, I daresay the doctor will not be sorry.

"He has been here to-day. Him and Mr. Philip was here and quarrelled. Philip has told you, I suppose, sir?"

"Before heaven, on the word of a gentleman, when I said he was dead, Caroline, I thought he was dead! Yes, I declare, at our college, Maxwell — Dr. Maxwell — who had been at Cambridge with us, told me that our old friend Hunt had died in

Canada.” (This, my beloved friends and readers, may not have been the precise long bow which George Firmin, Esq., M.D., pulled; but that he twanged a famous lie out, whenever there was occasion for the weapon, I assure you is an undoubted fact.) “Yes, Dr. Maxwell told me our old friend was dead. Our old friend? My worst enemy and yours! But let that pass. It was he, Caroline, who led me into crimes which I have never ceased to deplore.”

“Ah, Mr. Firmin,” sighs the Little Sister, “since I’ve known you, you was big enough to take care of yourself in that way.”

“I have not come to excuse myself, Caroline,” says the deep sweet voice. “I have done you enough wrong, and I feel it here — at this heart. I have not come to speak about myself, but of some one I love the best of all the world — the only being I do love — some one you love, you good and generous soul — about Philip.”

“What is it about Philip?” asks Mrs. Brandon, very quickly.

“Do you want harm to happen to him?”

“Oh, my darling boy, no!” cries the Little Sister, clasping her little hands.

“Would you keep him from harm?”

“Ah, sir, you know I would. When he had the scarlet fever, didn’t I pour the drink down his poor throat, and nurse him, and tend him, as if, as if — as a mother would her own child?”

“You did, you did, you noble, noble woman; and heaven bless you for it! A father does. I am not all heartless, Caroline, as you deem me, perhaps.”

“I don’t think it’s much merit, your loving him,” says Caroline, resuming her sewing. And, perhaps, she thinks within herself, “What is he a coming to?” You see she was a shrewd little person, when her passions and partialities did not overcome her reason; and she had come to the conclusion that this elegant Dr. Firmin whom she had admired so once was a — not altogether veracious gentleman. In fact, I heard her myself say afterwards, “La! he used to talk so fine, and slap his hand on his heart, you know; but I usedn’t to believe him, no more than a man in a play.” “It’s not much merit your loving that boy,” says Caroline, then. “But what about him, sir?”

Then Firmin explained. This man Hunt was capable of any crime for money or revenge. Seeing Caroline was alive —

“I ‘spose you told him I was dead too, sir,” says she, looking up from the work.

“Spare me, spare me! Years ago, perhaps, when I had lost sight of you, I may, perhaps, have thought — ”

“And it’s not to you, George Brandon — it’s not to you,” cries Caroline, starting up, and speaking with her sweet, innocent, ringing voice; “it’s to kind, dear friends, — it’s to my good God that I owe my life, which you had flung it away. And I paid you back by guarding your boy’s dear life, I did, under — under Him who giveth and taketh. And bless His name!”

“You are a good woman, and I am a bad, sinful man, Caroline,” says the other. “You saved my Philip’s — our Philip’s life, at the risk of your own. Now I tell you that another immense danger menaces him, and may come upon him any day as long as yonder scoundrel is alive. Suppose his character is assailed; suppose, thinking you dead, I married another — ”

“Ah, George, you never thought me dead; though, perhaps, you wished it, sir. And many would have died,” added the poor Little Sister.

“Look, Caroline! If I was married to you, my wife — Philip’s mother — was not my wife, and he is her natural son. The property he inherits does not belong to him. The children of his grandfather’s other daughter claim it, and Philip is a beggar. Philip, bred as he has been — Philip, the heir to a mother’s large fortune.”

“And — and his father’s, too?” asks Caroline, anxiously.

“I daren’t tell you — though, no, by heavens! I can trust you with everything. My own great gains have been swallowed up in speculations which have been almost all fatal. There has been a fate hanging over me, Caroline — a righteous punishment for having deserted you. I sleep with a sword over my head, which may fall and destroy me. I walk with a volcano under my feet, which may burst any day and annihilate me. And people speak of the famous Dr. Firmin, the rich Dr. Firmin, the prosperous Dr. Firmin! I shall have a title soon, I believe. I am believed to be happy, and I am alone, and the wretchedest man alive.”

“Alone, are you?” said Caroline. “There was a woman once would have kept by you, only you — you flung her away. Look here, George Brandon. It’s over with us. Years and years ago it lies where a little cherub was buried. But I love my

Philip; and I won't hurt him, no, never, never, never."

And as the doctor turned to go away, Caroline followed him wistfully into the hall, and it was there that Philip found them.

Caroline's tender "never, never," rang in Philip's memory as he sat at Ridley's party, amidst the artists and authors there assembled. Phil was thoughtful and silent. He did not laugh very loud. He did not praise or abuse anybody outrageously, as was the wont of that most emphatic young gentleman. He scarcely contradicted a single person; and perhaps, when Larkins said Scumble's last picture was beautiful, or Bogle, the critic of the *Connoisseur*, praised Bowman's last novel, contented himself with a scornful "Ho!" and a pull at his whiskers by way of protest and denial. Had he been in his usual fine spirits, and enjoying his ordinary flow of talk, he would have informed Larkins and the assembled company not only that Scumble was an impostor, but that he, Larkins, was an idiot for admiring him. He would have informed Bogle that he was infatuated about that jackass Bowman, that cockney, that wretched ignoramus, who didn't know his own or any other language. He would have taken down one of Bowman's stories from the shelf, and proved the folly, imbecility, and crass ignorance of that author. (Ridley has a simple little stock of novels and poems in an old cabinet in his studio, and reads them still with much artless wonder and respect.) Or, to be sure, Phil would have asserted propositions the exact contrary of those here maintained, and declared that Bowman was a genius, and Scumble a most accomplished artist. But then, you know, somebody else must have commenced by taking the other side. Certainly a more paradoxical, and provoking, and obstinate, and contradictory disputant than Mr. Phil, I never knew. I never met Dr. Johnson, who died before I came up to town; but I do believe Phil Firmin would have stood up and argued even with him.

At these Thursday divans the host provided the modest and kindly refreshment, and Betsy the maid, or Virgilio the model, travelled to and fro with glasses and water. Each guest brought his own smoke, and I promise you there were such liberal contributions of the article, that the studio was full of it; and new comers used to be saluted by a roar of laughter as you heard, rather than saw, them entering, and choking in the fog. It was, "Holloa, Prodgers! is that you, old boy?" and the beard of Prodgers (that famous sculptor) would presently loom through the cloud. It was, "Newcome, how goes?" and Mr. Clive Newcome (a mediocre artist I must own, but a famous good fellow, with an uncommonly pretty villa and pretty and rich wife at Wimbledon) would make his appearance, and be warmly greeted by our little host. It was, "Is that you, F. B.? would you like a link, old boy, to see you through the fog?" And the deep voice of Frederick Bayham, Esquire (the eminent critic on Art), would boom out of the tobaccomist, and would exclaim, "A link? I would like a drink." Ah, ghosts of youth, again ye draw near! Old figures glimmer through the cloud. Old songs echo out of the distance. What were you saying anon about Dr. Johnson, boys? I am sure some of us must remember him. As for me, I am so old, that I might have been at Edial school — the other pupil along with little Davy Garrick and his brother.

We had a bachelor's supper in the Temple so lately that I think we must pay but a very brief visit to a smoking party in Thornhaugh Street, or the ladies will say that we are too fond of bachelor habits, and keep our friends away from their charming and amiable society. A novel must not smell of cigars much, nor should its refined and genteel page be stained with too frequent brandy and water. Please to imagine, then, the prattle of the artists, authors, and amateurs assembled at Ridley's divan. Fancy Jarman, the miniature painter, drinking more liquor than any man present, asking his neighbour (sub voce) why Ridley does not give his father (the old butler) five shillings to wait; suggesting that perhaps the old man is gone out, and is getting seven-and-sixpence elsewhere; praising Ridley's picture aloud, and sneering at it in an undertone; and when a man of rank happens to enter the room, shambling up to him, and fawning on him, and cringing to him with fulsome praise and flattery. When the gentleman's back is turned, Jarman can spit epigrams at it. I hope he will never forgive Ridley, and always continue to hate him; for hate him Jarman will, as long as he is prosperous, and curse him as long as the world esteems him. Look at Pym, the incumbent of Saint Bronze hard by, coming in to join the literary and artistic assembly, and choking in his white neckcloth to the diversion of all the company who can see him! Sixteen, eighteen, twenty men are assembled. Open the windows, or sure they will all be stifled with the smoke! Why, it fills the whole house so, that the Little Sister has to open her parlour window on the ground-floor, and gasp for fresh air.

Phil's head and cigar are thrust out from a window above, and he lolls there, musing about his own affairs, as his smoke ascends to the skies. Young Mr. Philip Firmin is known to be wealthy, and his father gives very good parties in Old Parr Street, so Jarman sidles up to Phil and wants a little fresh air too. He enters into conversation by abusing Ridley's picture that is on the easel.

"Everybody is praising it; what do you think of it, Mr. Firmin? Very queer drawing about those eyes, isn't there?"

"Is there?" growls Phil.

"Very loud colour."

"Oh!" says Phil.

"The composition is so clearly priggish from Raphael."

"Indeed!"

"I beg your pardon. I don't think you know who I am," continues the other, with a simper.

"Yes, I do," says Phil, glaring at him. "You're a painter, and your name is Mr. Envy."

"Sir!" shrieks the painter; but he is addressing himself to the tails of Phil's coat, the superior half of Mr. Firmin's body is stretching out of the window. Now, you may speak of a man behind his back, but not to him. So Mr. Jarman withdraws, and addresses himself, face to face, to somebody else in the company. I daresay he abuses that upstart, impudent, bumptious young doctor's son. Have I not owned that Philip was often very rude? and to-night he is in a specially bad humour.

As he continues to stare into the street, who is that who has just reeled up to the railings below, and is talking in at Mrs. Brandon's window? Whose black-guard voice and laugh are those which Phil recognizes with a shudder? It is the voice and laugh of our friend Mr. Hunt, whom Philip left, not very long since, near his father's house in Old Parr Street; and both of those familiar sounds are more vinous, more odious, more impudent than they were even two hours ago.

"Holloa! I say!" he calls out with a laugh and a curse. "Pst! Mrs. Whatdyoucallem! Hang it! don't shut the window. Let a fellow in!" and as he looks towards the upper window, where Philip's head and bust appear dark before the light, Hunt cries out, "Holloa! what game's up now, I wonder? Supper and ball. Shouldn't be surprised." And he hiccups a waltz tune, and clatters time to it with his dirty boots.

"Mrs. Whadyoucall! Mrs. B—!" the sot then recommences to shriek out. "Must see you — most particular business. Private and confidential. Hear of something to your advantage." And rap, rap, rap, he is now thundering at the door. In the clatter of twenty voices few hear Hunt's noise except Philip; or, if they do, only imagine that another of Ridley's guests is arriving.

At the hall door there is talk and altercation, and the high shriek of a well-known odious voice. Philip moves quickly from his window, shoulders friend Jarman at the studio door, and hustling past him obtains, no doubt, more good wishes from that ingenious artist. Philip is so rude and overbearing that I really have a mind to depose him from his place of hero, only, you see, we are committed. His name is on the page overhead, and we can't take it down and put up another. The Little Sister is standing in her hall by the just opened door, and remonstrating with Mr. Hunt, who appears to wish to force his way in.

"Pooh! shtuff, my dear! If he's here I musht see him — particular business — get out of that!" and he reels forward against little Caroline's shoulder.

"Get away, you brute, you!" cries the little lady. "Go home, Mr. Hunt; you are worse than you were this morning." She is a resolute little woman, and puts out a firm little arm against this odious invader. She has seen patients in hospital raging in fever: she is not frightened by a tipsy man. "La! is it you, Mr. Philip? Whoever will take this horrid man? He ain't fit to go upstairs among the gentlemen; indeed he ain't."

"You said Firmin was here — and it isn't the father. It's the cub! I want the doctor. Where's the doctor?" hiccups the chaplain, lurching against the wall; and then he looks at Philip with bloodshot eyes, that twinkle hate. "Who wantsh you, I shlike to know? Had enough of you already to-day. Conceited brute. Don't look at me in that sortaway! I ain't afraid of you — ain't afraid anybody. Time was when I was a young man fight you as soon as look at you. I say, Philip!"

"Go home, now. Do go home, there's a good man," says the landlady.

"I say! Look here — hic — hi! Philip! On your word as a gentleman, your father's not here? He's a sly old boots, Brummell Firmin is — Trinity man — I'm not a Trinity man — Corpus man. I say, Philip, give us your hand. Bear no malice. Look here — something very particular. After dinner — went into Air Street — you know — rouge gagne, et couleur — cleaned out, on the honour of a gentleman and Master of Arts of the university of Cambridge. So was your father — no, he went out in medicine. I say, Philip, hand us out five sovereigns, and let's try the luck again! What, you won't? It's mean, I say. Don't be mean.

“Oh, here’s five shillings! Go and have a cab. Fetch a cab for him, Virgilio, do!” cries the mistress of the house.

“That’s not enough, my dear!” cries the chaplain, advancing towards Mrs. Brandon, with such a leer and air, that Philip, half choked with passion, runs forward, grips Hunt by the collar, and crying out, “You filthy scoundrel; as this is not my house, I may kick you out of it!” — in another instant has run Hunt through the passage, hurled him down the steps, and sent him sprawling into the kennel.

“Row down below,” says Rosebury, placidly, looking from above. “Personal conflict. Intoxicated individual — in gutter. Our impetuous friend has floored him.”

Hunt, after a moment, sits up and glares at Philip. He is not hurt. Perhaps the shock has sobered him. He thinks, perhaps, Philip is going to strike again. “Hands off, BASTARD!” shrieks out the prostrate wretch.

“O Philip, Philip! He’s mad, he’s tipsy!” cries out the Little Sister, running into the street. She puts her arms round Philip. “Don’t mind him, dear — he’s mad! Policeman! The gentleman has had too much. Come in, Philip; come in!”

She took him into her little room. She was pleased with the gallantry of the boy. she Liked to see him just now, standing over her enemy, courageous, victorious, her champion. “La! how savage he did look; and how brave and strong you are! But the little wretch ain’t fit to stand before such as you!” And she passed her little hand down his arm, of which the muscles were all in a quiver from the recent skirmish.

“What did the scoundrel mean by calling me bastard?” said Philip, the wild blue eyes glaring round about with more than ordinary fierceness.

“Nonsense, dear! Who minds anything he says, that beast? His language is always horrid; he’s not a gentleman. He had had too much this morning when he was here. What matters what he says? He won’t know anything about it to-morrow. But it was kind of my Philip to rescue his poor little nurse, wasn’t it? Like a novel. Come in, and let me make you some tea. Don’t go to no more smoking; you have had enough. Come in and talk to me.”

And, as a mother, with sweet pious face, yearns to her little children from her seat, she fondles him, she watches him; she fills her teapot from her singing kettle. She talks — talks in her homely way, and on this subject and that. It is a wonder how she prattles on, who is generally rather silent. She won’t see Phil’s eyes, which are following her about very strangely and fiercely. And when again he mutters, “What did he mean by — ” “La, my dear, how cross you are!” she breaks out. “It’s always so; you won’t be happy without your cigar. Here’s a cheeroot, a beauty! Pa brought it home from the club. A China captain gave him some. You must light it at the little end. There!” And if I could draw the picture which my mind sees of her lighting Phil’s cheroot for him, and smiling the while, — of the little innocent Dalilah coaxing and wheedling this young Samson, I know it would be a pretty picture. I wish Ridley would sketch it for me.



CHAPTER 12

DAMOCLES.

On the next morning, at an hour so early that Old Parr Street was scarce awake, and even the maids who wash the broad steps of the houses of the tailors and medical gentlemen who inhabit that region had not yet gone down on their knees before their respective doors, a ring was heard at Dr. Firmin's night-bell, and when the door was opened by the yawning attendant, a little person in a grey gown and a black bonnet made her appearance, handed a note to the servant, and said the case was most urgent and the doctor must come at once. Was not Lady Humandhaw the noble person whom we last mentioned, as the invalid about whom the doctor and the nurse had spoken a few words on the previous evening? The Little Sister, for it was she, used the very same name to the servant, who retired grumbling to waken up his master and deliver the note.

Nurse Brandon sate awhile in the great gaunt dining-room where hung the portrait of the doctor in his splendid black collar and cuffs, and contemplated this masterpiece until an invasion of housemaids drove her from the apartment, when she took refuge in that other little room to which Mrs. Firmin's portrait had been consigned.

"That's like him ever so many years and years ago," she thinks. "It is a little handsomer; but it has his wicked look that I used to think so killing, and so did my sisters both of them — they were ready to tear out each other's eyes for jealousy. And that's Mrs. Firmin's! Well, I suppose the painter haven't flattered her. If he have she could have been no great things, Mrs. F. couldn't." And the doctor, entering softly by the opened door and over the thick Turkey carpet, comes up to her noiseless, and finds the Little Sister gazing at the portrait of the departed lady.

"Oh, it's you, is it? I wonder whether you treated her no better than you treated me, Dr. F.? I've a notion she's not the only one. She don't look happy, poor thing," says the little lady.

"What is it, Caroline?" asks the deep-voiced doctor; "and what brings you so early?"

The Little Sister then explains to him. "Last night after he went away Hunt came, sure enough. He had been drinking. He was very rude, and Philip wouldn't bear it. Philip had a good courage of his own and a hot blood. And Philip thought Hunt was insulting her, the Little Sister. So he up with his hand, and down goes Mr. Hunt on the pavement. Well, when he was down he was in a dreadful way, and he called Philip a deadful name."

"A name? what name?" Then Caroline told the doctor the name Mr. Hunt had used; and if Firmin's face usually looked wicked, I daresay it did not seem very angelical when he heard how this odious name had been applied to his son. "Can he do Philip a mischief?" Caroline continued. "I thought I was bound to tell his father. Look here, Dr. F., I don't want to do my dear boy a harm. — But suppose what you told me last night isn't true — as I don't think you much mind! — mind — saying things as are incorrect you know, when us women are in the case. But suppose when you played the villain, thinking only to take in a poor innocent girl of sixteen, it was you who were took in, and that I was your real wife after all? There would be a punishment!"

"I should have an honest and good wife, Caroline," said the doctor, with a groan.

"This would be a punishment, not for you, but for my poor Philip," the woman goes on. "What has he done, that his honest name should be took from him — and his fortune perhaps? I have been lying broad awake all night thinking of him. Ah, George Brandon! Why, why did you come to my poor old father's house, and bring this misery down on me, and on your child unborn?"

"On myself, the worst of all," says the doctor.

"You deserve it. But it's us innocent that has had, or will have to suffer most. O George Brandon! Think of a poor child, flung away, and left to starve and die, without even so much as knowing your real name! Think of your boy, perhaps brought to shame and poverty through your fault!"

"Do you suppose I don't often think of my wrong?" says the doctor. "That it does not cause me sleepless nights, and hours of anguish? Ah! Caroline!" and he looks in the glass. — "I am not shaved, and it's very unbecoming," he thinks; that is, if I may dare to read his thoughts, as I do to report his unheard words.

"You think of your wrong now it may be found out, I daresay!" says Caroline. "Suppose this Hunt turns against you?"

He is desperate; mad for drink and money; has been in gaol — as he said this very night to me and my papa. He'll do or say anything. If you treat him hard, and Philip have treated him hard — not harder than served him right though — he'll pull the house down and himself under it, but he'll be revenged. Perhaps he drank so much last night, that he may have forgot. But I fear he means mischief, and I came here to say so, and hoping that you might be kept on your guard, Doctor F., and if you have to quarrel with him, I don't know what you ever will do, I am sure — no more than if you had to fight a chimney-sweep in the street. I have been awake all night thinking, and as soon as ever I saw the daylight, I determined I would run and tell you."

"When he called Philip that name, did the boy seem much disturbed?" asked the doctor.

"Yes; he referred to it again and again — though I tried to coax him out of it. But it was on his mind last night, and I am sure he will think of it the first thing this morning. Ah, yes, doctor! conscience will sometimes let a gentleman doze; but after discovery has come, and opened your curtains, and said, 'You desired to be called early!' there's little use in trying to sleep much. You look very much frightened, Doctor F." the nurse continues. "You haven't such a courage as Philip has; or as you had when you were a young man, and came a leading poor girls astray. You used to be afraid of nothing then. Do you remember that fellow on board the steamboat in Scotland in our wedding-trip? and, la, I thought you was going to kill him. That poor little Lord Cinqbars told me ever so many stories then about your courage and shooting people. It wasn't very courageous, leaving a poor girl without even a name, and scarce a guinea, was it? But I ain't come to call up old stories — only to warn you. Even in old times, when he married us, and I thought he was doing a kindness, I never could abide this horrible man. In Scotland, when you was away shooting with your poor little lord, the things Hunt used to say and look was deadful. I wonder how ever you, who were gentlemen, could put up with such a fellow! Ah, that was a sad honeymoon of ours! I wonder why I'm a thinking of it now? I suppose it's from having seen the picture of the other one — poor lady!"

"I have told you, Caroline, that I was so wild and desperate at that unhappy time, I was scarcely accountable for my actions. If I left you, it was because I had no other resource but flight. I was a ruined penniless man, but for my marriage with Louisa Ringwood. You don't suppose the marriage was happy? Happy! when have I ever been happy? My lot is to be wretched, and bring wretchedness down on those I love! — on you, on my father, on my wife, on my boy — I am a doomed man. Ah, that the innocent should suffer for me!" And our friend looks askance in the glass, at the blue chin and hollow eyes which make his guilt look the more haggard.

"I never had my lines," the little sister continued, "I never knew there were papers, or writings, or anything but a ring and a clergyman, when you married me. But I've heard tell that people in Scotland don't want a clergyman at all; and if they call themselves man and wife, they are man and wife. Now, sir, Mr. and Mrs. Brandon certainly did travel together in Scotland — witness that man whom you were going to throw into the lake for being rude to your wife — and . . . La! Don't fly out so! It wasn't me, a poor girl of sixteen, who did wrong. It was you, a man of the world, who was years and years older."

When Brandon carried off his poor little victim and wife, there had been a journey to Scotland, where Lord Cinqbars, then alive, had sporting quarters. His lordship's chaplain, Mr. Hunt, had been of the party, which fate very soon afterwards separated. Death seized on Cinqbars at Naples. Debt caused Firmin — Brandon, as he called himself then — to fly the country. The chaplain wandered from gaol to gaol. And as for poor little Caroline Brandon, I suppose the husband who had married her under a false name thought that to escape her, leave her, and disown her altogether was an easier and less dangerous plan than to continue relations with her. So one day, four months after their marriage, the young couple being then at Dover, Caroline's husband happened to go out for a walk. But he sent away a portmanteau by the back door when he went out for the walk, and as Caroline was waiting for her little dinner some hours after, the porter who carried the luggage came with a little note from her dearest G. B.; and it was full of little fond expressions of regard and affection, such as gentlemen put into little notes; but dearest G. B. said the bailiffs were upon him, and one of them had arrived that morning, and he must fly: and he took half the money he had, and left half for his little Carry. And he would be back soon, and arrange matters; or tell her where to write and follow him. And she was to take care of her little health, and to write a great deal to her Georgy. And she did not know how to write very well then; but she did her best, and improved a great deal; for, indeed, she wrote a great deal, poor thing. Sheets and sheets of paper she blotted with ink and tears. And then the money was spent; and the next money; and no more came, and no more letters. And she was alone at sea, sinking, sinking, when it pleased heaven to send that friend who rescued her. It is such a sad, sad little story, that in fact I don't like dwelling on it; not caring to look upon poor innocent, trusting creatures in pain.

. . . Well, then, when Caroline exclaimed, "La! don't fly out so, Dr. Firmin!" I suppose the doctor had been crying out, and swearing fiercely, at the recollections of his friend Mr. Brandon, and at the danger which possibly hung over that gentleman. Marriage ceremonies are dangerous risks in jest or in earnest. You can't pretend to marry even a poor old bankrupt lodging-house-keeper's daughter without some risk of being brought subsequently to book. If you have a vulgar wife alive, and afterwards choose to leave her and marry an earl's niece, you will come to trouble, however well connected you are and highly placed in society. If you have had thirty thousand pounds with wife No. 2, and have to pay it back on a sudden, the payment may be inconvenient. You may be tried for bigamy, and sentenced, goodness knows to what punishment. At any rate, if the matter is made public, and you are a most respectable man, moving in the highest scientific and social circles, those circles may be disposed to request you to walk out of their circumference. A novelist, I know, ought to have no likes, dislikes, pity, partiality for his characters; but I declare I cannot help feeling a respectful compassion for a gentleman, who, in consequence of a youthful, and, I am sure, sincerely regretted folly, may be liable to lose his fortune, his place in society, and his considerable practice. Punishment hasn't a right to come with such a *pede claud*. There ought to be limitations; and it is shabby and revengeful of Justice to present her little bill when it has been more than twenty years owing . . . Having had his talk out with the Little Sister, having a long past crime suddenly taken down from the shelf; having a remorse, long since supposed to be dead and buried, suddenly starting up in the most blustering, boisterous, inconvenient manner; having a rage and terror tearing him within; I can fancy this most respectable physician going about his day's work, and most sincerely sympathize with him. Who is to heal the physician? Is he not more sick at heart than most of his patients that day? He has to listen to Lady Megrim cackling for half an hour at least, and describing her little ailments. He has to listen, and never once to dare to say, "Confound you, old chatterbox! What are you prating about your ailments to me, who am suffering real torture whilst I am smirking in your face?" He has to wear the inspiriting smile, to breathe the gentle joke, to console, to whisper hope, to administer remedy; and all day, perhaps, he sees no one so utterly sick, so sad, so despairing, as himself.

The first person on whom he had to practise hypocrisy that day was his own son, who chose to come to breakfast — a meal of which son and father seldom now partook in company. "What does he know, and what does he suspect?" are the father's thoughts; but a louring gloom is on Philip's face, and the father's eyes look into the son's, but cannot penetrate their darkness.

"Did you stay late last night, Philip?" says papa.

"Yes, sir, rather late," answers the son.

"Pleasant party?"

"No, sir, stupid. Your friend Mr. Hunt wanted to come in. He was drunk, and rude to Mrs. Brandon, and I was obliged to put him out of the door. He was dreadfully violent and abusive."

"Swore a good deal, I suppose?"

"Fiercely, sir, and called names."

I daresay Philip's heart beat so when he said these last words, that they were inaudible: at all events, Philip's father did not appear to pay much attention to the words, for he was busy reading the *Morning Post*, and behind that sheet of fashionable news hid whatever expression of agony there might be on his face. Philip afterwards told his present biographer of this breakfast meeting and dreary tête-à-tête. "I burned to ask what was the meaning of that scoundrel's words of the past night," Philip said to his biographer; "but I did not dare, somehow. You see, Pendennis, it is not pleasant to say point-blank to your father, 'Sir, are you a confirmed scoundrel, or are you not? Is it possible that you have made a double marriage, as yonder other rascal hinted; and that my own legitimacy and my mother's fair fame, as well as poor, harmless Caroline's honour and happiness, have been destroyed by your crime?' But I had lain awake all night thinking about that scoundrel Hunt's words, and whether there was any meaning beyond drunken malice in what he said." So we find that three people had passed a bad night in consequence of Mr. Firmin's evil behaviour of five-and-twenty years back, which surely was a most unreasonable punishment for a sin of such old date. I wish, dearly beloved brother sinners, we could take all the punishment for our individual crimes on our individual shoulders: but we drag others down with us — that is the fact; and when Macheath is condemned to hang, it is Polly and Lucy who have to weep and suffer and wear piteous mourning in their hearts long after the dare-devil rogue has jumped off the Tyburn ladder.

"Well, sir, he did not say a word," said Philip, recounting the meeting to his friend; "not a word, at least, regarding the

matter both of us had on our heart. But about fashion, parties, politics, he discoursed much more freely than was usual with him. He said I might have had Lord Ringwood's seat for Whipham but for my unfortunate politics. What made a radical of me, he asked, who was naturally one of the most haughty men? (and that, I think, perhaps I am," says Phil, "and a good many liberal fellows are"). I should calm down, he was sure — I should calm down, and be of the politics des hommes du monde."

Philip could not say to his father, "Sir, it is seeing you cringe before great ones that has set my own back up." There were countless points about which father and son could not speak; and an invisible, unexpressed, perfectly unintelligible mistrust, always was present when those two were tête-à-tête.

Their meal was scarce ended when entered to them Mr. Hunt, with his hat on. I was not present at the time, and cannot speak as a certainty; but I should think at his ominous appearance Philip may have turned red and his father pale. "Now is the time," both, I daresay, thought; and the doctor remembered his stormy young days of foreign gambling, intrigue, and duel, when he was put on his ground before his adversary, and bidden, at a given signal, to fire. One, two, three! Each man's hand was armed with malice and murder. Philip had plenty of pluck for his part, but I should think on such an occasion might be a little nervous and fluttered, whereas his father's eye was keen, and his aim rapid and steady.

"You and Philip had a difference last night, Philip tells me," said the doctor.

"Yes, and I promised he should pay me," said the clergyman.

"And I said I should desire no better," says Mr. Phil.

"He struck his senior, his father's friend — a sick man, a clergyman," gasped Hunt.

"Were you to repeat what you did last night, I should repeat what I did," said Phil. "You insulted a good woman."

"It's a lie, sir!" cries the other.

"You insulted a good woman, a lady in her own house, and I turned you out of it," said Phil.

"I say, again, it is a lie, sir!" screams Hunt, with a stamp on the table.

"That you should give me the lie, or otherwise, is perfectly immaterial to me. But whenever you insult Mrs. Brandon, or any harmless woman in my presence, I shall do my best to chastise you," cries Philip of the red moustaches, curling them with much dignity.

"You hear him, Firmin?" says the parson.

"Faith, I do, Hunt!" says the physician; "and I think he means what he says, too."

"Oh! you take that line, do you?" cries Hunt of the dirty hands, the dirty teeth, the dirty neckcloth.

"I take what you call that line; and whenever a rudeness is offered to that admirable woman in my son's hearing, I shall be astonished if he does not resent it," says the doctor. "Thank you, Philip!"

The father's resolute speech and behaviour gave Philip great momentary comfort. Hunt's words of the night before had been occupying the young man's thoughts. Had Firmin been criminal, he could not be so bold.

"You talk this way in presence of your son? You have been talking over the matter together before?" asks Hunt.

"We have been talking over the matter before — yes. We were engaged on it when you came into breakfast," said the doctor. "Shall we go on with the conversation where we left it off?"

"Well, do — that is, if you dare," said the clergyman, somewhat astonished.

"Philip, my dear, it is ill for a man to hide his head before his own son; but if I am to speak — and speak I must one day or the other — why not now?"

"Why at all, Firmin?" asks the clergyman, astonished at the other's rather sudden resolve.

"Why? Because I am sick and tired of you, Mr. Tufton Hunt," cries the physician, in his most lofty manner, "of you and your presence in my house; your blackguard behaviour and your rascal extortions — because you will force me to speak one day or the other — and now, Philip, if you like, shall be the day."

"Hang it, I say! Stop a bit!" cries the clergyman.

"I understand you want some more money from me."

"I did promise Jacobs I would pay him to-day, and that was what made me so sulky last night; and, perhaps, I took a little too much. You see my mind was out of order; and what's the use of telling a story that is no good to any one, Firmin —

least of all to you," cries the parson, darkly.

"Because, you ruffian, I'll bear with you no more," cries the doctor, the veins of his forehead swelling as he looks fiercely at his dirty adversary. "In the last nine months, Philip, this man has had nine hundred pounds from me."

"The luck has been so very bad, so bad, upon my honour, now," grumbles the parson.

"To-morrow he will want more; and the next day more; and the next day more; and, in fine, I won't live with this accursed man of the sea round my neck. You shall have the story; and Mr. Hunt shall sit by and witness against his own crime and mine. I had been very wild at Cambridge, when I was a young man. I had quarrelled with my father, lived with a dissipated set, and beyond my means; and had had my debts paid so often by your grandfather, that I was afraid to ask for more. He was stern to me; I was not dutiful to him. I own my fault. Mr. Hunt can bear witness to what I say.

"I was in hiding at Margate, under a false name. You know the name."

"Yes, sir, I think I know the name," Philip said, thinking he liked his father better now than he had ever liked him in his life, and sighing, "Ah, if he had always been frank and true with me!"

"I took humble lodgings with an obscure family." (If Dr. Firmin had a prodigious idea of his own grandeur and importance, you see I cannot help it — and he was long held to be such a respectable man.) "And there I found a young girl — one of the most innocent beings that ever a man played with and betrayed. Betrayed, I own it, heaven forgive me! The crime has been the shame of my life, and darkened my whole career with misery. I got a man worse than myself, if that could be. I got Hunt for a few pounds, which he owed me, to make a sham marriage between me and poor Caroline. My money was soon gone. My creditors were after me. I fled the country, and I left her."

"A sham marriage! a sham marriage!" cries the clergyman. "Didn't you make me perform it by holding a pistol to my throat? A fellow won't risk transportation for nothing. But I owed him money for cards, and he had my bill, and he said he would let me off, and that's why I helped him. Never mind. I am out of the business now, Mr. Brummell Firmin, and you are in it. I have read the Act, sir. The clergyman who performs the marriage is liable to punishment, if informed against within three years, and it's twenty years or more. But you, Mr. Brummell Firmin — your case is different; and you, my young gentleman, with the fiery whiskers, who strike down old men of a night — you may find some of us know how to revenge ourselves, though we are down." And with this, Hunt rushed to his greasy hat, and quitted the house, discharging imprecations at his hosts as he passed through the hall.

Son and father sate awhile silent, after the departure of their common enemy. At last the father spoke.

"This is the sword that has always been hanging over my head, and it is now falling, Philip."

"What can the man do? Is the first marriage a good marriage?" asked Philip, with alarmed face.

"It's is no marriage. It is void to all intents and purposes. You may suppose I have taken care to learn the law about that. Your legitimacy is safe, sure enough. But that man can ruin me, or nearly so. He will try to-morrow, if not to-day. As long as you or I can give him a guinea, he will take it to the gambling-house. I had the mania on me myself once. My poor father quarrelled with me in consequence, and died without seeing me. I married your mother — Heaven help her, poor soul! and forgive me for being but a harsh husband to her — with a view of mending my shattered fortunes. I wished she had been more happy, poor thing. But do not blame me utterly, Philip. I was desperate, and she wished for the marriage so much! I had good looks and high spirits in those days. People said so." (And here he glances obliquely at his own handsome portrait.) "Now I am a wreck, a wreck!"

"I conceive, sir, that this will annoy you; but how can it ruin you?" asked Philip.

"What becomes of my practice as a family physician? The practice is not now what it was, between ourselves, Philip, and the expenses greater than you imagine. I have made unlucky speculations. If you count upon much increase of wealth from me, my boy, you will be disappointed; though you were never mercenary, no, never. But the story bruited about by this rascal, of a physician of eminence engaged in two marriages, do you suppose my rivals won't hear it, and take advantage of it — my patients hear it, and avoid me?"

"Make terms with the man at once, then, sir, and silence him."

"To make terms with a gambler is impossible. My purse is always there open for him to thrust his hand into when he loses. No man can withstand such a temptation. I am glad you have never fallen into it. I have quarrelled with you sometimes for living with people below your rank: perhaps you were right, and I was wrong. I have liked, always did, I don't disguise it, to live with persons of station. And these, when I was at the university, taught me play and extravagance;

and in the world haven't helped me much. Who would? Who would?" and the doctor relapsed into meditation.

A little catastrophe presently occurred, after which Mr. Philip Firmin told me the substance of this story. He described his father's long acquiescence in Hunt's demands, and sudden resistance to them, and was at a loss to account for the change. I did not tell my friend in express terms, but I fancied I could account for the change of behaviour. Dr. Firmin, in his interviews with Caroline, had had his mind set at rest about one part of his danger. The doctor need no longer fear the charge of a double marriage. The Little Sister resigned her claims past, present, future.

If a gentleman is sentenced to be hung, I wonder is it a matter of comfort to him or not to know beforehand the day of the operation? Hunt would take his revenge. When and how? Dr. Firmin asked himself. Nay, possibly, you will have to learn that this eminent practitioner walked about with more than one danger hanging imminent over him. Perhaps it was a rope: perhaps it was a sword: some weapon of execution, at any rate, as we presently may see. A day passes: no assassin darts at the doctor as he threads the dim opera-colonnade passage on his way to his club. A week goes by: no stiletto is plunged into his well-wadded breast as he steps from his carriage at some noble patient's door. Philip says he never knew his father more pleasant, easy, good-humoured, and affable than during this period, when he must have felt that a danger was hanging over him of which his son at this time had no idea. I dined in Old Parr Street once in this memorable period (memorable it seemed to me from immediately subsequent events). Never was the dinner better served: the wine more excellent: the guests and conversation more gravely respectable than at this entertainment: and my neighbour remarked with pleasure how the father and son seemed to be on much better terms than ordinary. The doctor addressed Philip pointedly once or twice; alluded to his foreign travels; spoke of his mother's family — it was most gratifying to see the pair together. Day after day passes so. The enemy has disappeared. At least, the lining of his dirty hat is no longer visible on the broad marble table of Dr. Firmin's hall.

But one day — it may be ten days after the quarrel — a little messenger comes to Philip, and says, "Philip dear, I am sure there is something wrong; that horrible Hunt has been here with a very quiet, soft-spoken old gentleman, and they have been going on with my poor Pa about my wrongs and his — his, indeed! — and they have worked him up to believe that somebody has cheated his daughter out of great fortune; and who can that somebody be but your father? And whenever they see me coming, papa and that horrid Hunt go off to the 'Admiral Byng;' and one night when Pa came home he said, 'Bless you, bless you, my poor, innocent, injured child; and blessed you will be, mark a fond father's words!' They are scheming something against Philip and Philip's father. Mr. Bond the soft-spoken old gentleman's name is: and twice there has been a Mr. Walls to inquire if Mr. Hunt was at our house."

"Mr. Bond? — Mr. Walls? — A gentleman of the name of Bond was uncle Twysden's attorney. An old gentleman, with a bald head, and one eye bigger than the other?"

"Well, this old man has one smaller than the other, I do think," says Caroline. "First man who came was Mr. Walls — a rattling young fashionable chap, always laughing, talking about theatres, operas, everything — came home from the 'Byng' along with Pa and his new friend — oh! I do hate him, that man, that Hunt! — then he brought the old man, this Mr. Bond. What are they scheming against you, Philip? I tell you this matter is all about you and your father."

Years and years ago, in the poor mother's lifetime, Philip remembered an outbreak of wrath on his father's part, who called uncle Twysden a swindling miser, and this very Mr. Bond a scoundrel who deserved to be hung, for interfering in some way in the management of a part of the property which Mrs. Twysden and her sister inherited from their own mother. That quarrel had been made up, as such quarrels are. The brothers-in-law had continued to mistrust each other; but there was no reason why the feud should descend to the children; and Philip and his aunt, and one of her daughters at least, were on good terms together. Philip's uncle's lawyers engaged with his father's debtor and enemy against Dr. Firmin: the alliance boded no good.

"I won't tell you what I think, Philip," said the father. "You are fond of your cousin?"

"Oh! for ev —"

"For ever, of course! At least until we change our mind, or one of us grows tired, or finds a better mate."

"Ah, sir!" cries Philip, but suddenly stops in his remonstrance.

"What were you going to say, Philip, and why do you pause?"

"I was going to say, father, if I might without offending, that I think you judge hardly of women. I know two who have been very faithful to you."

“And I traitor to both of them. Yes; and my remorse, Philip, my remorse!” says his father in his deepest tragedy voice, clutching his hand over a heart that I believe beat very coolly. But, psha! why am I, Philip’s biographer, going out of the way to abuse Philip’s papa? Is not the threat of bigamy and exposure enough to disturb any man’s equanimity? I say again, suppose there is another sword — a rope, if you will so call it — hanging over the head of our Damocles of Old Parr Street? . . . Howbeit, the father and the son met and parted in these days with unusual gentleness and cordiality. And these were the last days in which they were to meet together. Nor could kindness and cordiality.

Why were these the last days son and father were to pass together? Dr. Firmin is still alive. Philip is a very tolerably prosperous gentleman. He and his father parted good friends, and it is the biographer’s business to narrate how and wherefore. When Philip told his father that Messrs. Bond and Selby, his uncle Twysden’s attorneys, were suddenly interested about Mr. Brandon and his affairs, the father instantly guessed, though the son was too simple as yet to understand how it was that these gentlemen interfered. If Mr. Brandon-Firmin’s marriage with Miss Ringwood was null, her son was illegitimate, and her fortune went to her sister. Painful as such a duty might be to such tender-hearted people as our Twysden acquaintances to deprive a dear nephew of his fortune, yet, after all, duty is duty, and a parent must sacrifice everything for justice and his own children. “Had I been in such a case,” Talbot Twysden subsequently and repeatedly declared, “I should never have been easy a moment if I thought I possessed wrongfully a beloved nephew’s property. I could not have slept in peace; I could not have shown my face at my own club, or to my own conscience, had I the weight of such an injustice on my mind.” In a word, when he found that there was a chance of annexing Philip’s share of the property to his own, Twysden saw clearly that his duty was to stand by his own wife and children.

The information upon which Talbot Twysden, Esq., acted, was brought to him at his office by a gentleman in dingy black, who, after a long interview with him, accompanied him to his lawyer, Mr. Bond, before mentioned. Here, in South Square, Gray’s Inn, the three gentlemen held a consultation, of which the results began quickly to show themselves. Messrs. Bond and Selby had an exceedingly lively, cheerful, jovial, and intelligent confidential clerk, who combined business and pleasure with the utmost affability, and was acquainted with a thousand queer things, and queer histories about queer people in this town; who lent money; who wanted money; who was in debt; and who was outrunning the constable; whose diamonds were in pawn; whose estates were over-mortgaged; who was over-building himself; who was casting eyes of longing at what pretty opera dancer — about races, fights, bill brokers, quicquid agunt homines. This Tom Walls had a deal of information, and imparted it so as to make you die of laughing.

The Reverend Tufton Hunt brought this jolly fellow first to the “Admiral Byng,” where his amiability won all hearts at the club. At the “Byng” it was not very difficult to gain Captain Gann’s easy confidence. And this old man was, in the course of a very trifling consumption of rum-and-water, brought to see that his daughter had been the object of a wicked conspiracy, and was the rightful and most injured wife of a man who ought to declare her fair fame before the world and put her in possession of a portion of his great fortune.

A great fortune? How great a fortune? Was it three hundred thousand, say? Those doctors, many of them, had fifteen thousand a year. Mr. Walls (who perhaps knew better) was not at liberty to say what the fortune was: but it was a shame that Mrs. Brandon was kept out of her rights, that was clear.

Old Gann’s excitement, when this matter was first broached to him (under vows of profound secrecy), was so intense, that his old reason tottered on its rickety old throne. He well nigh burst with longing to speak upon this mystery. Mr. and Mrs. Oves, the esteemed landlord and lady of the “Byng,” never saw him so excited. He had a great opinion of the judgment of his friend, Mr. Ridley; in fact, he must have gone to Bedlam, unless he had talked to somebody on this most nefarious transaction, which might make the blood of every Briton curdle with horror — as he was free to say.

Old Mr. Ridley was of a much cooler temperament, and altogether a more cautious person. The doctor rich? He wished to tell no secrets, nor to meddle in no gentleman’s affairs: but he have heard very different statements regarding Dr. Firmin’s affairs.

When dark hints about treason, wicked desertion, rights denied, “and a great fortune which you are kept out of, my poor Caroline, by a rascally wolf in sheep’s clothing, you are; and I always mistrusted him, from the moment I saw him, and said to your mother, ‘Emily, that Brandon is a bad fellow, Brandon is;’ and bitterly, bitterly I’ve rued ever receiving him under my roof.” — when speeches of this nature were made to Mrs. Caroline, strange to say, the little lady made light of them. “Oh, nonsense, Pa! Don’t be bringing that sad old story up again. I have suffered enough from it already. If Mr. F. left me, he wasn’t the only one who flung me away; and I have been able to live, thank mercy, through it all.”

This was a hard hit, and not to be parried. The truth is, that when poor Caroline, deserted by her husband, had come back, in wretchedness, to her father's door, the man, and the wife who then ruled him, had thought fit to thrust her away. And she had forgiven them: and had been enabled to heap a rare quantity of coals on that old gentleman's head.

When the captain remarked his daughter's indifference and unwillingness to reopen this painful question of her sham marriage with Firmin, his wrath was moved and his suspicion excited. "Ha!" says he, "have this man been a tampering with you again?"

"Nonsense, Pa!" once more says Caroline. "I tell you, it is this fine-talking lawyer's clerk has been tampering with you. You're made a tool of, Pa! and you've been made a tool of all your life!"

"Well, now, upon my honour, my honour, my good madam!" interposes Mr. Walls.

"Don't talk to me, sir! I don't want any lawyers' clerks to meddle in my business!" cries Mrs. Brandon, very briskly. "I don't know what you're come about. I don't want to know, and I'm most certain it is for no good."

I suppose it was the ill success of his ambassador that brought Mr. Bond himself to Thornhaugh Street; and a more kind, fatherly little man never looked than Mr. Bond, although he may have had one eye smaller than the other. "What is this, my dear madam, I hear from my confidential clerk, Mr. Walls?" he asked of the Little Sister. "You refuse to give him your confidence because he is only a clerk? I wonder whether you will accord it to me, as a principal?"

"She may, sir, she may — every confidence!" says the captain, laying his hand on that snuffy satin waistcoat which all his friends so long admired on him. "She might have spoken to Mr. Walls."

"Mr. Walls is not a family man. I am. I have children at home, Mrs. Brandon, as old as you are," says the benevolent Bond. "I would have justice done them, and for you too."

"You're very good to take so much trouble about me all of a sudden, to be sure," says Mrs. Brandon demurely. "I suppose you don't do it for nothing."

"I should not require much fee to help a good woman to her rights; and a lady I don't think needs much persuasion to be helped to her advantage," remarks Mr. Bond.

"That depends who the helper is."

"Well, if I can do you no harm, and help you possibly to a name, to a fortune, to a high place in the world, I don't think you need be frightened. I don't look very wicked or very artful, do I?"

"Many is that don't look so. I've learned as much as that about you gentlemen," remarks Mrs. Brandon.

"You have been wronged by one man, and doubt all."

"Not all. Some, sir!"

"Doubt about me if I can by any possibility injure you. But how and why should I? Your good father knows what has brought me here. I have no secret from him. Have I, Mr. Gann, or Captain Gann, as I have heard you addressed?"

"Mr., sir, — plain Mr. — No, sir; your conduct have been most open, honourable, and like a gentleman. Neither would you, sir, do ought to disparage Mrs. Brandon; neither would I, her father. No ways, I think, would a parent do harm to his own child. May I offer you any refreshment, sir?" and a shaky, a dingy, but a hospitable hand, is laid upon the glossy cupboard, in which Mrs. Brandon keeps her modest little store of strong waters.

"Not one drop, thank you! You trust me, I think, more than Mrs. Firm — I beg your pardon — Mrs. Brandon, is disposed to do."

At the utterance of that monosyllable Firm, Caroline became so white, and trembled so, that her interlocutor stopped, rather alarmed at the effect of his word — his word! — his syllable of a word.

The old lawyer recovered himself with much grace.

"Pardon me, madam," he said; "I know your wrongs; I know your most melancholy history; I know your name, and was going to use it, but it seemed to renew painful recollections to you, which I would not needlessly recal."

Captain Gann took out a snuffy pocket-handkerchief, wiped two red eyes and a shirt-front, and winked at the attorney, and gasped in a pathetic manner.

"You know my story and name, sir, who are a stranger to me. Have you told this old gentleman all about me and my affairs, Pa?" asks Caroline, with some asperity. "Have you told him that my Ma never gave me a word of kindness — that I toiled for you and her like a servant — and when I came back to you, after being deceived and deserted, that you and Ma

shut the door in my face? You did! you did! I forgive you; but a hundred thousand billion years can't mend that injury, father, while you broke a poor child's heart with it that day! My Pa has told you all this, Mr. What's-your-name? I'm s'prized he didn't find something pleasanter to talk about, I'm sure!"

"My love!" interposed the captain.

"Pretty love! to go and tell a stranger in a public-house, and ever so many there beside, I suppose, your daughter's misfortunes, Pa. Pretty love! That's what I've had from you!"

"Not a soul, on the honour of a gentleman, except me and Mr. Walls."

"Then what do you come to talk about me at all for? and what scheme on hearth are you driving at? and what brings this old man here?" cries the landlady of Thornhaugh Street, stamping her foot.

"Shall I tell you frankly, my good lady? I called you Mrs. Firmin now because, on my honour and word, I believe such to be your rightful name — because you are the lawful wife of George Brand Firmin. If such be your lawful name, others bear it who have no right to bear it — and inherit property to which they can lay no just claim. In the year 1827, you, Caroline Gann, a child of sixteen, were married by a clergyman whom you know, to George Brand Firmin, calling himself George Brandon. He was guilty of deceiving you; but you were guilty of no deceit. He was a hardened and wily man; but you were an innocent child out of a school-room. And though he thought the marriage was not binding upon him, binding it is by Act of Parliament and judges' decision; and you are as assuredly George Firmin's wife, madam, as Mrs. Bond is mine!"

"You have been cruelly injured, Caroline," says the captain, wagging his old nose over his handkerchief.

Caroline seemed to be very well versed in the law of the transaction. "You mean, sir," she said slowly, "that if me and Mr. Brandon was married to each other, he knowoing that he was only playing at marriage, and me believing that it was all for good, we are really married."

"Undoubtedly you are, madam — my client has — that is, I have had advice on the point."

"But if we both knew that it was — was only a sort of a marriage — an irregular marriage, you know?"

"Then the Act says that to all intents and purposes the marriage is null and void."

"But you didn't know, my poor innocent child!" cries Mr. Gann. "How should you? How old was you? She was a child in the nursery, Mr. Bond, when the villain inveigled her away from her poor old father. She knew nothing of irregular marriages."

"Of course she didn't the poor creature," cries the old gentleman, rubbing his hands together with perfect good-humour. "Poor young thing, poor young thing!"

As he was speaking, Caroline, very pale and still, sate looking at Ridley's sketch of Philip, which hung in her little room. Presently she turned round on the attorney, folding her little hands over her work.

"Mr. Bond," she said, "girls, though they may be ever so young, know more than some folks fancy. I was more than sixteen when that — that business happened. I wasn't happy at home, and was eager to get away. I knew that a gentleman of rank wouldn't be likely really to marry a poor Cinderella out of a lodging-house, like me. If the truth must be told, I — I knew it was no marriage — never thought it was a marriage — not for good, you know."

And she folds her little hands together as she utters the words, and I daresay once more looks at Philip's portrait.

"Gracious goodness, madam, you must be under some error!" cries the attorney. "How should a child like you know that the marriage was irregular?"

"Because I had no lines!" cries Caroline quickly. "Never asked for none! And our maid we had then said to me, 'Miss Carry, where's your lines? And it's no good without.' And I knew it wasn't! And I'm ready to go before the Lord Chancellor to-morrow and say so!" cries Caroline, to the bewilderment of her father and her cross-examinant.

"Pause, pause! my good madam!" exclaims the meek old gentleman, rising from his chair.

"Go and tell this to them as sent you, sir!" cries Caroline, very imperiously, leaving the lawyer amazed, and her father's face in a bewilderment, over which we will fling his snuffy old pocket-handkerchief.

"If such is unfortunately the case — if you actually mean to abide by this astonishing confession — which deprives you of a high place in society — and — and casts down the hope we had formed of redressing your injured reputation — I have nothing for it! I take my leave, madam! Good morning, Mr. Hum! — Mr. Gann!" And the old lawyer walks out of the Little

Sister's room.

"She won't own to the marriage! She is fond of some one else — the little suicide!" thinks the old lawyer, as he clatters down the street to a neighbouring house, where his anxious principal is waiting. "She's fond of some one else!"

Yes. But the some one else whom Caroline loved was Brand Firmin's son: and it was to save Philip from ruin that the poor Little Sister chose to forget her marriage to his father.



CHAPTER 13

LOVE ME LOVE MY DOG.

Whilst the battle is raging, the old folks and ladies peep over the battlements, to watch the turns of the combat and the behaviour of the knights. To princesses in old days, whose lovely hands were to be bestowed upon the conqueror, it must have been a matter of no small interest to know whether the slim young champion with the lovely eyes on the milk-white steed should vanquish, or the dumpy, elderly, square-shouldered, squinting, carrotty whiskerando of a warrior who was laying about him so savagely; and so in this battle, on the issue of which depended the keeping or losing of poor Philip's inheritance, there were several non-combatants deeply interested. Or suppose we withdraw the chivalrous simile (as, in fact, the conduct and views of certain parties engaged in the matter were anything but what we call chivalrous), and imagine a wily old monkey who engages a cat to take certain chestnuts out of the fire, and pussy putting her paw through the bars, seizing the nut and then dropping it? Jacko is disappointed and angry, shows his sharp teeth, and bites if he dares. When the attorney went down to do battle for Philip's patrimony, some of those who wanted it were spectators of the fight, and lurking up a tree hard by. When Mr. Bond came forward to try and seize Phil's chestnuts, there was a wily old monkey who thrust the cat's paw out, and proposed to gobble up the smoking prize.

If you have ever been at the "Admiral Byng," you know, my dear madam, that the parlour where the club meets is just behind Mrs. Oves's bar; so that by lifting up the sash of the window which communicates between the two apartments, that good-natured woman may put her face into the club-room, and actually be one of the society. Sometimes, for company, old Mr. Ridley goes and sits with Mrs. O— in her bar, and reads the paper there. He is slow at his reading. The long words puzzle the worthy gentleman. As he has plenty of time to spare, he does not grudge it to the study of his paper.

On the day when Mr. Bond went to persuade Mrs. Brandon in Thornhaugh Street to claim Dr. Firmin for her husband, and to disinherit poor Philip, a little gentleman wrapt most solemnly and mysteriously in a great cloak appeared at the bar of the "Admiral Byng," and said in an aristocratic manner, "You have a parlour; show me to it:" and being introduced to the parlour (where there are fine pictures of Oves, and Mrs. O — and Spotty-nose, their favourite defunct bull-dog), sat down and called for a glass of sherry and a newspaper.

The civil and intelligent potboy of the "Byng" took the party The Advertiser of yesterday (which to-day's paper was in 'and); and when the gentleman began to swear over the old paper, Frederick gave it as his opinion to his mistress that the new comer was a harbitrary gent — as, indeed, he was, with the omission, perhaps, of a single letter; a man who bullied everybody who would submit to be bullied. In fact, it was our friend Talbot Twysden, Esq., Commissioner of the Powder and Pomatum Office; and I leave those who know him to say whether he is arbitrary or not.

To him presently came that bland old gentleman, Mr. Bond, who also asked for a parlour and some sherry and water; and this is how Philip and his veracious and astute biographer came to know for a certainty that dear uncle Talbot was the person who wished to — to have Philip's chestnuts.

Mr. Bond and Mr. Twysden had been scarcely a minute together, when such a storm of imprecations came clattering through the glass-window which communicates with Mrs. Oves's bar, that I daresay they made the jugs and tumblers clatter on the shelves, and Mr. Ridley, a very modest-spoken man, reading his paper, lay it down with a scared face, and say, "Well, I never." Nor did he often, I dare to say.

This volley was fired by Talbot Twysden, in consequence of his rage at the news which Mr. Bond brought him.

"Well, Mr. Bond; well, Mr. Bond! What does she say?" he asked of his emissary.

"She will have nothing to do with the business, Mr. Twysden. We can't touch it; and I don't see how we can move her. She denies the marriage as much as Firmin does: says she knew it was a mere sham when the ceremony was performed."

"Sir you didn't bribe her enough," shrieked Mr. Twysden. "You have bungled this business; by George, you have, sir."

"Go and do it yourself, sir, if you are not ashamed to appear in it," says the lawyer. "You don't suppose I did it because I liked it; or want to take that poor young fellow's inheritance from him, as you do?"

"I wish justice and the law, sir. If I were wrongfully detaining his property I would give it up. I would be the first to give it up. I desire justice and law, and employ you because you are a law agent. Are you not?"

"And I have been on your errand, and shall send in my bill in due time; and there will be an end of my connection with you as your law agent, Mr. Twysden," cried the old lawyer.

"You know, sir, how badly Firmin acted to me in the last matter."

"Faith, sir, if you ask my opinion as a law agent, I don't think there was much to choose between you. How much is the sherry and water? — keep the change. Sorry I'd no better news to bring you, Mr. T., and as you are dissatisfied, again recommend you to employ another law agent."

"My good sir, I—"

"My good sir, I have had other dealings with your family, and am no more going to put up with your high-tightness than I would with Lord Ringwood's, when I was one of his law agents. I am not going to tell Mr. Philip Firmin that his uncle and aunt propose to ease him of his property; but if anybody else does — that good little Mrs. Brandon — or that old goose Mr. Whatdyoucallem, her father — I don't suppose he will be over well pleased. I am speaking as a gentleman now, not as a law agent. You and your nephew had each a half share of Mr. Philip Firmin's grand-father's property, and you wanted it all, that's the truth, and set a law agent to get it for you; and swore at him because he could not get it from its right owner. And so, sir, I wish you a good morning, and recommend you to take your papers to some other agent, Mr. Twysden." And with this, exit Mr. Bond. And now, I ask you, if that secret could be kept which was known through a trembling glass-door to Mrs. Oves of the "Admiral Byng," and to Mr. Ridley, the father of J. J., and the obsequious husband of Mrs. Ridley.? On that very afternoon, at tea-time, Mrs. Ridley was made acquainted by her husband (in his noble and circumlocutory manner) with the conversation which he had overheard. It was agreed that an embassy should be sent to J. J. on the business, and his advice taken regarding it; and J. J.'s opinion was that the conversation certainly should be reported to Mr. Philip Firmin, who might afterwards act upon it as he should think best.

What? His own aunt, cousins, and uncle agreed in a scheme to overthrow his legitimacy, and deprive him of his grandfather's inheritance? It seemed impossible. Big with the tremendous news, Philip came to his adviser, Mr. Pendennis, of the Temple, and told him what had occurred on the part of father, uncle, and Little Sister. Her abnegation had been so noble, that you may be sure Philip appreciated it; and a tie of friendship was formed between the young man and the little lady even more close and tender than that which had bound them previously. But the Twysdens, his kinsfolk, to employ a lawyer in order to rob him of his inheritance! — Oh, it was dastardly! Philip bawled and stamped, and thumped his sense of the wrong in his usual energetic manner. As for his cousin Ringwood Twysden, Phil had often entertained a strong desire to wring his neck and pitch him downstairs. As for uncle Talbot: that he is an old pump, that he is a pompous old humbug, and the queerest old sycophant, I grant you; but I couldn't have believed him guilty of this. And as for the girls — oh, Mrs. Pendennis, you who are good, you who are kind, although you hate them, I know you do — you can't say, you won't say, that they were in the conspiracy?

"But suppose Twysden was asking only for what he conceives to be his rights?" asked Mr. Pendennis. "Had your father been married to Mrs. Brandon, you would not have been Dr. Firmin's legitimate son. Had you not been his legitimate son, you had no right to a half-share of your grandfather's property. Uncle Talbot acts only the part of honour and justice in the transaction. He is Brutus, and he orders you off to death, with a bleeding heart."

"And he orders his family out of the way," roars Phil, "so that they mayn't be pained by seeing the execution! I see it all now. I wish somebody would send a knife through me at once, and put an end to me. I see it all now. Do you know that for the last week I have been to Beaunash Street, and found nobody? Agnes had the bronchitis, and her mother was attending to her; Blanche came for a minute or two, and was as cool — as cool as I have seen Lady Iceberg be cool to her. Then they must go away for change of air. They have been gone these three days: whilst uncle Talbot and that viper of a Ringwood have been closeted with that nice new friend, Mr. Hunt. O conf —! I beg your pardon, ma'am; but I know you always allow for the energy of my language."

"I should like to see that Little Sister, Mr. Firmin. She has not been selfish, or had any scheme but for your good," remarks my wife.

"A little angel who drops her h's — a little heart, so good and tender that I melt as I think of it," says Philip, drawing his big hand over his eyes. "What have men done to get the love of some women? We don't earn it; we don't deserve it, perhaps. We don't return it. They bestow it on us. I have given nothing back for all this love and kindness, but I look a little like my father of old days, for whom — for whom she had an attachment. And see now how she would die to serve me! You

are wonderful, women are! your fidelities and your ficklenesses alike marvellous. What can any woman have found to adore in the doctor? Do you think my father could ever have been adorable, Mrs. Pendennis? And yet I have heard my poor mother say she was obliged to marry him. She knew it was a bad match, but she couldn't resist it. In what was my father so irresistible? He is not to my taste. Between ourselves, I think he is a — well, never mind what."

"I think we had best not mind what," says my wife, with a smile.

"Quite right — quite right; only I blurt out everything that is on my mind. Can't keep it in," cries Phil, gnawing his mustachios. "If my fortune depended on my silence I should be a beggar, that's the fact. And, you see, if you had such a father as mine, you yourself would find it rather difficult to hold your tongue about him. But now, tell me: this ordering away of the girls and aunt Twysden, whilst the little attack upon my property is being carried on — isn't it queer?"

"The question is at an end," said Mr. Pendennis. "You are restored to your *atavis regibus* and ancestral honours. Now that uncle Twysden can't get the property without you, have courage, my boy — he may take it, along with the encumbrance."

Poor Phil had not known — but some of us, who are pretty clear-sighted when our noble selves are not concerned, had perceived that Philip's dear aunt was playing fast and loose with the lad, and when his back was turned was encouraging a richer suitor for her daughter.

Hand on heart I can say of my wife, that she meddles with her neighbours as little as any person I ever knew; but when treacheries in love affairs are in question, she fires up at once, and would persecute to death almost the heartless male or female criminal who would break love's sacred laws. The idea of a man or woman trifling with that holy compact awakens in her a flame of indignation. In certain confidences (of which let me not vulgarize the arcana), she had given me her mind about some of Miss Twysden's behaviour with that odious blackamoor, as she chose to call Captain Woolcomb, who, I own, had a very slight tinge of complexion; and when, quoting the words of Hamlet regarding his father and, mother, I asked, "Could she on this fair mountain leave to feed, and batten on this Moor?" Mrs. Pendennis cried out that this matter was all too serious for jest, and wondered how her husband could make word-plays about it. Perhaps she has not the exquisite sense of humour possessed by some folks; or is it that she has more reverence? In her creed, if not in her church, marriage is a sacrament; and the fond believer never speaks of it without awe.

Now, as she expects both parties to the marriage engagement to keep that compact holy, she no more understands trifling with it than she could comprehend laughing and joking in a church. She has no patience with flirtations as they are called. "Don't tell me, sir," says the enthusiast, "a light word between a man and a married woman ought not to be permitted." And this is why she is harder on the woman than the man, in cases where such dismal matters happen to fall under discussion. A look, a word from a woman, she says, will check a libertine thought or word in a man; and these cases might be stopped at once if the woman but showed the slightest resolution. She is thus more angry (I am only mentioning the peculiarities, not defending the ethics of this individual moralist) — she is, I say, more angrily disposed towards the woman than the man in such delicate cases; and, I am afraid, considers that women are for the most part only victims because they choose to be so.

Now, we had happened during this season to be at several entertainments, routs, and so forth, where poor Phil, owing to his unhappy Bohemian preferences and love of tobacco, was not present — and where we saw Miss Agnes Twysden carrying on such a game with the tawny Woolcomb, as set Mrs. Laura in a tremor of indignation. What though Agnes's blue-eyed mamma sat near her blue-eyed daughter and kept her keen clear orbs perfectly wide open and cognizant of all that happened? So much the worse for her, the worse for both. It was a shame and a sin that a Christian English mother should suffer her daughter to deal lightly with the most holy, the most awful of human contracts; should be preparing her child who knows for what after misery of mind and soul. Three months ago, you saw how she encouraged poor Philip, and now see her with this mulatto!

"Is he not a man and a brother, my dear?" perhaps at this Mr. Pendennis interposes.

"Oh, for shame, Pen, no levity on this — no sneers and laughter on this the most sacred subject of all." And here, I daresay, the woman falls to caressing her own children and hugging them to her heart as her manner was when moved. *Que voulez-vous?* There are some women in the world to whom love and truth are all in all here below. Other ladies there are who see the benefit of a good jointure, a town and country house, and so forth, and who are not so very particular as to the character, intellect, or complexion of gentlemen who are in a position to offer their dear girls these benefits. In fine, I

say that regarding this blue-eyed mother and daughter, Mrs. Laura Pendennis was in such a state of mind, that she was ready to tear their blue eyes out.

Nay, it was with no little difficulty that Mrs. Laura could be induced to hold her tongue upon the matter and not give Philip her opinion. "What?" she would ask, "the poor young man is to be deceived and cajoled; to be taken or left as it suits these people; to be made miserable for life certainly if she marries him; and his friends are not to dare to warn him? The cowards! The cowardice of you men, Pen, upon matters of opinion, of you masters and lords of creation, is really despicable, sir! You dare not have opinions, or holding them you dare not declare them, and act by them. You compromise with crime every day because you think it would be officious to declare yourself and interfere. You are not afraid of outraging morals, but of inflicting ennui upon society, and losing your popularity. You are as cynical as — as, what was the name of the horrid old man who lived in the tub — Demosthenes? — well, Diogenes, then, and the name does not matter a pin, sir. You are as cynical, only you wear fine ruffled shirts and wristbands, and you carry your lantern dark. It is not right to 'put your oar in,' as you say in your jargon (and even your slang is a sort of cowardice, sir, for you are afraid to speak the feelings of your heart:—) it is not right to meddle and speak the truth, not right to rescue a poor soul who is drowning — of course not. What call have you fine gentlemen of the world to put your oar in? Let him perish! What did he in that galley? That is the language of the world, baby darling. And, my poor, poor child, when you are sinking, nobody is to stretch out a hand to save you!" As for that wife of mine, when she sets forth the maternal plea, and appeals to the exuberant school of philosophers, I know there is no reasoning with her. I retire to my books, and leave her to kiss out the rest of the argument over the children.

Philip did not know the extent of the obligation which he owed to his little friend and guardian, Caroline; but he was aware that he had no better friend than herself in the world; and, I daresay, returned to her, as the wont is in such bargains between man and woman — woman and man, at least — a sixpence for that pure gold treasure, her sovereign affection. I suppose Caroline thought her sacrifice gave her a little authority to counsel Philip; for she it was who, I believe, first bid him to inquire whether that engagement which he had virtually contracted with his cousin was likely to lead to good, and was to be binding upon him but not on her? She brought Ridley to add his doubts to her remonstrances. She showed Philip that not only his uncle's conduct, but his cousin's, was interested, and set him to inquire into it further.

That peculiar form of bronchitis under which poor dear Agnes was suffering was relieved by absence from London. The smoke, the crowded parties and assemblies, the late hours, and, perhaps, the gloom of the house in Beaunash Street, distressed the poor dear child; and her cough was very much soothed by that fine, cutting east wind, which blows so liberally along the Brighton cliffs, and which is so good for coughs, as we all know. But there was one fault in Brighton which could not be helped in her bad case; it is too near London. The air, that chartered libertine, can blow down from London quite easily; or people can come from London to Brighton, bringing, I dare say, the insidious London fog along with them. At any rate, Agnes, if she wished for quiet, poor thing, might have gone farther and fared better. Why, if you owe a tailor a bill, he can run down and present it in a few hours. Vulgar, inconvenient acquaintances thrust themselves upon you at every moment and corner. Was ever such a tohubohu of people as there assembles? You can't be tranquil, if you will. Organs pipe and scream without cease at your windows. Your name is put down in the papers when you arrive; and everybody meets everybody ever so many times a day.

On finding that his uncle had set lawyers to work, with the charitable purpose of ascertaining whether Philip's property was legitimately his own, Philip was a good deal disturbed in mind. He could not appreciate that high sense of moral obligation by which Mr. Twysden was actuated. At least, he thought that these inquiries should not have been secretly set a-foot; and as he himself was perfectly open — a great deal too open, perhaps — in his words and his actions, he was hard with those who attempted to hoodwink or deceive him.

It could not be; ah! no, it never could be, that Agnes the pure and gentle was privy to this conspiracy. But then, how very — very often of late she had been from home; how very, very cold aunt Twysden's shoulder had somehow become. Once, when he reached the door, a fishmonger's boy was leaving a fine salmon at the kitchen, — a salmon and a tub of ice. Once, twice, at five o'clock, when he called, a smell of cooking pervaded the hall, — that hall which culinary odours very seldom visited. Some of those noble Twysden dinners were on the tapis, and Philip was not asked. Not to be asked. was no great deprivation; but who were the guests? To be sure, these were trifles light as air; but Philip smelt mischief in the steam of those Twysden dinners. He chewed that salmon with a bitter sauce as he saw it sink down the area steps and disappear (with its attendant lobster) in the dark kitchen regions.

Yes; eyes were somehow averted that used to look into his very frankly; a glove somehow had grown over a little hand which once used to lie very comfortably in his broad palm. Was anybody else going to seize it, and was it going to paddle in that blackamoor's unblest fingers? Ah! fiends and tortures! a gentleman may cease to love, but does he like a woman to cease to love him? People carry on ever so long for fear of that declaration that all is over. No confession is more dismal to make. The sun of love has set. We sit in the dark — I mena you, dear madam, and Corydon, or I and Amaryllis — uncomfortably, with nothing more to say to one another; with the night dew falling, and a risk of catching cold, drearily contemplating the fading west, with "the cold remains of lustre gone, of fire long past away." Sink, fire of love! Rise, gentle moon, and mists of chilly evening. And, my good Madam Amaryllis, let us go home to some tea and a fire.

So Philip determined to go and seek his cousin. Arrived at his hotel (and if it were the — I can't conceive Philip in much better quarters), he had the opportunity of inspecting those delightful newspaper arrivals, a perusal of which has so often edified us at Brighton. Mr. and Mrs. Penfold, he was informed, continued their residence, No. 96, Horizontal Place; and it was with those guardians he knew his Agnes was staying. He speeds to Horizontal Place. Miss Twysden is out. He heaves a sigh, and leaves a card. Has it ever happened to you to leave a card at that house — that house which was once THE house — almost your own; where you were ever welcome; where the kindest hand was ready to grasp yours, the brightest eye to greet you? And now your friendship has dwindled away to a little bit of pasteboard, shed once a year, and poor dear Mrs. Jones (it is with J. you have quarrelled) still calls on the ladies of your family and slips her husband's ticket upon the hall table. O life and time, that it should have come to this! O gracious powers! Do you recal the time when Arabella Briggs was Arabella Thompson? You call and talk fadaises to her (at first she is rather nervous, and has the children in); you talk rain and fine weather; the last novel; the next party. Thompson in the City? Yes, Mr. Thompson is in the City. He's pretty well, thank you. Ah! Daggers, ropes, and poisons, has it come to this? You are talking about the weather, and another man's health, and another man's children, of which she is mother, to her? Time was the weather, was all a burning sunshine, in which you and she basked; or if clouds gathered, and a storm fell, such a glorious rainbow haloed round you, such delicious tears fell and refreshed you, that the storm was more ravishing than the calm. And now another man's children are sitting on her knee — their mother's knee; and once a year Mr. and Mrs. John Thompson request the honour of Mr. Brown's company at dinner; and once a year you read in The Times, "In Nursery Street, the wife of J. Thompson, Esq., of a Son." To come to the once-beloved one's door, and find the knocker tied up with a white kid glove, is humiliating — say what you will, it is humiliating.

Philip leaves his card, and walks on to the Cliff, and of course, in three minutes, meets Clinker. Indeed, who ever went to Brighton for half an hour without meeting Clinker?

"Father pretty well? His old patient, Lady Geminy, is down here with the children; what a number of them there are, to be sure! Come to make any stay? See your cousin, Miss Twysden, is here with the Penfolds. Little party at the Grigsons' last night; she looked uncommonly well; danced ever so many times with the Black Prince, Woolcomb of the Greens. Suppose I may congratulate you. Six thousand five hundred a year now, and thirteen thousand when his grandmother dies; but those negresses live for ever. I suppose the thing is settled. I saw them on the pier just now, and Mrs. Penfold was reading a book in the arbour. Book of sermons it was — pious woman, Mrs. Penfold. I dare say they are on the pier still." Striding with hurried steps Philip Firmin makes for the pier. The breathless Clinker cannot keep alongside of his face. I should like to have seen it when Clinker said that "the thing" was settled between Miss Twysden and the cavalry gentleman.

There were a few nursery governesses, maids, and children, paddling about at the end of the pier; and there was a fat woman reading a book in one of the arbours — but no Agnes, no Woolcomb. Where can they be? Can they be weighing each other? or buying those mad pebbles, which people are known to purchase? or having their silhouettes done in black? Ha! ha! Woolcomb would hardly have his face done in black. The idea would provoke odious comparisons. I see Philip is in a dreadfully bad sarcastic humour.

Up there comes from one of those trap-doors which lead down from the pier-head to the green sea-waves ever restlessly jumping below — up there comes a little Skye-terrier dog with a red collar, who, as soon as she sees Philip, sings, squeaks, whines, runs, jumps, flumps up on him, if I may use the expression, kisses his hands, and with eyes, tongue, paws, and tail shows him a thousand marks of welcome and affection. What, Brownie, Brownie! Philip is glad to see the dog, an old friend who has many a time licked his hand and bounced upon his knee.

The greeting over, Brownie, wagging her tail with prodigious activity, trots before Philip — trots down an opening, down the steps under which the waves shimmer greenly, and into quite a quiet remote corner just over the water, whence

you may command a most beautiful view of the sea, the shore, the Marine Parade, and the Albion Hotel, and where, were I five-and-twenty say, with nothing else to do, I would gladly pass a quarter of an hour talking about Glaucus or the Wonders of the Deep with the object of my affections.

Here, amongst the labyrinth of piles, Brownie goes flouncing along till she comes to a young couple who are looking at the view just described. In order to view it better, the young man has laid his hand, a pretty little hand most delicately gloved, on the lady's hand; and Brownie comes up and nuzzles against her, and whines and talks, as much as to say, "Here's somebody," and the lady says, "Down, Brownie, miss."

"It's no good, Agnes, that dog," says the gentleman (he has very curly, not to say woolly hair, under his natty little hat). "I'll give you a pug with a nose you can hang your hat on. I do know of one now. My man Rummins knows of one. Do you like pugs?"

"I adore them," says the lady.

"I'll give you one, if I have to pay fifty pounds for it. And they fetch a good figure, the real pugs do, I can tell you. Once in London there was an exhibition of 'em, and — "

"Brownie, Brownie, down!" cries Agnes. The dog was jumping at a gentleman, a tall gentleman with red mustachios and beard, who advances through the chequered shade, under the ponderous beams, over the translucent sea.

"Pray don't mind, Brownie won't hurt me," says a perfectly well-known voice, the sound of which sends all the colours shuddering out of Miss Agnes' pink cheeks.

"You see I gave my cousin this dog, Captain Woolcomb," says the gentleman; "and the little slut remembers me. Perhaps Miss Twysden likes the pug better."

"Sir!"

"If it has a nose you can hang your hat on, it must be a very pretty dog, and I suppose you intend to hang your hat on it a good deal."

"Oh, Philip!" says the lady; but an attack of that dreadful coughing stops further utterance.



CHAPTER 14

CONTAINS TWO OF PHILIP'S MISHAPS.

You know that, in some parts of India, infanticide is the common custom. It is part of the religion of the land, as, in other districts, widow-burning used to be. I can't imagine that ladies like to destroy either themselves or their children, though they submit with bravery, and even cheerfulness, to the decrees of that religion which orders them to make away with their own or their young ones' lives. Now, suppose you and I, as Europeans, happened to drive up where a young creature was just about to roast herself, under the advice of her family and the highest dignitaries of her church; what could we do? Rescue her? No such thing. We know better than to interfere with her, and the laws and usages of her country. We turn away with a sigh from the mournful scene; we pull out our pocket-handkerchiefs, tell coachman to drive on, and leave her to her sad fate.

Now about poor Agnes Twysden: how, in the name of goodness, can we help her? You see she is a well brought up and religious young woman of the Brahminical sect. If she is to be sacrificed, that old Brahmin her father, that good and devout mother, that most special Brahmin her brother, and that admirable girl her strait-laced sister, all insist upon her undergoing the ceremony, and deck her with flowers ere they lead her to that dismal altar flame. Suppose, I say, she has made up her mind to throw over poor Philip, and take on with some one else? What sentiment ought our virtuous bosoms to entertain towards her? Anger? I have just been holding a conversation with a young fellow in rags and without shoes, whose bed is commonly a dry arch, who has been repeatedly in prison, whose father and mother were thieves, and whose grandfathers were thieves; — are we to be angry with him for following the paternal profession? With one eye brimming with pity, the other steadily keeping watch over the family spoons, I listen to his artless tale. I have no anger against that child; nor towards thee, Agnes, daughter of Talbot the Brahmin.

For though duty is duty, when it comes to the pinch, it is often hard to do. Though dear papa and mamma say that here is a gentleman with ever so many thousands a year, an undoubted part in So-and-So-shire, and whole islands in the western main, who is wildly in love with your fair skin and blue eyes, and is ready to fling all his treasures at your feet; yet, after all, when you consider that he is very ignorant though very cunning; very stingy though very rich; very ill-tempered, probably, if faces and eyes and mouths can tell truth: and as for Philip Firmin — though actually his legitimacy is dubious, as we have lately heard, in which case his maternal fortune is ours — and as for his paternal inheritance, we don't know whether the doctor is worth thirty thousand pounds or a shilling; — yet, after all — as for Philip — he is a man; he is a gentleman; he has brains in his head, and a great honest heart of which he has offered to give the best feelings to his cousin; — I say, when a poor girl has to be off with that old love, that honest and fair love, and be on with the new one, the dark one, I feel for her; and though the Brahmins are, as we know, the most genteel sect in Hindostan, I rather wish the poor child could have belonged to some lower and less rigid sect. Poor Agnes! to think that he has sat for hours, with mamma and Blanche or the governess, of course, in the room (for, you know, when she and Philip were quite wee wee things dear mamma had little amiable plans in view); has sat for hours by Miss Twysden's side pouring out his heart to her; has had, mayhap, little precious moments of confidential talk — little hasty whispers in corridors, on stairs, behind window curtains, and — and so forth in fact. She must remember all this past; and can't, without some pang, listen on the same sofa, behind the same window-curtains, to her dark suitor pouring out his artless tales of barracks, boxing, horseflesh, and the tender passion. He is dull, he is mean, he is ill-tempered, he is ignorant, and the other was . . .; but she will do her duty: oh, yes! she will do her duty! Poor Agnes! C'est à fendre le coeur. I declare I quite feel for her.

When Philip's temper was roused, I have been compelled, as his biographer, to own how very rude and disagreeable he could be; and you must acknowledge that a young man has some reason to be displeased, when he finds the girl of his heart hand in hand with another young gentleman in an occult and shady recess of the woodwork of Brighton Pier. The green waves are softly murmuring: so is the officer of the Life Guards Green. The waves are kissing the beach. Ah, agonizing thought! I will not pursue the simile, which may be but a jealous man's mad fantasy. Of this I am sure, no pebble on that beach is cooler than polished Agnes. But, then, Philip drunk with jealousy is not a reasonable being like Philip sober. "He had a dreadful temper," Philip's dear aunt said of him afterwards, — "I trembled for my dear, gentle child, united for ever to a man of that violence. Never, in my secret mind, could I think that their union could be a happy one.

Besides, you know, the nearness of their relationship. My scruples on that score, dear Mrs. Candour, never, never could be quite got over." And these scruples came to weigh whole tons, when Mangrove Hall, the house in Berkeley Square, and Mr. Woolcomb's West India island were put into the scale along with them.

Of course there was no good in remaining amongst those damp, reeking timbers, now that the pretty little tête-à-tête was over. Little Brownie hung fondling and whining round Philip's ankles, as the party ascended to the upper air. "My child, how pale you look!" cries Mrs. Penfold, putting down her volume. Out of the captain's opal eyeballs shot lurid flames, and hot blood burned behind his yellow cheeks. In a quarrel, Mr. Philip Firmin could be particularly cool and self-possessed. When Miss Agnes rather piteously introduced him to Mrs. Penfold, he made a bow as polite and gracious as any performed by his royal father. "My little dog knew me," he said, caressing the animal. "She is a faithful little thing, and she led me down to my cousin; and — Captain Woolcomb, I think, is your name, sir?"

As Philip curls his moustache and smiles blandly, Captain Woolcomb pulls his and scowls fiercely. "Yes, sir," he mutters, "my name is Woolcomb." Another bow and a touch of the hat from Mr. Firmin. A touch? — a gracious wave of the hat; acknowledged by no means so gracefully by Captain Woolcomb.

To these remarks, Mrs. Penfold says, "Oh!" In fact, "Oh!" is about the best thing that could be said under the circumstances.

"My cousin, Miss Twysden, looks so pale because she was out very late dancing last night. I hear it was a very pretty ball. But ought she to keep such late hours, Mrs. Penfold, with her delicate health? Indeed, you ought not, Agnes! Ought she to keep late hours, Brownie? There — don't, you little foolish thing! I gave my cousin the dog: and she's very fond of me — the dog is — still. You were saying, Captain Woolcomb, when I came up, that you would give Miss Twysden a dog on whose nose you could hang your — I beg pardon?"

Mr. Woolcomb, as Philip made this second allusion to the peculiar nasal formation of the pug, ground his little white teeth together, and let slip a most improper monosyllable. More acute bronchial suffering was manifested on the part of Miss Twysden. Mrs. Penfold said, "The day is clouding over. I think, Agnes, I will have my chair, and go home."

"May I be allowed to walk with you as far as your house?" says Philip, twiddling a little locket which he wore at his watch-chain. It was a little gold locket, with a little pale hair inside. Whose hair could it have been that was so pale and fine? As for the pretty hieroglyphical A. T. at the back, those letters might indicate Alfred Tennyson, or Anthony Trollope, who might have given a lock of their golden hair to Philip, for I know he is an admirer of their works.

Agnes looked guiltily at the little locket. Captain Woolcomb pulled his moustache so, that you would have thought he would have pulled it off; and his opal eyes glared with fearful confusion and wrath.

"Will you please to fall back and let me speak to you, Agnes? Pardon me, Captain Woolcomb, I have a private message for my cousin; and I came from London expressly to deliver it."

"If Miss Twysden desires me to withdraw, I fall back in one moment," says the captain, clenching the little lemon-coloured gloves.

"My cousin and I have lived together all our lives, and I bring her a family message. Have you any particular claim to hear it, Captain Woolcomb?"

"Not if Miss Twysden don't want me hear it. . . . D— the little brute."

"Don't kick poor little harmless Brownie! He shan't kick you, shall he, Brownie?"

"If the brute comes between my shins, I'll kick her!" shrieks the captain. "Hang her, I'll throw her into the sea!"

"Whatever you do to my dog, I swear I will do to you!" whispers Philip to the captain.

"Where are you staying?" shrieks the captain. "Hang you, you shall hear from me."

"Quiet — Bedford Hotel. Easy, or I shall think you want the ladies to overhear."

"Your conduct is horrible, sir," says Agnes, rapidly, in the French language. "Mr. does not comprehend it."

"— it! If you have any secrets to talk, I'll withdraw fast enough, Miss Agnes," says Othello.

"Oh, Grenville! can I have any secrets from you? Mr. Firmin is my first-cousin. We have lived together all our lives. Philip, I— I don't know whether mamma announced to you my — my engagement with Captain Grenville Woolcomb." The agitation has brought on another severe bronchial attack. Poor, poor little Agnes! What it is to have a delicate throat!

The pier tosses up to the skies, as though it had left its moorings — the houses on the cliff dance and reel, as though an

earthquake was driving them — the sea walks up into the lodging-houses — and Philip's legs are failing from under him: it is only for a moment. When you have a large, tough double tooth out, doesn't the chair go up to the ceiling, and your head come off too? But, in the next instant, there is a grave gentleman before you, making you a bow, and concealing something in his right sleeve. The crash is over. You are a man again. Philip clutches hold of the chain pier for a minute: it does not sink under him. The houses, after reeling for a second or two, reassume the perpendicular, and bulge their bow windows towards the main. He can see the people looking from the windows, the carriages passing, Professor Spurrier riding on the cliff with eighteen young ladies, his pupils. In long after days he remembers those absurd little incidents with a curious tenacity.

"This news," Philip says, "was not — not altogether unexpected. I congratulate my cousin, I am sure. Captain Woolcomb, had I known this for certain, I am sure I should not have interrupted you. You were going, perhaps, to ask me to your hospitable house, Mrs. Penfold?"

"Was she though?" cries the captain.

"I have asked a friend to dine with me at the Bedford, and shall go to town, I hope, in the morning. Can I take anything for you, Agnes? Good-by:" and he kisses his hand in quite a *dégagé* manner, as Mrs. Penfold's chair turns eastward and he goes to the west. Silently the tall Agnes sweeps along, a fair hand laid upon her friend's chair.

It's over! it's over! She has done it. He was bound, and kept his honour, but she did not: it was she who forsook him. And I fear very much Mr. Philip's heart leaps with pleasure and an immense sensation of relief at thinking he is free. He meets half a dozen acquaintances on the cliff. He laughs, jokes, shakes hands, invites two or three to dinner in the gayest manner. He sits down on that green, not very far from his inn, and is laughing to himself, when he suddenly feels something nestling at his knee, — rubbing, and nestling, and whining plaintively. "What, is that you?" It is little Brownie, who has followed him. Poor little rogue!

Then Philip bent down his head over the dog, and as it jumped on him, with little bleats, and whines, and innocent caresses, he broke out into a sob, and a great refreshing rain of tears fell from his eyes. Such a little illness! Such a mild fever! Such a speedy cure! Some people have the complaint so mildly that they are scarcely ever kept to their beds. Some bear its scars for ever.

Philip sat resolutely at the hotel all night, having given special orders to the porter to say that he was at home, in case any gentleman should call. He had a faint hope, he afterwards owned, that some friend of Captain Woolcomb might wait on him on that officer's part. He had a faint hope that a letter might come explaining that treason, — as people will have a sick, gnawing, yearning, foolish desire for letters — letters which contain nothing, which never did contain anything — letters which, nevertheless, you — You know, in fact, about those letters, and there is no earthly use in asking to read Philip's. Have we not all read those love-letters which, after love-quarrels, come into court sometimes? We have all read them; and how many have written them? Nine o'clock. Ten o'clock. Eleven o'clock. No challenge from the captain; no explanation from Agnes. Philip declares he slept perfectly well. But poor little Brownie the dog made a piteous howling all night in the stables. She was not a well-bred dog. You could not have hung the least hat on her nose.

We compared anon our dear Agnes to a Brahmin lady, meekly offering herself up to sacrifice according to the practice used in her highly respectable caste. Did we speak in anger or in sorrow? — surely in terms of respectful grief and sympathy. And if we pity her, ought we not likewise to pity her highly respectable parents? When the notorious Brutus ordered his sons to execution, you can't suppose he was such a brute as to be pleased? All three parties suffered by the transaction: the sons, probably, even more than their austere father; but it stands to reason that the whole trio were very melancholy. At least, were I a poet or musical composer depicting that business, I certainly should make them so:— the sons, piping in a very minor key indeed; the father's manly basso, accompanied by deep wind instruments, and interrupted by appropriate sobs. Though pretty fair Agnes is being led to execution, I don't suppose she likes it, or that her parents are happy, who are compelled to order the tragedy.

That the rich young proprietor of Mangrove Hall should be fond of her, was merely a coincidence, Mrs. Twysden afterwards always averred. Not for mere wealth — ah, no! not for mines of gold — would they sacrifice their darling child. But when that sad Firmin affair happened, you see it also happened that Captain Woolcomb was much struck by dear Agnes, whom he met everywhere. Her scapegrace of a cousin would go nowhere. He preferred his bachelor associates, and horrible smoking and drinking habits, to the amusements and pleasures of more refined society. He neglected Agnes.

There is not the slightest doubt he neglected and mortified her, and his wilful and frequent absence showed how little he cared for her. Would you blame the dear girl for coldness to a man who himself showed such indifference to her? "No, my good Mrs. Candour. Had Mr. Firmin been ten times as rich as Mr. Woolcomb, I should have counselled my child to refuse him. I take the responsibility of the measure entirely on myself — I, and her father, and her brother." So Mrs. Twysden afterwards spoke, in circles where an absurd and odious rumour ran, that the Twysdens had forced their daughter to jilt young Mr. Firmin in order to marry a young quadroon. People will talk, you know, *de me, de te*. If Woolcomb's dinners had not gone off so after his marriage, I have little doubt the scandal would have died away, and he and his wife might have been pretty generally respected and visited.

Nor must you suppose, as we have said, that dear Agnes gave up her first love without a pang. That bronchitis showed how acutely the poor thing felt her position. It broke out very soon after Mr. Woolcomb's attentions became a little particular; and she actually left London in consequence. It is true that he could follow her without difficulty, but so, for the matter of that, could Philip, as we have seen, when he came down and behaved so rudely to Captain Woolcomb. And before Philip came, poor Agnes could plead, "My father pressed me *sair*," as in the case of the notorious Mrs. Robin Gray.

Father and mother both pressed her *sair*. Mrs. Twysden, I think I have mentioned, wrote an admirable letter, and was aware of her accomplishment. She used to write reams of gossip regularly every week to dear uncle Ringwood when he was in the country: and when her daughter Blanche married, she is said to have written several of her new son's sermons. As a Christian mother, was she not to give her daughter her advice at this momentous period of her life? That advice went against poor Philip's chances with his cousin, who was kept acquainted with all the circumstances of the controversy of which we have just seen the issue. I do not mean to say that Mrs. Twysden gave an impartial statement of case. What parties in a lawsuit do speak impartially on their own side or their adversaries'? Mrs. Twysden's view, as I have learned subsequently, and as imparted to her daughter, was this:— That most unprincipled man, Dr. Firmin, who had already attempted, and unjustly, to deprive the Twysdens of a part of their property, had commenced in quite early life his career of outrage and wickedness against the Ringwood family. He had led dear Lord Ringwood's son, poor dear Lord Cinqbars, into a career of vice and extravagance which caused the premature death of that unfortunate young nobleman. Mr. Firmin had then made a marriage, in spite of the tears and entreaties of Mrs. Twysden, with her late unhappy sister, whose whole life had been made wretched by the doctor's conduct. But the climax of outrage and wickedness was, that when he — he, a low, penniless adventurer — married Colonel Ringwood's daughter, he was married already, as could be sworn by the repentant clergyman who had been forced, by threats of punishment which Dr. Firmin held over him, to perform the rite! "The mind" — Mrs. Talbot Twysden's fine mind — "shuddered at the thought of such wickedness." But most of all (for to think ill of any one whom she had once loved gave her pain) there was reason to believe that the unhappy Philip Firmin was his father's accomplice, and that he knew of his own illegitimacy, which he was determined to set aside by any fraud or artifice — (she trembled, she wept to have to say this: O heaven! that there should be such perversity in thy creatures!) And so little store did Philip set by his mother's honour, that he actually visited the abandoned woman who acquiesced in her own infamy, and had brought such unspeakable disgrace on the Ringwood family! The thought of this crime had caused Mrs. Twysden and her dear husband nights of sleepless anguish — had made them years and years older — had stricken their hearts with a grief which must endure to the end of their days. With people so unscrupulous, so grasping, so artful as Dr. Firmin and (must she say?) his son, they were bound to be on their guard; and though they had avoided Philip, she had deemed it right, on the rare occasions when she and the young man whom she must now call her illegitimate nephew met, to behave as though she knew nothing of this most dreadful controversy.

"And now, dearest child" . . . Surely the moral is obvious? The dearest child "must see at once that any foolish plans which were formed in childish days and under former delusions must be cast aside for ever as impossible, as unworthy of a Twysden — of a Ringwood. Be not concerned for the young man himself," wrote Mrs. Twysden — "I blush that he should bear that dear father's name who was slain in honour on Busaco's glorious field. P. F. has associates amongst whom he has ever been much more at home than in our refined circle, and habits which will cause him to forget you only too easily. And if near you is one whose ardour shows itself in his every word and action, whose wealth and property may raise you to a place worthy of my child, need I say, a mother's, a father's blessing go with you." This letter was brought to Miss Twysden, at Brighton, by a special messenger; and the superscription announced that it was "honoured by Captain Grenville Woolcomb."

Now when Miss Agnes has had a letter to this effect, from a mother in whose prudence and affection a child could

surely confide; when she remembers all the abuse her brother lavishes against Philip, as, heaven bless some of them! dear relatives can best do; when she thinks how cold he has of late been — how he will come smelling of cigars — how he won't conform to the usages du monde, and has neglected all the decencies of society — how she often can't understand his strange rhapsodies about poetry, painting, and the like, nor how he can live with such associates as those who seem to delight him — and now how he is showing himself actually unprincipled and abetting his horrid father; when we consider mither pressing sair, and all these points in mither's favour, I don't think we can order Agnes to instant execution for the resolution to which she is coming. She will give him up — she will give him up. Good-by, Philip. Good-by the past. Be forgotten, be forgotten, fond words spoken in not unwilling ears! Be still and breathe not, eager lips, that have trembled so near to one another! Unlock, hands, and part for ever, that seemed to be formed for life's long journey! Ah, to part for ever is hard; but harder and more humiliating still to part without regret!

That papa and mamma had influenced Miss Twysden in her behaviour my wife and I could easily imagine, when Philip, in his wrath and grief, came to us and poured out the feelings of his heart. My wife is a repository of men's secrets, and untiring consoler and comforter; and she knows many a sad story which we are not at liberty to tell, like this one of which this person, Mr. Firmin, has given us possession.

"Father and mother's orders," shouts Philip, "I daresay, Mrs. Pendennis; but the wish was father to the thought of parting, and it was for the blackamoor's parks and acres that the girl jilted me. Look here. I told you just now that I slept perfectly well on that infernal night after I had said farewell to her. Well, I didn't. It was a lie. I walked ever so many times the whole length of the cliff, from Hove to Rottingdean almost, and then went to bed afterwards, and slept a little out of sheer fatigue. And as I was passing by Horizontal Place (— I happened to pass by there two or three times in the moonlight, like a great jackass —) you know those verses of mine which I have hummed here sometimes?" (hummed! he used to roar them!) "'When the locks of burnished gold, lady, shall to silver turn!' Never mind the rest. You know the verses about fidelity and old age? She was singing them on that night, to that negro. And I heard the beggar's voice say, 'Bravo!' through the open windows."

"Ah, Philip! it was cruel," says my wife, heartily pitying our friend's anguish and misfortune. "It was cruel indeed. I am sure we can feel for you. But think what certain misery a marriage with such a person would have been! Think of your warm heart given away for ever to that heartless creature."

"Laura, Laura, have you not often warned me not to speak ill of people?" says Laura's husband.

"I can't help it sometimes," cries Laura in a transport. "I try and do my best not to speak ill of my neighbours; but the worldliness of those people shocks me so that I can't bear to be near them. They are so utterly tied and bound by conventionalities, so perfectly convinced of their own excessive high-breeding, that they seem to me more odious and more vulgar than quite low people; and I am sure Mr. Philip's friend, the Little Sister, is infinitely more ladylike than his dreary aunt or either of his supercilious cousins!" Upon my word, when this lady did speak her mind, there was no mistaking her meaning.

I believe Mr. Firmin took a considerable number of people into his confidence regarding this love affair. He is one of those individuals who can't keep their secrets; and when hurt he roars so loudly that all his friends can hear. It has been remarked that the sorrows of such persons do not endure very long; nor surely was there any great need in this instance that Philip's heart should wear a lengthened mourning. Ere long he smoked his pipes, he played his billiards, he shouted his songs; he rode in the Park for the pleasure of severely cutting his aunt and cousins when their open carriage passed, or of riding down Captain Woolcomb or his cousin Ringwood, should either of those worthies come in his way.

One day, when the old Lord Ringwood came to town for his accustomed spring visit, Philip condescended to wait upon him, and was announced to his lordship just as Talbot Twysden and Ringwood his son were taking leave of their noble kinsman. Philip looked at them with a flashing eye and a distended nostril, according to his swaggering wont. I daresay they on their part bore a very mean and hangdog appearance; for my lord laughed at their discomfiture, and seemed immensely amused as they slunk out of the door when Philip came hectoring in.

"So, sir, there has been a family row. Heard all about it: at least, their side. Your father did me the favour to marry my niece, having another wife already?"

"Having no other wife already, sir — though my dear relations wish to show that he had."

"Wanted your money; thirty thousand pounds is not a trifle. Ten thousand apiece for those children. And no more

need of any confounded pinching and scraping, as they have to do at Beaunash Street. Affair off between you and Agnes? Absurd affair. So much the better.”

“Yes, sir, so much the better.”

“Have ten thousand apiece. Would have twenty thousand if they got yours. Quite natural to want it.”

“Quite.”

“Woolcomb a sort of negro, I understand. Fine property here: besides the West India rubbish. Violent man — so people tell me. Luckily Agnes seems a cool, easy-going woman, and must put up with the rough as well as the smooth in marrying a property like that. Very lucky for you that that woman persists there was no marriage with your father. Twysden says the doctor bribed her. Take it he’s not got much money to bribe, unless you gave some of yours.”

“I don’t bribe people to bear false witness, my lord — and if —

“Don’t be in a huff; I didn’t say so. Twysden says so — perhaps thinks so. When people are at law they believe anything of one another.”

“I don’t know what other people may do, sir. If I had another man’s money, I should not be easy until I had paid him back. Had my share of my grandfather’s property not been lawfully mine — and for a few hours I thought it was not — please God, I would have given it up to its rightful owners — at least, my father would.”

“Why, hang it all, man, you don’t mean to say your father has not settled with you?”

Philip blushed a little. He had been rather surprised that there had been no settlement between him and his father.

“I am only of age a few months, sir. I am not under any apprehension. I get my dividends regularly enough. One of my grandfather’s trustees, General Baynes, is in India. He is to return almost immediately, or we should have sent a power of attorney out to him. There’s no hurry about the business.”

Philip’s maternal grandfather, and Lord Ringwood’s brother, the late Colonel Philip Ringwood, had died possessed of but trifling property of his own; but his wife had brought him a fortune of sixty thousand pounds, which was settled on their children, and in the names of trustees — Mr. Briggs, a lawyer, and Colonel Baynes, an East India officer, and friend of Mrs. Philip Ringwood’s family. Colonel Baynes had been in England some eight years before; and Philip remembered a kind old gentleman coming to see him at school, and leaving tokens of his bounty behind. The other trustee, Mr. Briggs, a lawyer of considerable county reputation, was dead long since, having left his affairs in an involved condition. During the trustee’s absence and the son’s minority, Philip’s father received the dividends on his son’s property, and liberally spent them on the boy. Indeed, I believe that for some little time at college, and during his first journeys abroad, Mr. Philip spent rather more than the income of his maternal inheritance, being freely supplied by his father, who told him not to stint himself. He was a sumptuous man, Dr. Firmin — openhanded — subscribing to many charities — a lover of solemn good cheer. The doctor’s dinners and the doctor’s equipages were models in their way; and I remember the sincere respect with which my uncle the major (the family guide in such matters) used to speak of Dr. Firmin’s taste. “No duchess in London, sir,” he would say, “drove better horses than Mrs. Firmin. Sir George Warrender, sir, could not give a better dinner, sir, than that to which we sat down yesterday.” And for the exercise of these civic virtues the doctor had the hearty respect of the good major.

“Don’t tell me, sir,” on the other hand, Lord Ringwood would say; “I dined with the fellow once — a swaggering fellow, sir; but a servile fellow. The way he bowed and flattered was perfectly absurd. Those fellows think we like it — and we may. Even at my age, I like flattery — any quantity of it; and not what you call delicate, but strong, sir. I like a man to kneel down and kiss my shoestrings. I have my own opinion of him afterwards, but that is what I like — what all men like; and that is what Firmin gave in quantities. But you could see that his house was monstrously expensive. His dinner was excellent, and you saw it was good every day — not like your dinners, my good Maria; not like your wines, Twysden, which, hang it, I can’t swallow, unless I send ’em in myself. Even at my own house, I don’t give that kind of wine on common occasions which Firmin used to give. I drink the best myself, of course, and give it to some who know; but I don’t give it to common fellows, who come to hunting dinners, or to girls and boys who are dancing at my balls.”

“Yes; Mr. Firmin’s dinners were very handsome — and a pretty end came of the handsome dinners!” sighed Mrs. Twysden.

“That’s not the question; I am only speaking about the fellow’s meat and drink, and they were both good. And it’s my opinion, that fellow will have a good dinner wherever he goes.”

I had the fortune to be present at one of these feasts, which Lord Ringwood attended, and at which I met Philip's trustee, General Baynes, who had just arrived from India. I remember now the smallest details of the little dinner, — the brightness of the old plate, on which the doctor prided himself, and the quiet comfort, not to say splendour, of the entertainment. The general seemed to take a great liking to Philip, whose grandfather had been his special friend and comrade in arms. He thought he saw something of Philip Ringwood in Philip Firmin's face.

"Ah, indeed!" growls Lord Ringwood.

"You ain't a bit like him," says the downright general. "Never saw a handsomer or more openlooking fellow than Philip Ringwood."

"Oh! I daresay I looked pretty open myself forty years ago," said my lord; "now I'm shut, I suppose. I don't see the least likeness in this young man to my brother."

"That is some sherry as old as the century," whispers the host; "it is the same the Prince Regent liked so at a Mansion House dinner, five-and-twenty years ago."

"Never knew anything about wine; was always tippling liqueurs and punch. What do you give for this sherry, doctor?"

The doctor sighed, and looked up to the chandelier. "Drink it while it lasts, my good lord; but don't ask me the price. The fact is, I don't like to say what I gave for it."

"You need not stint yourself in the price of sherry, doctor," cries the general gaily; "you have but one son, and he has a fortune of his own, as I happen to know. You haven't dipped it, master Philip?"

"I fear, sir, I may have exceeded my income sometimes, in the last three years; but my father has helped me."

"Exceeded nine hundred a-year! Upon my word! When I was a sub, my friends gave me fifty pounds a year, and I never was a shilling in debt! What are men coming to now?"

"If doctors drink Prince Regent's sherry at ten guineas a dozen, what can you expect of their sons, General Baynes?" grumbles my lord.

"My father gives you his best, my lord," says Philip gaily; "if you know of any better, he will get it for you. Si non, his utere mecum! Please to pass me that decanter, Pen!"

I thought the old lord did not seem ill pleased at the young man's freedom; and now, as I recal it, think I can remember, that a peculiar silence and anxiety seemed to weigh upon our host — upon him whose face was commonly so anxious and sad.

The famous sherry, which had made many voyages to Indian climes before it acquired its exquisite flavour, had travelled some three or four times round the doctor's polished table, when Brice, his man, entered with a letter on his silver tray. Perhaps Philip's eyes and mine exchanged glances in which ever so small a scintilla of mischief might sparkle. The doctor often had letters when he was entertaining his friends; and his patients had a knack of falling ill at awkward times.

"Gracious heavens!" cries the doctor, when he read the despatch — it was a telegraphic message. "The poor Grand Duke!"

"What Grand Duke?" asks the surly lord of Ringwood.

"My earliest patron and friend — the Grand Duke of Groningen! Seized this morning at eleven at Potzendorff! Has sent for me. I promised to go to him if ever he had need of me. I must go! I can save the night-train yet. General! our visit to city must be deferred till my return. Get a portmanteau, Brice; and call a cab at once. Philip will entertain my friends for the evening. My dear lord, you won't mind an old doctor leaving you to attend an old patient? I will write from Groningen. I shall be there on Friday morning. Farewell, gentlemen! Brice, another bottle of that sherry! I pray, don't let anybody stir! God bless you, Philip, my boy!" And with this the doctor went up, took his son by the hand, and laid the other very kindly on the young man's shoulder. Then he made a bow round the table to his guests — one of his graceful bows, for which he was famous. I can see the sad smile on his face now, and the light from the chandelier over the dining-table glancing from his shining forehead, and casting deep shadows on to his cheek from his heavy brows.

The departure was a little abrupt, and, of course, cast somewhat of a gloom upon the company.

"My carriage ain't ordered till ten — must go on sitting here, I suppose. Confounded life doctor's must be! Called up any hour in the night! Get their fees! Must go!" growled the great man of the party.

"People are glad enough to have them when they are ill, my lord. I think I have heard that once, when you were at

Ryde — ”

The great man started back as if a little shock of cold water had fallen on him; and then looked at Philip with not unfriendly glances. “Treated for gout — so he did. Very well, too!” said my lord; and whispered, not inaudibly, “Cool hand, that boy!” And then his lordship fell to talk with General Baynes about his campaigning, and his early acquaintance with his own brother, Philip’s grandfather.

The general did not care to brag about his own feats of arms, but was loud in praises of his old comrade. Philip was pleased to hear his grandsire so well spoken of. The general had known Dr. Firmin’s father also, who likewise had been a colonel in the famous old Peninsular army. “A Tartar that fellow was, and no mistake!” said the good officer. “Your father has a strong look of him; and you have a glance of him at times. But you remind me of Philip Ringwood not a little; and you could not belong to a better man.”

“Ha!” says my lord. There has been differences between him and his brother. He may have been thinking of days when they were friends. Lord Ringwood now graciously asked if General Baynes was staying in London? But the general had only come to do this piece of business, which must now be delayed. He was too poor to live in London. He must look out for a country place, where he and his children could live cheaply. “Three boys at school, and one at college, Mr. Philip — you know what that must cost; though, thank my stars, my college boy does not spend nine hundred a year. Nine hundred! Where should we be if he did?” In fact, the days of nabobs are long over, and the general had come back to his native country with only very small means for the support of a great family.

When my lord’s carriage came, he departed, and the other guests presently took their leave. The general, who was a bachelor for the nonce, remained awhile, and we three prattled over cheroots in Philip’s smokingroom. It was a night like a hundred I have spent there, and yet how well I remember it! We talked about Philip’s future prospects, and he communicated his intentions to us in his lordly way. As for practising at the bar: No, sir! he said, in reply to General Baynes’ queries, he should not make much hand of that: shouldn’t if he were ever so poor. He had his own money, and his father’s, and he condescended to say that he might, perhaps, try for Parliament, should an eligible opportunity offer. “Here’s a fellow born with a silver spoon in his mouth,” says the general, as we walked away together. “A fortune to begin with; a fortune to inherit. My fortune was two thousand pounds and the price of my two first commissions; and when I die my children will not be quite so well off as their father was when he began!”

Having parted with the old officer at his modest sleeping quarters near his club, I walked to my own home, little thinking that yonder cigar, of which I had shaken some of ashes in Philip’s smoking-room, was to be the last tobacco I ever should smoke there. The pipe was smoked out. The wine was drunk. When that door closed on me, it closed for the last time — at least, was never more to admit me as Philip’s, as Dr. Firmin’s, guest and friend. I pass the place often now. My youth comes back to me as I gaze at those blank, shining windows. I see myself a boy, and Philip a child; and his fair mother; and his father, the hospitable, the melancholy, the magnificent. I wish I could have helped him. I wish somehow he had borrowed money. He never did. He gave me his often. I have never seen him since that night when his own door closed upon him.

On the second day after the doctor’s departure, as I was at breakfast with my family, I received the following letter:—

My dear Pendennis,

Could I have seen you in private on Tuesday night, I might have warned you of the calamity which was hanging over my house. But to what good end? That you should know a few weeks, hours before, what all the world will ring with to-morrow? Neither you nor I, nor one whom we both love, would have been the happier for knowing my misfortunes a few hours sooner. In four-and-twenty hours every club in London will be busy with talk of the departure of the celebrated Dr. Firmin — the wealthy Dr. Firmin; a few months more and (I have strict and confidential reason to believe) hereditary rank would have been mine, but Sir George Firmin would have been an insolvent man, and his son Sir Philip a beggar. Perhaps the thought of this honour has been one of the reasons which has determined me on expatriating myself sooner than I otherwise needed to have done.

George Firmin, the honoured, the wealthy physician, and his son a beggar? I see you are startled at the news! You wonder how, with a great practice, and no great ostensible expenses, such ruin should have come upon me — upon him. It has seemed as if for years past Fate has been determined to make war upon George Brand Firmin; and who can battle against Fate? A man universally admitted to be of good judgment, I have embarked in mercantile speculations the most

promising. Everything upon which I laid my hand has crumbled to ruin; but I can say with the Roman bard, “Impavidum ferient ruinæ.” And, almost penniless, almost aged, an exile driven from my country, I seek another where I do not despair — I even have a firm belief that I shall be enabled to repair my shattered fortunes! My race has never been deficient in courage, and Philip and Philip’s father must use all theirs, so as to be enabled to face the dark times which menace them. Si celeres quatit pennas Fortuna, we must resign what she gave us, and bear our calamity with unshaken hearts!

There is a man, I own to you, whom I cannot, I must not face. General Baynes has just come from India, with but very small savings, I fear; and these are jeopardized by his imprudence and my most cruel and unexpected misfortune. I need not tell you that my all would have been my boy’s. My will, made long since, will be found in the tortoiseshell secretaire standing in my consulting-room under the picture of Abraham offering up Isaac. In it you will see that everything, except annuities to old and deserving servants and a legacy to one excellent and faithful woman whom I own I have wronged — my all, which once was considerable, is left to my boy.

I am now worth less than nothing, and have compromised Philip’s property along with my own. As a man of business, General Baynes, Colonel Ringwood’s old companion in arms, was culpably careless, and I— alas! that I must own it — deceived him. Being the only surviving trustee (Mrs. Philip Ringwood’s other trustee was an unprincipled attorney who has been long dead), General B. signed a paper authorizing, as he imagined, my bankers to receive Philip’s dividends, but, in fact, giving me the power to dispose of the capital sum. On my honour, as a man, as a gentleman, as a father, Penderennis, I hoped to replace it! I took it; I embarked it in speculations in which it sank down with ten times the amount of my own private property. Half-year after half-year, with straitened means and with the greatest difficulty to myself, my poor boy has had his dividend; and he at least has never known what was want or anxiety until now. Want? Anxiety? Pray heaven he never may suffer the sleepless anguish, the racking care which has pursued me! “Post equitem sedet atra cura,” our favourite poet says. Ah! how truly, too, does he remark, “Patriæ quis exul se quoque fugit?” Think you where I go grief and remorse will not follow me? They will never leave me until I shall return to this country — for that I shall return, my heart tells me — until I can reimburse General Baynes, who stands indebted to Philip through his incautiousness and my overpowering necessity; and my heart — an erring but fond father’s heart — tells me that my boy will not eventually lose a penny by my misfortune.

I own, between ourselves, that this illness of the Grand Duke of Groningen was a pretext which I put forward. You will hear of me ere long from the place whither for some time past I have determined on bending my steps. I placed 2001. on Saturday, to Philip’s credit, at his banker’s I take little more than that sum with me; depressed, yet full of hope; having done wrong, yet determined to retrieve it, and vowing that ere I die my poor boy shall not have to blush at bearing the name of

George Brand Firmin.

Good-by, dear Philip! Your old friend will tell you of my misfortunes. When I write again, it will be to tell you where to address me; and wherever I am, or whatever misfortunes oppress me, think of me always as your fond.

Father.

I had scarce read this awful letter when Philip Firmin himself came into our breakfast-room, looking very much disturbed.



CHAPTER 15

CONTAINS TWO OF PHILIP'S MISHAPS.

You know that, in some parts of India, infanticide is the common custom. It is part of the religion of the land, as, in other districts, widow-burning used to be. I can't imagine that ladies like to destroy either themselves or their children, though they submit with bravery, and even cheerfulness, to the decrees of that religion which orders them to make away with their own or their young ones' lives. Now, suppose you and I, as Europeans, happened to drive up where a young creature was just about to roast herself, under the advice of her family and the highest dignitaries of her church; what could we do? Rescue her? No such thing. We know better than to interfere with her, and the laws and usages of her country. We turn away with a sigh from the mournful scene; we pull out our pocket-handkerchiefs, tell coachman to drive on, and leave her to her sad fate.

Now about poor Agnes Twysden: how, in the name of goodness, can we help her? You see she is a well brought up and religious young woman of the Brahminical sect. If she is to be sacrificed, that old Brahmin her father, that good and devout mother, that most special Brahmin her brother, and that admirable girl her strait-laced sister, all insist upon her undergoing the ceremony, and deck her with flowers ere they lead her to that dismal altar flame. Suppose, I say, she has made up her mind to throw over poor Philip, and take on with some one else? What sentiment ought our virtuous bosoms to entertain towards her? Anger? I have just been holding a conversation with a young fellow in rags and without shoes, whose bed is commonly a dry arch, who has been repeatedly in prison, whose father and mother were thieves, and whose grandfathers were thieves; — are we to be angry with him for following the paternal profession? With one eye brimming with pity, the other steadily keeping watch over the family spoons, I listen to his artless tale. I have no anger against that child; nor towards thee, Agnes, daughter of Talbot the Brahmin.

For though duty is duty, when it comes to the pinch, it is often hard to do. Though dear papa and mamma say that here is a gentleman with ever so many thousands a year, an undoubted part in So-and-So-shire, and whole islands in the western main, who is wildly in love with your fair skin and blue eyes, and is ready to fling all his treasures at your feet; yet, after all, when you consider that he is very ignorant though very cunning; very stingy though very rich; very ill-tempered, probably, if faces and eyes and mouths can tell truth: and as for Philip Firmin — though actually his legitimacy is dubious, as we have lately heard, in which case his maternal fortune is ours — and as for his paternal inheritance, we don't know whether the doctor is worth thirty thousand pounds or a shilling; — yet, after all — as for Philip — he is a man; he is a gentleman; he has brains in his head, and a great honest heart of which he has offered to give the best feelings to his cousin; — I say, when a poor girl has to be off with that old love, that honest and fair love, and be on with the new one, the dark one, I feel for her; and though the Brahmins are, as we know, the most genteel sect in Hindostan, I rather wish the poor child could have belonged to some lower and less rigid sect. Poor Agnes! to think that he has sat for hours, with mamma and Blanche or the governess, of course, in the room (for, you know, when she and Philip were quite wee wee things dear mamma had little amiable plans in view); has sat for hours by Miss Twysden's side pouring out his heart to her; has had, mayhap, little precious moments of confidential talk — little hasty whispers in corridors, on stairs, behind window curtains, and — and so forth in fact. She must remember all this past; and can't, without some pang, listen on the same sofa, behind the same window-curtains, to her dark suitor pouring out his artless tales of barracks, boxing, horseflesh, and the tender passion. He is dull, he is mean, he is ill-tempered, he is ignorant, and the other was . . .; but she will do her duty: oh, yes! she will do her duty! Poor Agnes! C'est à fendre le coeur. I declare I quite feel for her.

When Philip's temper was roused, I have been compelled, as his biographer, to own how very rude and disagreeable he could be; and you must acknowledge that a young man has some reason to be displeased, when he finds the girl of his heart hand in hand with another young gentleman in an occult and shady recess of the woodwork of Brighton Pier. The green waves are softly murmuring: so is the officer of the Life Guards Green. The waves are kissing the beach. Ah, agonizing thought! I will not pursue the simile, which may be but a jealous man's mad fantasy. Of this I am sure, no pebble on that beach is cooler than polished Agnes. But, then, Philip drunk with jealousy is not a reasonable being like Philip sober. "He had a dreadful temper," Philip's dear aunt said of him afterwards, — "I trembled for my dear, gentle child, united for ever to a man of that violence. Never, in my secret mind, could I think that their union could be a happy one.

Besides, you know, the nearness of their relationship. My scruples on that score, dear Mrs. Candour, never, never could be quite got over." And these scruples came to weigh whole tons, when Mangrove Hall, the house in Berkeley Square, and Mr. Woolcomb's West India island were put into the scale along with them.

Of course there was no good in remaining amongst those damp, reeking timbers, now that the pretty little tête-à-tête was over. Little Brownie hung fondling and whining round Philip's ankles, as the party ascended to the upper air. "My child, how pale you look!" cries Mrs. Penfold, putting down her volume. Out of the captain's opal eyeballs shot lurid flames, and hot blood burned behind his yellow cheeks. In a quarrel, Mr. Philip Firmin could be particularly cool and self-possessed. When Miss Agnes rather piteously introduced him to Mrs. Penfold, he made a bow as polite and gracious as any performed by his royal father. "My little dog knew me," he said, caressing the animal. "She is a faithful little thing, and she led me down to my cousin; and — Captain Woolcomb, I think, is your name, sir?"

As Philip curls his moustache and smiles blandly, Captain Woolcomb pulls his and scowls fiercely. "Yes, sir," he mutters, "my name is Woolcomb." Another bow and a touch of the hat from Mr. Firmin. A touch? — a gracious wave of the hat; acknowledged by no means so gracefully by Captain Woolcomb.

To these remarks, Mrs. Penfold says, "Oh!" In fact, "Oh!" is about the best thing that could be said under the circumstances.

"My cousin, Miss Twysden, looks so pale because she was out very late dancing last night. I hear it was a very pretty ball. But ought she to keep such late hours, Mrs. Penfold, with her delicate health? Indeed, you ought not, Agnes! Ought she to keep late hours, Brownie? There — don't, you little foolish thing! I gave my cousin the dog: and she's very fond of me — the dog is — still. You were saying, Captain Woolcomb, when I came up, that you would give Miss Twysden a dog on whose nose you could hang your — I beg pardon?"

Mr. Woolcomb, as Philip made this second allusion to the peculiar nasal formation of the pug, ground his little white teeth together, and let slip a most improper monosyllable. More acute bronchial suffering was manifested on the part of Miss Twysden. Mrs. Penfold said, "The day is clouding over. I think, Agnes, I will have my chair, and go home."

"May I be allowed to walk with you as far as your house?" says Philip, twiddling a little locket which he wore at his watch-chain. It was a little gold locket, with a little pale hair inside. Whose hair could it have been that was so pale and fine? As for the pretty hieroglyphical A. T. at the back, those letters might indicate Alfred Tennyson, or Anthony Trollope, who might have given a lock of their golden hair to Philip, for I know he is an admirer of their works.

Agnes looked guiltily at the little locket. Captain Woolcomb pulled his moustache so, that you would have thought he would have pulled it off; and his opal eyes glared with fearful confusion and wrath.

"Will you please to fall back and let me speak to you, Agnes? Pardon me, Captain Woolcomb, I have a private message for my cousin; and I came from London expressly to deliver it."

"If Miss Twysden desires me to withdraw, I fall back in one moment," says the captain, clenching the little lemon-coloured gloves.

"My cousin and I have lived together all our lives, and I bring her a family message. Have you any particular claim to hear it, Captain Woolcomb?"

"Not if Miss Twysden don't want me hear it. . . . D— the little brute."

"Don't kick poor little harmless Brownie! He shan't kick you, shall he, Brownie?"

"If the brute comes between my shins, I'll kick her!" shrieks the captain. "Hang her, I'll throw her into the sea!"

"Whatever you do to my dog, I swear I will do to you!" whispers Philip to the captain.

"Where are you staying?" shrieks the captain. "Hang you, you shall hear from me."

"Quiet — Bedford Hotel. Easy, or I shall think you want the ladies to overhear."

"Your conduct is horrible, sir," says Agnes, rapidly, in the French language. "Mr. does not comprehend it."

"— it! If you have any secrets to talk, I'll withdraw fast enough, Miss Agnes," says Othello.

"Oh, Grenville! can I have any secrets from you? Mr. Firmin is my first-cousin. We have lived together all our lives. Philip, I— I don't know whether mamma announced to you my — my engagement with Captain Grenville Woolcomb." The agitation has brought on another severe bronchial attack. Poor, poor little Agnes! What it is to have a delicate throat!

The pier tosses up to the skies, as though it had left its moorings — the houses on the cliff dance and reel, as though an

earthquake was driving them — the sea walks up into the lodging-houses — and Philip's legs are failing from under him: it is only for a moment. When you have a large, tough double tooth out, doesn't the chair go up to the ceiling, and your head come off too? But, in the next instant, there is a grave gentleman before you, making you a bow, and concealing something in his right sleeve. The crash is over. You are a man again. Philip clutches hold of the chain pier for a minute: it does not sink under him. The houses, after reeling for a second or two, reassume the perpendicular, and bulge their bow windows towards the main. He can see the people looking from the windows, the carriages passing, Professor Spurrier riding on the cliff with eighteen young ladies, his pupils. In long after days he remembers those absurd little incidents with a curious tenacity.

"This news," Philip says, "was not — not altogether unexpected. I congratulate my cousin, I am sure. Captain Woolcomb, had I known this for certain, I am sure I should not have interrupted you. You were going, perhaps, to ask me to your hospitable house, Mrs. Penfold?"

"Was she though?" cries the captain.

"I have asked a friend to dine with me at the Bedford, and shall go to town, I hope, in the morning. Can I take anything for you, Agnes? Good-by:" and he kisses his hand in quite a *dégagé* manner, as Mrs. Penfold's chair turns eastward and he goes to the west. Silently the tall Agnes sweeps along, a fair hand laid upon her friend's chair.

It's over! it's over! She has done it. He was bound, and kept his honour, but she did not: it was she who forsook him. And I fear very much Mr. Philip's heart leaps with pleasure and an immense sensation of relief at thinking he is free. He meets half a dozen acquaintances on the cliff. He laughs, jokes, shakes hands, invites two or three to dinner in the gayest manner. He sits down on that green, not very far from his inn, and is laughing to himself, when he suddenly feels something nestling at his knee, — rubbing, and nestling, and whining plaintively. "What, is that you?" It is little Brownie, who has followed him. Poor little rogue!

Then Philip bent down his head over the dog, and as it jumped on him, with little bleats, and whines, and innocent caresses, he broke out into a sob, and a great refreshing rain of tears fell from his eyes. Such a little illness! Such a mild fever! Such a speedy cure! Some people have the complaint so mildly that they are scarcely ever kept to their beds. Some bear its scars for ever.

Philip sat resolutely at the hotel all night, having given special orders to the porter to say that he was at home, in case any gentleman should call. He had a faint hope, he afterwards owned, that some friend of Captain Woolcomb might wait on him on that officer's part. He had a faint hope that a letter might come explaining that treason, — as people will have a sick, gnawing, yearning, foolish desire for letters — letters which contain nothing, which never did contain anything — letters which, nevertheless, you — You know, in fact, about those letters, and there is no earthly use in asking to read Philip's. Have we not all read those love-letters which, after love-quarrels, come into court sometimes? We have all read them; and how many have written them? Nine o'clock. Ten o'clock. Eleven o'clock. No challenge from the captain; no explanation from Agnes. Philip declares he slept perfectly well. But poor little Brownie the dog made a piteous howling all night in the stables. She was not a well-bred dog. You could not have hung the least hat on her nose.

We compared anon our dear Agnes to a Brahmin lady, meekly offering herself up to sacrifice according to the practice used in her highly respectable caste. Did we speak in anger or in sorrow? — surely in terms of respectful grief and sympathy. And if we pity her, ought we not likewise to pity her highly respectable parents? When the notorious Brutus ordered his sons to execution, you can't suppose he was such a brute as to be pleased? All three parties suffered by the transaction: the sons, probably, even more than their austere father; but it stands to reason that the whole trio were very melancholy. At least, were I a poet or musical composer depicting that business, I certainly should make them so:— the sons, piping in a very minor key indeed; the father's manly basso, accompanied by deep wind instruments, and interrupted by appropriate sobs. Though pretty fair Agnes is being led to execution, I don't suppose she likes it, or that her parents are happy, who are compelled to order the tragedy.

That the rich young proprietor of Mangrove Hall should be fond of her, was merely a coincidence, Mrs. Twysden afterwards always averred. Not for mere wealth — ah, no! not for mines of gold — would they sacrifice their darling child. But when that sad Firmin affair happened, you see it also happened that Captain Woolcomb was much struck by dear Agnes, whom he met everywhere. Her scapegrace of a cousin would go nowhere. He preferred his bachelor associates, and horrible smoking and drinking habits, to the amusements and pleasures of more refined society. He neglected Agnes.

There is not the slightest doubt he neglected and mortified her, and his wilful and frequent absence showed how little he cared for her. Would you blame the dear girl for coldness to a man who himself showed such indifference to her? "No, my good Mrs. Candour. Had Mr. Firmin been ten times as rich as Mr. Woolcomb, I should have counselled my child to refuse him. I take the responsibility of the measure entirely on myself — I, and her father, and her brother." So Mrs. Twysden afterwards spoke, in circles where an absurd and odious rumour ran, that the Twysdens had forced their daughter to jilt young Mr. Firmin in order to marry a young quadroon. People will talk, you know, *de me, de te*. If Woolcomb's dinners had not gone off so after his marriage, I have little doubt the scandal would have died away, and he and his wife might have been pretty generally respected and visited.

Nor must you suppose, as we have said, that dear Agnes gave up her first love without a pang. That bronchitis showed how acutely the poor thing felt her position. It broke out very soon after Mr. Woolcomb's attentions became a little particular; and she actually left London in consequence. It is true that he could follow her without difficulty, but so, for the matter of that, could Philip, as we have seen, when he came down and behaved so rudely to Captain Woolcomb. And before Philip came, poor Agnes could plead, "My father pressed me *sair*," as in the case of the notorious Mrs. Robin Gray.

Father and mother both pressed her *sair*. Mrs. Twysden, I think I have mentioned, wrote an admirable letter, and was aware of her accomplishment. She used to write reams of gossip regularly every week to dear uncle Ringwood when he was in the country: and when her daughter Blanche married, she is said to have written several of her new son's sermons. As a Christian mother, was she not to give her daughter her advice at this momentous period of her life? That advice went against poor Philip's chances with his cousin, who was kept acquainted with all the circumstances of the controversy of which we have just seen the issue. I do not mean to say that Mrs. Twysden gave an impartial statement of case. What parties in a lawsuit do speak impartially on their own side or their adversaries'? Mrs. Twysden's view, as I have learned subsequently, and as imparted to her daughter, was this:— That most unprincipled man, Dr. Firmin, who had already attempted, and unjustly, to deprive the Twysdens of a part of their property, had commenced in quite early life his career of outrage and wickedness against the Ringwood family. He had led dear Lord Ringwood's son, poor dear Lord Cinqbars, into a career of vice and extravagance which caused the premature death of that unfortunate young nobleman. Mr. Firmin had then made a marriage, in spite of the tears and entreaties of Mrs. Twysden, with her late unhappy sister, whose whole life had been made wretched by the doctor's conduct. But the climax of outrage and wickedness was, that when he — he, a low, penniless adventurer — married Colonel Ringwood's daughter, he was married already, as could be sworn by the repentant clergyman who had been forced, by threats of punishment which Dr. Firmin held over him, to perform the rite! "The mind" — Mrs. Talbot Twysden's fine mind — "shuddered at the thought of such wickedness." But most of all (for to think ill of any one whom she had once loved gave her pain) there was reason to believe that the unhappy Philip Firmin was his father's accomplice, and that he knew of his own illegitimacy, which he was determined to set aside by any fraud or artifice — (she trembled, she wept to have to say this: O heaven! that there should be such perversity in thy creatures!) And so little store did Philip set by his mother's honour, that he actually visited the abandoned woman who acquiesced in her own infamy, and had brought such unspeakable disgrace on the Ringwood family! The thought of this crime had caused Mrs. Twysden and her dear husband nights of sleepless anguish — had made them years and years older — had stricken their hearts with a grief which must endure to the end of their days. With people so unscrupulous, so grasping, so artful as Dr. Firmin and (must she say?) his son, they were bound to be on their guard; and though they had avoided Philip, she had deemed it right, on the rare occasions when she and the young man whom she must now call her illegitimate nephew met, to behave as though she knew nothing of this most dreadful controversy.

"And now, dearest child" . . . Surely the moral is obvious? The dearest child "must see at once that any foolish plans which were formed in childish days and under former delusions must be cast aside for ever as impossible, as unworthy of a Twysden — of a Ringwood. Be not concerned for the young man himself," wrote Mrs. Twysden — "I blush that he should bear that dear father's name who was slain in honour on Busaco's glorious field. P. F. has associates amongst whom he has ever been much more at home than in our refined circle, and habits which will cause him to forget you only too easily. And if near you is one whose ardour shows itself in his every word and action, whose wealth and property may raise you to a place worthy of my child, need I say, a mother's, a father's blessing go with you." This letter was brought to Miss Twysden, at Brighton, by a special messenger; and the superscription announced that it was "honoured by Captain Grenville Woolcomb."

Now when Miss Agnes has had a letter to this effect, from a mother in whose prudence and affection a child could

surely confide; when she remembers all the abuse her brother lavishes against Philip, as, heaven bless some of them! dear relatives can best do; when she thinks how cold he has of late been — how he will come smelling of cigars — how he won't conform to the usages du monde, and has neglected all the decencies of society — how she often can't understand his strange rhapsodies about poetry, painting, and the like, nor how he can live with such associates as those who seem to delight him — and now how he is showing himself actually unprincipled and abetting his horrid father; when we consider mither pressing sair, and all these points in mither's favour, I don't think we can order Agnes to instant execution for the resolution to which she is coming. She will give him up — she will give him up. Good-by, Philip. Good-by the past. Be forgotten, be forgotten, fond words spoken in not unwilling ears! Be still and breathe not, eager lips, that have trembled so near to one another! Unlock, hands, and part for ever, that seemed to be formed for life's long journey! Ah, to part for ever is hard; but harder and more humiliating still to part without regret!

That papa and mamma had influenced Miss Twysden in her behaviour my wife and I could easily imagine, when Philip, in his wrath and grief, came to us and poured out the feelings of his heart. My wife is a repository of men's secrets, and untiring consoler and comforter; and she knows many a sad story which we are not at liberty to tell, like this one of which this person, Mr. Firmin, has given us possession.

"Father and mother's orders," shouts Philip, "I daresay, Mrs. Pendennis; but the wish was father to the thought of parting, and it was for the blackamoor's parks and acres that the girl jilted me. Look here. I told you just now that I slept perfectly well on that infernal night after I had said farewell to her. Well, I didn't. It was a lie. I walked ever so many times the whole length of the cliff, from Hove to Rottingdean almost, and then went to bed afterwards, and slept a little out of sheer fatigue. And as I was passing by Horizontal Place (— I happened to pass by there two or three times in the moonlight, like a great jackass —) you know those verses of mine which I have hummed here sometimes?" (hummed! he used to roar them!) "'When the locks of burnished gold, lady, shall to silver turn!' Never mind the rest. You know the verses about fidelity and old age? She was singing them on that night, to that negro. And I heard the beggar's voice say, 'Bravo!' through the open windows."

"Ah, Philip! it was cruel," says my wife, heartily pitying our friend's anguish and misfortune. "It was cruel indeed. I am sure we can feel for you. But think what certain misery a marriage with such a person would have been! Think of your warm heart given away for ever to that heartless creature."

"Laura, Laura, have you not often warned me not to speak ill of people?" says Laura's husband.

"I can't help it sometimes," cries Laura in a transport. "I try and do my best not to speak ill of my neighbours; but the worldliness of those people shocks me so that I can't bear to be near them. They are so utterly tied and bound by conventionalities, so perfectly convinced of their own excessive high-breeding, that they seem to me more odious and more vulgar than quite low people; and I am sure Mr. Philip's friend, the Little Sister, is infinitely more ladylike than his dreary aunt or either of his supercilious cousins!" Upon my word, when this lady did speak her mind, there was no mistaking her meaning.

I believe Mr. Firmin took a considerable number of people into his confidence regarding this love affair. He is one of those individuals who can't keep their secrets; and when hurt he roars so loudly that all his friends can hear. It has been remarked that the sorrows of such persons do not endure very long; nor surely was there any great need in this instance that Philip's heart should wear a lengthened mourning. Ere long he smoked his pipes, he played his billiards, he shouted his songs; he rode in the Park for the pleasure of severely cutting his aunt and cousins when their open carriage passed, or of riding down Captain Woolcomb or his cousin Ringwood, should either of those worthies come in his way.

One day, when the old Lord Ringwood came to town for his accustomed spring visit, Philip condescended to wait upon him, and was announced to his lordship just as Talbot Twysden and Ringwood his son were taking leave of their noble kinsman. Philip looked at them with a flashing eye and a distended nostril, according to his swaggering wont. I daresay they on their part bore a very mean and hangdog appearance; for my lord laughed at their discomfiture, and seemed immensely amused as they slunk out of the door when Philip came hectoring in.

"So, sir, there has been a family row. Heard all about it: at least, their side. Your father did me the favour to marry my niece, having another wife already?"

"Having no other wife already, sir — though my dear relations wish to show that he had."

"Wanted your money; thirty thousand pounds is not a trifle. Ten thousand apiece for those children. And no more

need of any confounded pinching and scraping, as they have to do at Beaunash Street. Affair off between you and Agnes? Absurd affair. So much the better.”

“Yes, sir, so much the better.”

“Have ten thousand apiece. Would have twenty thousand if they got yours. Quite natural to want it.”

“Quite.”

“Woolcomb a sort of negro, I understand. Fine property here: besides the West India rubbish. Violent man — so people tell me. Luckily Agnes seems a cool, easy-going woman, and must put up with the rough as well as the smooth in marrying a property like that. Very lucky for you that that woman persists there was no marriage with your father. Twysden says the doctor bribed her. Take it he’s not got much money to bribe, unless you gave some of yours.”

“I don’t bribe people to bear false witness, my lord — and if —

“Don’t be in a huff; I didn’t say so. Twysden says so — perhaps thinks so. When people are at law they believe anything of one another.”

“I don’t know what other people may do, sir. If I had another man’s money, I should not be easy until I had paid him back. Had my share of my grandfather’s property not been lawfully mine — and for a few hours I thought it was not — please God, I would have given it up to its rightful owners — at least, my father would.”

“Why, hang it all, man, you don’t mean to say your father has not settled with you?”

Philip blushed a little. He had been rather surprised that there had been no settlement between him and his father.

“I am only of age a few months, sir. I am not under any apprehension. I get my dividends regularly enough. One of my grandfather’s trustees, General Baynes, is in India. He is to return almost immediately, or we should have sent a power of attorney out to him. There’s no hurry about the business.”

Philip’s maternal grandfather, and Lord Ringwood’s brother, the late Colonel Philip Ringwood, had died possessed of but trifling property of his own; but his wife had brought him a fortune of sixty thousand pounds, which was settled on their children, and in the names of trustees — Mr. Briggs, a lawyer, and Colonel Baynes, an East India officer, and friend of Mrs. Philip Ringwood’s family. Colonel Baynes had been in England some eight years before; and Philip remembered a kind old gentleman coming to see him at school, and leaving tokens of his bounty behind. The other trustee, Mr. Briggs, a lawyer of considerable county reputation, was dead long since, having left his affairs in an involved condition. During the trustee’s absence and the son’s minority, Philip’s father received the dividends on his son’s property, and liberally spent them on the boy. Indeed, I believe that for some little time at college, and during his first journeys abroad, Mr. Philip spent rather more than the income of his maternal inheritance, being freely supplied by his father, who told him not to stint himself. He was a sumptuous man, Dr. Firmin — openhanded — subscribing to many charities — a lover of solemn good cheer. The doctor’s dinners and the doctor’s equipages were models in their way; and I remember the sincere respect with which my uncle the major (the family guide in such matters) used to speak of Dr. Firmin’s taste. “No duchess in London, sir,” he would say, “drove better horses than Mrs. Firmin. Sir George Warrender, sir, could not give a better dinner, sir, than that to which we sat down yesterday.” And for the exercise of these civic virtues the doctor had the hearty respect of the good major.

“Don’t tell me, sir,” on the other hand, Lord Ringwood would say; “I dined with the fellow once — a swaggering fellow, sir; but a servile fellow. The way he bowed and flattered was perfectly absurd. Those fellows think we like it — and we may. Even at my age, I like flattery — any quantity of it; and not what you call delicate, but strong, sir. I like a man to kneel down and kiss my shoestrings. I have my own opinion of him afterwards, but that is what I like — what all men like; and that is what Firmin gave in quantities. But you could see that his house was monstrously expensive. His dinner was excellent, and you saw it was good every day — not like your dinners, my good Maria; not like your wines, Twysden, which, hang it, I can’t swallow, unless I send ’em in myself. Even at my own house, I don’t give that kind of wine on common occasions which Firmin used to give. I drink the best myself, of course, and give it to some who know; but I don’t give it to common fellows, who come to hunting dinners, or to girls and boys who are dancing at my balls.”

“Yes; Mr. Firmin’s dinners were very handsome — and a pretty end came of the handsome dinners!” sighed Mrs. Twysden.

“That’s not the question; I am only speaking about the fellow’s meat and drink, and they were both good. And it’s my opinion, that fellow will have a good dinner wherever he goes.”

I had the fortune to be present at one of these feasts, which Lord Ringwood attended, and at which I met Philip's trustee, General Baynes, who had just arrived from India. I remember now the smallest details of the little dinner, — the brightness of the old plate, on which the doctor prided himself, and the quiet comfort, not to say splendour, of the entertainment. The general seemed to take a great liking to Philip, whose grandfather had been his special friend and comrade in arms. He thought he saw something of Philip Ringwood in Philip Firmin's face.

"Ah, indeed!" growls Lord Ringwood.

"You ain't a bit like him," says the downright general. "Never saw a handsomer or more openlooking fellow than Philip Ringwood."

"Oh! I daresay I looked pretty open myself forty years ago," said my lord; "now I'm shut, I suppose. I don't see the least likeness in this young man to my brother."

"That is some sherry as old as the century," whispers the host; "it is the same the Prince Regent liked so at a Mansion House dinner, five-and-twenty years ago."

"Never knew anything about wine; was always tippling liqueurs and punch. What do you give for this sherry, doctor?"

The doctor sighed, and looked up to the chandelier. "Drink it while it lasts, my good lord; but don't ask me the price. The fact is, I don't like to say what I gave for it."

"You need not stint yourself in the price of sherry, doctor," cries the general gaily; "you have but one son, and he has a fortune of his own, as I happen to know. You haven't dipped it, master Philip?"

"I fear, sir, I may have exceeded my income sometimes, in the last three years; but my father has helped me."

"Exceeded nine hundred a-year! Upon my word! When I was a sub, my friends gave me fifty pounds a year, and I never was a shilling in debt! What are men coming to now?"

"If doctors drink Prince Regent's sherry at ten guineas a dozen, what can you expect of their sons, General Baynes?" grumbles my lord.

"My father gives you his best, my lord," says Philip gaily; "if you know of any better, he will get it for you. Si non, his utere mecum! Please to pass me that decanter, Pen!"

I thought the old lord did not seem ill pleased at the young man's freedom; and now, as I recal it, think I can remember, that a peculiar silence and anxiety seemed to weigh upon our host — upon him whose face was commonly so anxious and sad.

The famous sherry, which had made many voyages to Indian climes before it acquired its exquisite flavour, had travelled some three or four times round the doctor's polished table, when Brice, his man, entered with a letter on his silver tray. Perhaps Philip's eyes and mine exchanged glances in which ever so small a scintilla of mischief might sparkle. The doctor often had letters when he was entertaining his friends; and his patients had a knack of falling ill at awkward times.

"Gracious heavens!" cries the doctor, when he read the despatch — it was a telegraphic message. "The poor Grand Duke!"

"What Grand Duke?" asks the surly lord of Ringwood.

"My earliest patron and friend — the Grand Duke of Groningen! Seized this morning at eleven at Potzendorff! Has sent for me. I promised to go to him if ever he had need of me. I must go! I can save the night-train yet. General! our visit to city must be deferred till my return. Get a portmanteau, Brice; and call a cab at once. Philip will entertain my friends for the evening. My dear lord, you won't mind an old doctor leaving you to attend an old patient? I will write from Groningen. I shall be there on Friday morning. Farewell, gentlemen! Brice, another bottle of that sherry! I pray, don't let anybody stir! God bless you, Philip, my boy!" And with this the doctor went up, took his son by the hand, and laid the other very kindly on the young man's shoulder. Then he made a bow round the table to his guests — one of his graceful bows, for which he was famous. I can see the sad smile on his face now, and the light from the chandelier over the dining-table glancing from his shining forehead, and casting deep shadows on to his cheek from his heavy brows.

The departure was a little abrupt, and, of course, cast somewhat of a gloom upon the company.

"My carriage ain't ordered till ten — must go on sitting here, I suppose. Confounded life doctor's must be! Called up any hour in the night! Get their fees! Must go!" growled the great man of the party.

"People are glad enough to have them when they are ill, my lord. I think I have heard that once, when you were at

Ryde — ”

The great man started back as if a little shock of cold water had fallen on him; and then looked at Philip with not unfriendly glances. “Treated for gout — so he did. Very well, too!” said my lord; and whispered, not inaudibly, “Cool hand, that boy!” And then his lordship fell to talk with General Baynes about his campaigning, and his early acquaintance with his own brother, Philip’s grandfather.

The general did not care to brag about his own feats of arms, but was loud in praises of his old comrade. Philip was pleased to hear his grandsire so well spoken of. The general had known Dr. Firmin’s father also, who likewise had been a colonel in the famous old Peninsular army. “A Tartar that fellow was, and no mistake!” said the good officer. “Your father has a strong look of him; and you have a glance of him at times. But you remind me of Philip Ringwood not a little; and you could not belong to a better man.”

“Ha!” says my lord. There has been differences between him and his brother. He may have been thinking of days when they were friends. Lord Ringwood now graciously asked if General Baynes was staying in London? But the general had only come to do this piece of business, which must now be delayed. He was too poor to live in London. He must look out for a country place, where he and his children could live cheaply. “Three boys at school, and one at college, Mr. Philip — you know what that must cost; though, thank my stars, my college boy does not spend nine hundred a year. Nine hundred! Where should we be if he did?” In fact, the days of nabobs are long over, and the general had come back to his native country with only very small means for the support of a great family.

When my lord’s carriage came, he departed, and the other guests presently took their leave. The general, who was a bachelor for the nonce, remained awhile, and we three prattled over cheroots in Philip’s smokingroom. It was a night like a hundred I have spent there, and yet how well I remember it! We talked about Philip’s future prospects, and he communicated his intentions to us in his lordly way. As for practising at the bar: No, sir! he said, in reply to General Baynes’ queries, he should not make much hand of that: shouldn’t if he were ever so poor. He had his own money, and his father’s, and he condescended to say that he might, perhaps, try for Parliament, should an eligible opportunity offer. “Here’s a fellow born with a silver spoon in his mouth,” says the general, as we walked away together. “A fortune to begin with; a fortune to inherit. My fortune was two thousand pounds and the price of my two first commissions; and when I die my children will not be quite so well off as their father was when he began!”

Having parted with the old officer at his modest sleeping quarters near his club, I walked to my own home, little thinking that yonder cigar, of which I had shaken some of ashes in Philip’s smoking-room, was to be the last tobacco I ever should smoke there. The pipe was smoked out. The wine was drunk. When that door closed on me, it closed for the last time — at least, was never more to admit me as Philip’s, as Dr. Firmin’s, guest and friend. I pass the place often now. My youth comes back to me as I gaze at those blank, shining windows. I see myself a boy, and Philip a child; and his fair mother; and his father, the hospitable, the melancholy, the magnificent. I wish I could have helped him. I wish somehow he had borrowed money. He never did. He gave me his often. I have never seen him since that night when his own door closed upon him.

On the second day after the doctor’s departure, as I was at breakfast with my family, I received the following letter:—

My dear Pendennis,

Could I have seen you in private on Tuesday night, I might have warned you of the calamity which was hanging over my house. But to what good end? That you should know a few weeks, hours before, what all the world will ring with to-morrow? Neither you nor I, nor one whom we both love, would have been the happier for knowing my misfortunes a few hours sooner. In four-and-twenty hours every club in London will be busy with talk of the departure of the celebrated Dr. Firmin — the wealthy Dr. Firmin; a few months more and (I have strict and confidential reason to believe) hereditary rank would have been mine, but Sir George Firmin would have been an insolvent man, and his son Sir Philip a beggar. Perhaps the thought of this honour has been one of the reasons which has determined me on expatriating myself sooner than I otherwise needed to have done.

George Firmin, the honoured, the wealthy physician, and his son a beggar? I see you are startled at the news! You wonder how, with a great practice, and no great ostensible expenses, such ruin should have come upon me — upon him. It has seemed as if for years past Fate has been determined to make war upon George Brand Firmin; and who can battle against Fate? A man universally admitted to be of good judgment, I have embarked in mercantile speculations the most

promising. Everything upon which I laid my hand has crumbled to ruin; but I can say with the Roman bard, “Impavidum ferient ruinæ.” And, almost penniless, almost aged, an exile driven from my country, I seek another where I do not despair — I even have a firm belief that I shall be enabled to repair my shattered fortunes! My race has never been deficient in courage, and Philip and Philip’s father must use all theirs, so as to be enabled to face the dark times which menace them. Si celeres quatit pennas Fortuna, we must resign what she gave us, and bear our calamity with unshaken hearts!

There is a man, I own to you, whom I cannot, I must not face. General Baynes has just come from India, with but very small savings, I fear; and these are jeopardized by his imprudence and my most cruel and unexpected misfortune. I need not tell you that my all would have been my boy’s. My will, made long since, will be found in the tortoiseshell secretaire standing in my consulting-room under the picture of Abraham offering up Isaac. In it you will see that everything, except annuities to old and deserving servants and a legacy to one excellent and faithful woman whom I own I have wronged — my all, which once was considerable, is left to my boy.

I am now worth less than nothing, and have compromised Philip’s property along with my own. As a man of business, General Baynes, Colonel Ringwood’s old companion in arms, was culpably careless, and I— alas! that I must own it — deceived him. Being the only surviving trustee (Mrs. Philip Ringwood’s other trustee was an unprincipled attorney who has been long dead), General B. signed a paper authorizing, as he imagined, my bankers to receive Philip’s dividends, but, in fact, giving me the power to dispose of the capital sum. On my honour, as a man, as a gentleman, as a father, Penderennis, I hoped to replace it! I took it; I embarked it in speculations in which it sank down with ten times the amount of my own private property. Half-year after half-year, with straitened means and with the greatest difficulty to myself, my poor boy has had his dividend; and he at least has never known what was want or anxiety until now. Want? Anxiety? Pray heaven he never may suffer the sleepless anguish, the racking care which has pursued me! “Post equitem sedet atra cura,” our favourite poet says. Ah! how truly, too, does he remark, “Patriæ quis exul se quoque fugit?” Think you where I go grief and remorse will not follow me? They will never leave me until I shall return to this country — for that I shall return, my heart tells me — until I can reimburse General Baynes, who stands indebted to Philip through his incautiousness and my overpowering necessity; and my heart — an erring but fond father’s heart — tells me that my boy will not eventually lose a penny by my misfortune.

I own, between ourselves, that this illness of the Grand Duke of Groningen was a pretext which I put forward. You will hear of me ere long from the place whither for some time past I have determined on bending my steps. I placed 2001. on Saturday, to Philip’s credit, at his banker’s I take little more than that sum with me; depressed, yet full of hope; having done wrong, yet determined to retrieve it, and vowing that ere I die my poor boy shall not have to blush at bearing the name of

George Brand Firmin.

Good-by, dear Philip! Your old friend will tell you of my misfortunes. When I write again, it will be to tell you where to address me; and wherever I am, or whatever misfortunes oppress me, think of me always as your fond.

Father.

I had scarce read this awful letter when Philip Firmin himself came into our breakfast-room, looking very much disturbed.



CHAPTER 16

SAMARITANS.

The children trotted up to their friend with outstretched hands and their usual smiles of welcome. Philip patted their heads, and sate down with very wobegone aspect at the family table. "Ah, friends," said he, "do you know all?"

"Yes, we do," said Laura, sadly, who has ever compassion for others' misfortunes.

"What! is it all over the town already?" asked poor Philip.

"We have a letter from your father this morning." And we brought the letter to him, and showed him the affectionate special message for himself.

"His last thought was for you, Philip!" cries Laura. "See here, those last kind words!"

Philip shook his head. "It is not untrue, what is written here: but it is not all the truth." And Philip Firmin dismayed us by the intelligence which he proceeded to give. There was an execution in the house in Old Parr Street. A hundred clamorous creditors had already appeared there. Before going away, the doctor had taken considerable sums from those dangerous financiers to whom he had been of late resorting. They were in possession of numberless lately-signed bills, upon which the desperate man had raised money. He had professed to share with Philip, but he had taken the great share, and left Philip two hundred pounds of his own money. All the rest was gone. All Philip's stock had been sold out. The father's fraud had made him master of the trustee's signature: and Philip Firmin, reputed to be so wealthy, was a beggar, in my room. Luckily he had few, or very trifling, debts. Mr. Philip had a lordly impatience of indebtedness, and, with a good bachelor-income, had paid for all his pleasures as he enjoyed them.

Well! He must work. A young man ruined at two-and-twenty, with a couple of hundred pounds yet in his pocket, hardly knows that he is ruined. He will sell his horses — live in chambers — has enough to go on for a year. "When I am very hard put to it," says Philip, "I will come and dine with the children at one. I daresay you haven't dined much at Williams's in the Old Bailey? You can get a famous dinner there for a shilling — beef, bread, potatoes, beer, and a penny for the waiter." Yes, Philip seemed actually to enjoy his discomfiture. It was long since we had seen him in such spirits. "The weight is off my mind now. It has been throttling me for some time past. Without understanding why or wherefore, I have always been looking out for this. My poor father had ruin written in his face: and when those bailiffs made their appearance in Old Parr Street yesterday, I felt as if I had known them before. I had seen their hooked beaks in my dreams."

"That unlucky General Baynes, when he accepted your mother's trust, took it with its consequences. If the sentry falls asleep on his post, he must pay the penalty," says Mr. Pendennis, very severely.

"Great powers! you would not have me come down on an old man with a large family, and ruin them all?" cries Philip.

"No: I don't think Philip will do that," says my wife, looking exceedingly pleased.

"If men accept trusts they must fulfil them, my dear," cries the master of the house.

"And I must make that old gentleman suffer for my father's wrong? If I do, may I starve! there!" cries Philip.

"And so that poor Little Sister has made her sacrifice in vain!" sighed my wife. "As for the father — oh, Arthur! I can't tell you how odious that man was to me. There was something dreadful about him. And in his manner to women — oh! —"

"If he had been a black draught, my dear, you could not have shuddered more naturally."

"Well, he was horrible; and I know Philip will be better now he is gone."

Women often make light of ruin. Give them but the beloved objects, and poverty is a trifling sorrow to bear. As for Philip, he, as we have said, is gayer than he has been for years past. The doctor's flight occasions not a little club talk: but, now he is gone, many people see quite well that they were aware of his insolvency, and always knew it must end so. The case is told, is canvassed, is exaggerated as such cases will be. I daresay it forms a week's talk. But people know that poor Philip is his father's largest creditor, and eye the young man with no unfriendly looks when he comes to his club after his mishap, — with burning cheeks, and a tingling sense of shame, imagining that all the world will point at and avoid him as the guilty fugitive's son.

No: the world takes very little heed of his misfortune. One or two old acquaintances are kinder to him than before. A

few say his ruin, and his obligation to work, will do him good. Only a very, very few avoid him, and look unconscious as he passes them by. Amongst these cold countenances, you, of course, will recognize the faces of the whole Twysden family. Three statues, with marble eyes, could not look more stony-calm than aunt Twysden and her two daughters, as they pass in the stately barouche. The gentlemen turn red when they see Philip. It is rather late times for uncle Twysden to begin blushing, to be sure. "Hang the fellow! he will, of course, be coming for money. Dawkins, I am not at home, mind, when young Mr. Firmin calls." So says Lord Ringwood, regarding Philip fallen among thieves. Ah, thanks to heaven, travellers find Samaritans as well as Levites on life's hard way! Philip told us with much humour of a rencontre which he had had with his cousin, Ringwood Twysden, in a public place. Twysden was enjoying himself with some young clerks of his office; but as Philip advanced upon him, assuming his fiercest scowl and most hectoring manner, the other lost heart, and fled. And no wonder. "Do you suppose," says Twysden, "I will willingly sit in the same room with that cad, after the manner in which he has treated my family! No, sir!" And so the tall door in Beaunash Street is to open for Philip Firmin no more.

The tall door in Beaunash Street flies open readily enough for another gentleman. A splendid cab-horse reins up before it every day. A pair of varnished boots leap out of the cab, and spring up the broad stairs, where somebody is waiting with a smile of genteel welcome — the same smile — on the same sofa — the same mamma at her table writing her letters. And beautiful bouquets from Covent Garden decorate the room. And after half an hour mamma goes out to speak to the housekeeper, *vous comprenez*. And there is nothing particularly new under the sun. It will shine to-morrow upon pretty much the same flowers, sports, pastimes, which it illuminated yesterday. And when your love-making days are over, miss, and you are married, and advantageously established, shall not your little sisters, now in the nursery, trot down and play their little games? Would you, on your conscience, now — you who are rather inclined to consider Miss Agnes Twysden's conduct as heartless — would you, I say, have her cry her pretty eyes out about a young man who does not care much for her, for whom she never did care much herself, and who is now, moreover, a beggar, with a ruined and disgraced father and a doubtful legitimacy? Absurd! That dear girl is like a beautiful fragrant bower-room at the Star and Garter at Richmond, with honeysuckles mayhap trailing round the windows, from which you behold one of the most lovely and pleasant of wood and river scenes. The tables are decorated with flowers, rich winecups sparkle on the board, and Captain Jones's party have everything they can desire. Their dinner over, and that company gone, the same waiters, the same flowers, the same cups and crystals, array themselves for Mr. Brown and his party. Or, if you won't have Agnes Twysden compared to the Star and Garter Tavern, which must admit mixed company, liken her to the chaste moon who shines on shepherds of all complexions, swarthy or fair.

When, oppressed by superior odds, a commander is forced to retreat, we like him to show his skill by carrying off his guns, treasure, and camp equipages. Doctor Firmin, beaten by fortune and compelled to fly, showed quite a splendid skill and coolness in his manner of decamping, and left the very smallest amount of spoils in the hands of the victorious enemy. His wines had been famous amongst the grave epicures with whom he dined: he used to boast, like a worthy *bon vivant* who knows the value of wine-conversation after dinner, of the quantities which he possessed, and the rare bins which he had in store; but when the executioners came to arrange his sale, there was found only a beggarly account of empty bottles, and I fear some of the unprincipled creditors put in a great quantity of bad liquor which they endeavoured to foist off on the public as the genuine and carefully selected stock of a well-known connoisseur. News of this dishonest proceeding reached Dr. Firmin presently in his retreat; and he showed by his letter a generous and manly indignation at the manner in which his creditors had tampered with his honest name and reputation as a *bon vivant*. He have bad wine! For shame! He had the best from the best wine-merchant, and paid, or rather owed, the best prices for it; for of late years the doctor had paid no bills at all: and the wine-merchant appeared in quite a handsome group of figures in his schedule. In like manner his books were pawned to a book auctioneer; and Brice, the butler, had a bill of sale for the furniture. Firmin retreated, we will say with the honours of war, but as little harmed as possible by defeat. Did the enemy want the plunder of the city? He had smuggled almost all his valuable goods over the wall. Did they desire his ships? He had sunk them: and when at length the conquerors poured into his stronghold, he was far beyond the reach of their shot. Don't we often hear still that Nana Sahib is alive and exceedingly comfortable? We do not love him; but we can't help having a kind of admiration for that slippery fugitive who has escaped from the dreadful jaws of the lion. In a word, when Firmin's furniture came to be sold, it was a marvel how little his creditors benefited by the sale. Contemptuous brokers declared there never was such a shabby lot of goods. A friend of the house and poor Philip bought in his mother's picture for a few guineas; and as for the doctor's own state portrait, I am afraid it went for a few shillings only, and in the midst of a roar of Hebrew laughter. I saw in

Wardour Street, not long after, the doctor's sideboard, and what dealers cheerfully call the sarcophagus cellaret. Poor doctor! his wine was all drunken; his meat was eaten up; but his own body had slipped out of the reach of the hookbeaked birds of prey.

We had spoken rapidly in under tones, innocently believing that the young people round about us were taking no heed of our talk. But in a lull of the conversation, Mr. Pendennis junior, who had always been a friend to Philip, broke out with — "Philip! if you are so very poor, you'll be hungry, you know, and you may have my piece of bread and jam. And I don't want it, mamma," he added; "and you know Philip has often and often given me things."

Philip stooped down and kissed this good little Samaritan. "I'm not hungry, Arty, my boy," he said; "and I'm not so poor but I have got — look here — a fine new shilling for Arty!"

"Oh, Philip, Philip!" cried mamma.

"Don't take the money, Arthur," cried papa.

And the boy, with a rueful face but a manly heart, prepared to give back the coin. "It's quite a new one; and it's a very pretty one: but I won't have it, Philip, thank you," he said, turning very red.

"If he won't, I vow I will give it to the cabman," said Philip.

"Keeping a cab all this while? Oh, Philip, Philip!" again cries mamma the economist.

"Loss of time is loss of money, my dear lady," says Philip, very gravely. "I have ever so many places to go to. When I am set in for being ruined, you shall see what a screw I will become! I must go to Mrs. Brandon, who will be very uneasy, poor dear, until she knows the worst."

"Oh, Philip, I should like so to go with you!" cries Laura. "Pray, give her our very best regards and respects."

"Merci!" said the young man, and squeezed Mrs. Pendennis's hand in his own big one. "I will take your message to her, Laura. J'aime qu'on l'aime, savezvous?"

"That means, I love those who love her," cries little Laura; "but, I don't know," remarked this little person afterwards to her paternal confidant, "that I like all people to love my mamma. That is, I don't like her to like them, papa — only you may, papa, and Ethel may, and Arthur may, and I think, Philip may, now he is poor and quite, quite alone — and we will take care of him, won't we? And, I think, I'll buy him something with my money which aunt Ethel gave me."

"And I'll give him my money," cries a boy.

"And I'll div him my — my — " Psha! what matters what the little sweet lips prattled in their artless kindness? But the soft words of love and pity smote the mother's heart with an exquisite pang of gratitude and joy: and I know where her thanks were paid for those tender words and thoughts of her little ones.

Mrs. Pendennis made Philip promise to come to dinner, and also to remember not to take a cab — which promise Mr. Firmin had not much difficulty in executing, for he had but a few hundred yards to walk across the Park from his club; and I must say that my wife took a special care of our dinner that day, preparing for Philip certain dishes which she knew he liked, and enjoining the butler of the establishment (who also happened to be the owner of the house) to fetch from his cellar the very choicest wine in his possession.

I have previously described our friend and his boisterous, impetuous, generous nature. When Philip was moved, he called to all the world to witness his emotion. When he was angry, his enemies were all the rogues and scoundrels in the world. He vowed he would have no mercy on them, and desired all his acquaintances to participate in his anger. How could such an open-mouthed son have had such a close-spoken father? I daresay you have seen very well-bred young people, the children of vulgar and ill-bred parents; the swaggering father have a silent son; the loud mother a modest daughter. Our friend is not Amadis or Sir Charles Grandison; and I don't set him up for a moment as a person to be revered or imitated; but try to draw him faithfully, and as nature made him. As nature made him, so he was. I don't think he tried to improve himself much. Perhaps few people do. They suppose they do: and you read, in apologetic memoirs, and fond biographies, how this man cured his bad temper, and t'other worked and strove until he grew to be almost faultless. Very well and good, my good people. You can learn a language; you can master a science; I have heard of an old square-toes of sixty who learned, by study and intense application, very satisfactorily to dance; but can you, by taking thought, add to your moral stature? Ah me! the doctor who preaches is only taller than most of us by the height of the pulpit: and when he steps down, I daresay he cringes to the duchess, growls at his children, scolds his wife about the dinner. All is vanity, look you: and so the preacher is vanity, too.

Well, then, I must again say that Philip roared his griefs: he shouted his laughter: he bellowed his applause: he was extravagant in his humility as in his pride, in his admiration of his friends and contempt for his enemies: I daresay not a just man, but I have met juster men not half so honest; and certainly not a faultless man, though I know better men not near so good. So, I believe, my wife thinks: else, why should she be so fond of him? Did we not know boys who never went out of bounds, and never were late for school, and never made a false concord or quantity, and never came under the ferule; and others who were always playing truant, and blundering, and being whipped; and yet, somehow, was not Master Naughtyboy better liked than Master Goodchild? When Master Naughtyboy came to dine with us on the first day of his ruin, he bore a face of radiant happiness — he laughed, he bounced about, he caressed the children; now he took a couple on his knees; now he tossed the baby to the ceiling; now he sprawled over a sofa, and now he rode upon a chair; never was a penniless gentleman more cheerful. As for his dinner, Phil's appetite was always fine, but on this day an ogre could scarcely play a more terrible knife and fork. He asked for more and more, until his entertainers wondered to behold him. "Dine for to-day and to-morrow too; can't expect such fare as this every day, you know. This claret, how good it is! May I pack some up in paper, and take it home with me?" The children roared with laughter at this admirable idea of carrying home wine in a sheet of paper. I don't know that it is always at the best jokes that children laugh — children and wise men too.

When we three were by ourselves, and freed from the company of servants and children, our friend told us the cause of his gaiety. "By George!" he swore, "it is worth being ruined to find such good people in the world. My dear, kind Laura" — here the gentleman brushes his eyes with his fist — "it was as much as I could do this morning to prevent myself from hugging you in my arms, you were so generous, and — and so kind, and so tender, and so good, by George. And after leaving you, where do you think I went?"

"I think I can guess, Philip," says Laura.

"Well," says Philip, winking his eyes again, and tossing off a great bumper of wine, "I went to her, of course. I think she is the best friend I have in the world. The old man was out, and I told her about everything that had happened. And what do you think she has done? She says she has been expecting me — she has; and she has gone and fitted up a room with a nice little bed at the top of the house, with everything as neat and trim as possible; and she begged and prayed I would go and stay with her — and I said I would, to please her. And then she takes me down to her room; and she jumps up to a cupboard, which she unlocks; and she opens and takes three-and-twenty pounds out of a — out of a tea — out of a tea-caddy — confound me! — and she says, 'Here, Philip,' she says, and — Boo! what a fool I am!" and here the orator fairly broke down in his speech.



CHAPTER 17

IN WHICH PHILIP SHOWS HIS METTLE.

When the poor Little Sister proffered her mite, her all, to Philip, I daresay some sentimental passages occurred between them which are much too trivial to be narrated. No doubt her pleasure would have been at that moment to give him not only that gold which she had been saving up against rent-day, but the spoons, the furniture, and all the valuables of the house, including, perhaps, J. J.'s bricabrac, cabinets, china, and so forth. To perform a kindness, an act of self-sacrifice; — are not these the most delicious privileges of female tenderness? Philip checked his little friend's enthusiasm. He showed her a purse full of money, at which sight the poor little soul was rather disappointed. He magnified the value of his horses, which, according to Philip's calculation, were to bring him at least two hundred pounds more than the stock which he had already in hand; and the master of such a sum as this, she was forced to confess, had no need to despair. Indeed, she had never in her life possessed the half of it. Her kind dear little offer of a home in her house he would accept sometimes, and with gratitude. Well, there was a little consolation in that. In a moment that active little housekeeper saw the room ready; flowers on the mantel-piece; his looking-glass which her father could do quite well with the little one, as he was always shaved by the barber now; the quilted counterpane, which she had herself made — I know not what more improvements she devised; and I fear that at the idea of having Philip with her, this little thing was as extravagantly and unreasonably happy as we have just now seen Philip to be. What was that last dish which Pætus and Arria shared in common? I have lost my Lempriere's dictionary (that treasure of my youth), and forget whether it was a cold dagger *au naturel*, or a dish of hot coals *à la Romaine*, of which they partook; but, whatever it was, she smiled, and delightedly received it, happy to share the beloved one's fortune.

Yes: Philip would come home to his Little Sister sometimes: sometimes of a Saturday, and they would go to church on Sunday, as he used to do when he was a boy at school. "But then, you know," says Phil, "law is law; study is study. I must devote my whole energies to my work — get up very early."

"Don't tire your eyes, my dear," interposes Mr. Philip's soft, judicious friend.

"There must be no trifling with work," says Philip, with awful gravity. "There's Benton the Judge: Benton, and Burbage, you know."

"Oh, Benton and Burbage!" whispers the Little Sister, not a little bewildered.

"How do you suppose he became a judge before forty?"

"Before forty who? law, bless me!"

"Before he was forty, Mrs. Carry. When he came to work, he had his own way to make: just like me. He had a small allowance from his father: that's not like me. He took chambers in the Temple. He went to a pleader's office. He read fourteen, fifteen, hours every day. He dined on a cup of tea and a muttonchop."

"La, bless me, child! I wouldn't have you do that, not to be Lord Chamberlain — Chancellor what's his name? Destroy your youth with reading, and your eyes, and go without your dinner? You're not used to that sort of thing, dear; and it would kill you!"

Philip smoothed his fair hair off his ample forehead, and nodded his head, smiling sweetly. I think his inward monitor hinted to him that there was not much danger of his killing himself by over-work. "To succeed at the law, as in all other professions," he continued, with much gravity, "requires the greatest perseverance, and industry, and talent; and then, perhaps, you don't succeed. Many have failed who have had all these qualities."

"But they haven't talents like my Philip, I know they haven't. And I had to stand up in a court once, and was cross-examined by a vulgar man before a horrid deaf old judge; and I'm sure if your lawyers are like them I don't wish you to succeed at all. And now, look! there's a nice loin of pork coming up. Pa loves roast pork; and you must come and have some with us; and every day and all days, my dear, I should like to see you seated there." And the Little Sister frisked about here, and bustled there, and brought a cunning bottle of wine from some corner, and made the boy welcome. So that, you see, far from starving, he actually had two dinners on that first day of his ruin.

Caroline consented to a compromise regarding the money, on Philip's solemn vow and promise that she should be his

banker whenever necessity called. She rather desired his poverty for the sake of its precious reward. She hid away a little bag of gold for her darling's use whenever he should need it. I daresay she pinched and had shabby dinners at home, so as to save yet more, and so caused the captain to grumble. Why, for that boy's sake, I believe she would have been capable of shaving her lodgers' legs of mutton, and levying a tax on their tea-caddies and baker's stuff. If you don't like unprincipled attachments of this sort, and only desire that your womankind should love you for yourself, and according to your deserts, I am your very humble servant. Hereditary bondswomen! you know, that were you free, and did you strike the blow, my dears, you were unhappy for your pain, and eagerly would claim your bonds again. What poet has uttered that sentiment? It is perfectly true, and I know will receive the cordial approbation of the dear ladies.

Philip has decreed in his own mind that he will go and live in those chambers in the Temple where we have met him. Vanjohn, the sporting gentleman, had determined for special reasons to withdraw from law and sport in this country, and Mr. Firmin took possession of his vacant sleeping chamber. To furnish a bachelor's bed-room need not be a matter of much cost; but Mr. Philip was too good-natured a fellow to haggle about the valuation of Vanjohn's bedsteads and chests of drawers, and generously took them at twice their value. He and Mr. Cassidy now divided the rooms in equal reign. Ah, happy rooms! bright rooms, rooms near the sky, to remember you is to be young again! for I would have you to know, that when Philip went to take possession of his share of the fourth floor in the Temple, his biographer was still comparatively juvenile, and in one or two very old-fashioned families was called "young Pendennis."

So Philip Firmin dwelt in a garret; and the fourth part of a laundress and the half of a boy now formed the domestic establishment of him who had been attended by housekeepers, butlers, and obsequious liveried menials. To be freed from that ceremonial and etiquette of plush and worsted lace was an immense relief to Firmin. His pipe need not lurk in crypts or back closets now: its fragrance breathed over the whole chambers, and rose up to the sky, their near neighbour.

The first month or two after being ruined. Philip vowed, was an uncommonly pleasant time. He had still plenty of money in his pocket; and the sense that, perhaps, it was imprudent to take a cab or drink a bottle of wine, added a zest to those enjoyments which they by no means possessed when they were easy and of daily occurrence. I am not certain that a dinner of beef and porter did not amuse our young man almost as well as banquets much more costly to which he had been accustomed. He laughed at the pretensions of his boyish days, when he and other solemn young epicures used to sit down to elaborate tavern banquets, and pretend to criticize vintages, and sauces, and turtle. As yet there was not only content with his dinner, but plenty therewith; and I do not wish to alarm you by supposing that Philip will ever have to encounter any dreadful extremities of poverty or hunger in the course of his history. The wine in the jug was very low at times, but it never was quite empty. This lamb was shorn, but the wind was tempered to him.

So Philip took possession of his rooms in the Temple, and began actually to reside there just as the long vacation commenced, which he intended to devote to a course of serious study of the law and private preparation, before he should venture on the great business of circuits and the bar. Nothing is more necessary for desk-men than exercise, so Philip took a good deal; especially on the water, where he pulled a famous oar. Nothing is more natural after exercise than refreshment; and Mr. Firmin, now he was too poor for claret, showed a great capacity for beer. After beer and bodily labour, rest, of course, is necessary; and Firmin slept nine hours, and looked as rosy as a girl in her first season. Then such a man, with such a frame and health, must have a good appetite for breakfast. And then every man, who wishes to succeed at the bar, in the senate, on the bench, in the House of Peers, on the Woolsack, must know the quotidian history of his country; so, of course, Philip read the newspaper. Thus, you see, his hours of study were perforce curtailed by the necessary duties which distracted him from his labours.

It has been said that Mr. Firmin's companion in chambers, Mr. Cassidy, was a native of the neighbouring kingdom of Ireland, and engaged in literary pursuits in this country. A merry, shrewd, silent, observant little man, he, unlike some of his compatriots, always knew how to make both ends meet; feared no man alive in the character of a dun; and out of small earnings managed to transmit no small comforts and subsidies to old parents living somewhere in Munster. Of Cassidy's friends was Finucane, now editor of the Pall Mall Gazette; he married the widow of the late eccentric and gifted Captain Shandon, and Cass. himself was the fashionable correspondent of the Gazette, chronicling the marriages, deaths, births, dinner-parties of the nobility. These Irish gentlemen knew other Irish gentlemen, connected with other newspapers, who formed a little literary society. They assembled at each other's rooms, and at haunts where social pleasure was to be purchased at no dear rate. Philip Firmin was known to many of them before his misfortunes occurred, and when there was gold in plenty in his pocket, and never-failing applause for his songs.

When Pendennis and his friends wrote in this newspaper, it was impertinent enough, and many men must have heard the writers laugh at the airs which they occasionally thought proper to assume. The tone which they took amused, annoyed, tickled, was popular. It was continued, and, of course, caricatured by their successors. They worked for very moderate fees: but paid themselves by impertinence, and the satisfaction of assailing their betters. There or four persons were reserved from their abuse; but somebody was sure every week to be tied up at their post, and the public made sport of the victim's contortions. The writers were obscure barristers, ushers, and college men, but they had omniscience at their pen's end, and were ready to lay down the law on any given subject — to teach any man his business, were it a bishop in his pulpit, a Minister in his place in the House, a captain on his quarter-deck, a tailor on his shopboard, or a jockey in his saddle.

Since those early days of the Pall Mall Gazette, when old Shandon wielded his truculent tomahawk, and Messrs. W-rr-ngt-n and P-nd-nn-s followed him in the war-path, the Gazette had passed through several hands; and the victims who were immolated by the editors of to-day were very likely the objects of the best puffery of the last dynasty. To be flogged in what was your own school-room — that, surely, is a queer sensation; and when my Report was published on the decay of the sealing-wax trade in the three kingdoms (owing to the prevalence of gummed envelopes — as you may see in that masterly document), I was horsed up and smartly whipped in the Gazette by some of the rods which had come out of pickle since my time. Was not good Dr. Guillotin executed by his own neat invention? I don't know who was the Monsieur Samson who operated on me; but have always had my idea that Digges, of Corpus, was the man to whom my flagellation was entrusted. His father keeps a ladies'-school at Hackney; but there is an air of fashion in everything which Digges writes, and a chivalrous conservatism which makes me pretty certain that D. was my scarifier. All this, however, is naught. Let us turn away from the author's private griefs and egotisms to those of the hero of the story.

Does any one remember the appearance some twenty years ago of a little book called Trumpet Calls — a book of songs and poetry, dedicated to his brother officers by Cornet Canterton? His trumpet was very tolerably melodious, and the cornet played some small airs on it with some little grace and skill. But this poor Canterton belonged to the Life Guards Green, and Philip Firmin would have liked to have the lives of one or two troops at least of that corps. Entering into Mr. Cassidy's room, Philip found the little volume. He set to work to exterminate Canterton. He rode him down, trampled over his face and carcase, knocked the Trumpet Calls and all the teeth out of the trumpeter's throat. Never was such a smashing article as he wrote. And Mugford, Mr. Cassidy's chief and owner, who likes always to have at least one man served up and hashed small in the Pall Mall Gazette, happened at this very juncture to have no other victim ready in his larder. Philip's review appeared there in print. He rushed off with immense glee to Westminster, to show us his performance. Nothing must content him but to give a dinner at Greenwich on his success. Oh, Philip! We wished that this had not been his first fee; and that sober law had given it to him, and not the graceless and fickle muse with whom he had been flirting. For, truth to say, certain wise old heads which wagged over his performance could see but little merit in it. His style was coarse, his wit clumsy and savage. Never mind characterizing either now. He has seen the error of his ways, and divorced with the muse whom he never ought to have wooed.

The shrewd Cassidy not only could not write himself, but knew he could not — or, at least pen more than a plain paragraph, or a brief sentence to the point, but said he would carry this paper to his chief. "His Excellency" was the nickname by which this chief was called by his familiars. Mugford — Frederick Mugford, was his real name — and putting out of sight that little defect in his character, that he committed a systematic literary murder once a week, a more worthy good-natured little murderer did not live. He came of the old school of the press. Like French marshals, he had risen from the ranks, and retained some of the manners and oddities of the private soldier. A new race of writers had grown up since he enlisted as a printer's boy — men of the world, with the manners of other gentlemen. Mugford never professed the least gentility. He knew that his young men laughed at his peculiarities, and did not care a fig for their scorn. As the knife with which he conveyed his victuals to his mouth went down his throat at the plenteous banquets which he gave, he saw his young friends wince and wonder, and rather relished their surprise. Those lips never cared in the least about placing his h's in right places. They used bad language with great freedom — (to hear him bullying a printing-office was a wonder of eloquence) — but they betrayed no secrets, and the words which they uttered you might trust. He had belonged to two or three parties, and had respected them all. When he went to the Under-Secretary's office he was never kept waiting; and once or twice Mrs. Mugford, who governed him, ordered him to attend the Saturday reception of the Ministers' ladies, where he might be seen, with dirty hands, it is true, but a richly-embroidered waistcoat and fancy satin tie. His heart,

however, was not in these entertainments. I have heard him say that he only came because Mrs. M. would have it; and he frankly owned that he “would rather ‘ave a pipe, and a drop of something ‘ot, than all your ices and rubbish.”

Mugford had a curious knowledge of what was going on in the world, and of the affairs of countless people. When Cass. brought Philip’s article to his Excellency, and mentioned the author’s name, Mugford showed himself to be perfectly familiar with the histories of Philp and his father. “The old chap has nobbled the young fellow’s money, almost every shilling of it, I hear. Knew he never would carry on. His discounts would have killed any man. Seen his paper about this ten year. Young one is a gentleman — passionate fellow, hawhaw fellow, but kind to the poor. Father never was a gentleman, with all his fine airs and fine waistcoats. I don’t set up in that line myself, Cass., but I tell you I know ‘em when I see ‘em.”

Philip had friends and private patrons whose influence was great with the Mugford family, and of whom he little knew. Every year Mrs. M. was in the habit of contributing a Mugford to the world. She was one of Mrs. Brandon’s most regular clients; and year after year, almost from his first arrival in London, Ridley, the painter, had been engaged as portrait painter to this worthy family. Philip and his illness; Philip and his horses, splendours, and entertainments; Philip and his lamentable downfall and ruin, had formed the subject of many an interesting talk between Mrs. Mugford and her friend, the Little Sister; and as we know Caroline’s infatuation about the young fellow, we may suppose that his good qualities lost nothing in the description. When that article in the Pall Mall Gazette appeared, Nurse Brandon took the omnibus to Haverstock Hill, where, as you know, Mugford had his villa; — arrived at Mrs. Mugford’s, Gazette in hand, and had a long and delightful conversation with that lady. Mrs. Brandon bought I don’t know how many copies of that Pall Mall Gazette. She now asked for it repeatedly in her walks at sundry ginger-beer shops, and of all sorts of newsvendors. I have heard that when the Mugfords first purchased the Gazette, Mrs. M. used to drop bills from her pony-chaise, and distribute placards setting forth the excellence of the journal. “We keep our carriage, but we ain’t above our business, Brandon,” that good lady would say. And the business prospered under the management of these worthy folks; and the pony-chaise unfolded into a noble barouche; and the pony increased and multiplied, and became a pair of horses; and there was not a richer piece of gold-lace round any coachman’s hat in London than now decorated John, who had grown with the growth of his master’s fortunes, and drove the chariot in which his worthy employers rode on the way to Hampstead, honour, and prosperity.

“All this pitching into the poet is very well, you know, Cassidy,” says Mugford to his subordinate. “It’s like shooting a butterfly with a blunderbuss; but if Firmin likes that kind of sport, I don’t mind. There won’t be any difficulty about taking his copy at our place. The duchess knows another old woman who is a friend of his” (“the duchess” was the title which Mr. Mugford was in the playful habit of conferring upon his wife). “It’s my belief young F. had better stick to the law, and leave the writing rubbish alone. But he knows his own affairs best, and, mind you, the duchess is determined we shall give him a helping hand.”

Once, in the days of his prosperity, and in J. J.’s company, Philip had visited Mrs. Mugford and her family — a circumstance which the gentleman had almost forgotten. The painter and his friend were taking a Sunday walk, and came upon Mugford’s pretty cottage and garden, and were hospitably entertained there by the owners of the place. It has disappeared, and the old garden has long since been covered by terraces and villas, and Mugford and Mrs. M., good souls, where are they? But the lady thought she had never seen such a fine-looking young fellow as Philip; cast about in her mind which of her little female Mugfords should marry him; and insisted upon offering her guest champagne. Poor Phil! So, you see, whilst, perhaps, he was rather pluming himself upon his literary talents, and imagining that he was a clever fellow, he was only the object of a job on the part of two or three good folks, who knew his history, and compassionated his misfortunes.

Mugford recalled himself to Philip’s recollection, when they met after the appearance of Mr. Phil’s first performance in the Gazette. If he still took a Sunday walk, Hampstead way, Mr. M. requested him to remember that there was a slice of beef and a glass of wine at the old shop. Philip remembered it well enough now: the ugly room, the ugly family, the kind worthy people. Ere long he learned what had been Mrs. Brandon’s connection with them, and the young man’s heart was softened and grateful as he thought how this kind, gentle creature had been able to befriend him. She, we may be sure, was not a little proud of her protégé. I believe she grew to fancy that the whole newspaper was written by Philip. She made her fond parent read it aloud as she worked. Mr. Ridley, senior, pronounced it was remarkable fine, really now; without, I think, entirely comprehending the meaning of the sentiments which Mr. Gann gave forth in his rich loud voice, and often dropping asleep in his chair during this sermon.

In the autumn, Mr. Firmin’s friends, Mr. and Mrs. Pendennis, selected the romantic seaport town of Boulogne for

their holiday residence; and having roomy quarters in the old town, we gave Mr. Philip an invitation to pay us a visit whenever he could tear himself away from literature and law. He came in high spirits. He amused us by imitations and descriptions of his new proprietor and master, Mr. Mugford — his blunders, his bad language, his good heart. One day, Mugford expected a celebrated literary character to dinner, and Philip and Cassidy were invited to meet him. The great man was ill, and was unable to come. "Don't dish up the side-dishes," called out Mugford to his cook, in the hearing of his other guests. "Mr. Lyon ain't a coming." They dined quite sufficiently without the side-dishes, and were perfectly cheerful in the absence of the lion. Mugford patronized his young men with amusing good-nature. "Firmin, cut the goose for the duchess, will you? Cass. can't say Bo! to one, he can't. Ridley, a little of the stuffing. It'll make your hair curl." And Philip was going to imitate a frightful act with the cold steel (with which I have said Philip's master used to convey food to his mouth), but our dear innocent third daughter uttered a shriek of terror, which caused him to drop the dreadful weapon. Our darling little Florence is a nervous child, and the sight of an edged tool causes her anguish, ever since our darling little Tom nearly cut his thumb off with his father's razor.

Our main amusement in this delightful place was to look at the sea-sick landing from the steamers; and one day, as we witnessed this phenomenon, Philip sprang to the ropes which divided us from the arriving passengers, and with a cry of "How do you do, general?" greeted a yellow-faced gentleman, who started back, and, to my thinking, seemed but ill inclined to reciprocate Philip's friendly greeting. The general was fluttered, no doubt, by the bustle and interruptions incidental to the landing. A pallid lady, the partner of his existence, probably, was calling out, "Noof et doo domestiques, Doo!" to the sentries who kept the line, and who seemed little interested by this family news. A governess, a tall young lady, and several more male and female children, followed the pale lady, who, as I thought, looked strangely frightened when the gentleman addressed as general communicated to her Philip's name. "Is that him?" said the lady in questionable grammar; and the tall young lady turned a pair of large eyes upon the individual designated as "him," and showed a pair of dank ringlets, out of which the envious sea-nymphs had shaken all the curl.

The general turned out to be General Baynes; the pale lady was Mrs. General B.; the tall young lady was Miss Charlotte Baynes, the general's eldest child; and the other six, forming nine, or "noof," in all, as Mrs. General B. said, were the other members of the Baynes family. And here I may as well say why the general looked alarmed on seeing Philip, and why the general's lady frowned at him. In action, one of the bravest of men, in common life General Baynes was timorous and weak. Specially he was afraid of Mrs. General Baynes, who ruled him with a vigorous authority. As Philip's trustee, he had allowed Philip's father to make away with the boy's money. He learned with a ghastly terror that he was answerable for his own remissness and want of care. For a long while he did not dare to tell his commander-in-chief of this dreadful penalty which was hanging over him. When at last he ventured upon this confession, I do not envy him the scene which must have ensued between him and his commanding officer. The morning after the fatal confession, when the children assembled for breakfast and prayers, Mrs. Baynes gave their young ones their porridge: she and Charlotte poured out the tea and coffee for their elders, and then addressing her eldest son Ochterlony, she said, "Ocky, my boy, the general has announced a charming piece of news this morning."

"Bought that pony, sir?" says Ocky.

"Oh, what jolly fun!" says Moira, the second son.

"Dear, dear papa! what's the matter, and why do you look so?" cries Charlotte, looking behind her father's paper.

That guilty man would fain have made a shroud of his Morning Herald. He would have flung the sheet over his whole body, and lain hidden there from all eyes.

"The fun, my dears, is that your father is ruined: that's the fun. Eat your porridge now, little ones. Charlotte, pop a bit of butter in Carrick's porridge; for you mayn't have any to-morrow."

"Oh, gammon," cries Moira.

"You'll soon see whether it is gammon or not, sir, when you'll be starving, sir. Your father has ruined us — and a very pleasant morning's work, I am sure."

And she calmly rubs the nose of her youngest child who is near her, and too young, and innocent, and careless, perhaps, of the world's censure as yet to keep in a strict cleanliness her own dear little snub nose and dappled cheeks.

"We are only ruined, and shall be starving soon, my dears, and if the general has bought a pony — as I dare say he has; he is quite capable of buying a pony when we are starving — the best thing we can do is to eat the pony. M'Grigor, don't

laugh. Starvation is no laughing matter. When we were at Dumdum, in '36, we ate some colt. Don't you remember Jubber's colt — Jubber of the Horse Artillery, general? Never tasted anything more tender in all my life. Charlotte, take Jany's hands out of the marmalade! We are all ruined, my dears, as sure as our name is Baynes." Thus did the mother of the family prattle on in the midst of her little ones, and announce to them the dreadful news of impending starvation. "General Baynes, by his carelessness, had allowed Dr. Firmin to make away with the money over which the general had been set as sentinel. Philip might recover from the trustee, and no doubt would. Perhaps he would not press his claim? My dear, what can you expect from the son of such a father? Depend on it, Charlotte, no good fruit can come from a stock like that. The son is a bad one, the father is a bad one, and your father, poor dear soul, is not fit to be trusted to walk the street without some one to keep him from tumbling. Why did I allow him to go to town without me? We were quartered at Colchester then: and I could not move on account of your brother M'Grigor. 'Baynes,' I said to your father, 'as sure as I let you go away to town without me, you will come to mischief.' And go he did, and come to mischief he did. And through his folly I and my poor children must go and beg our bread in the streets — I and my seven poor, robbed, penniless little ones. Oh, it's cruel, cruel!"

Indeed, one cannot fancy a more dismal prospect for this worthy mother and wife than to see her children without provision at the commencement of their lives, and her luckless husband robbed of his life's earnings, and ruined just when he was too old to work.

What was to become of them? Now poor Charlotte thought, with pangs of a keen remorse, how idle she had been, and how she had snubbed her governesses, and how little she knew, and how badly she played the piano. Oh, neglected opportunities! Oh, remorse, now the time was past and irrecoverable! Does any young lady read this who, perchance, ought to be doing her lessons? My dear, lay down the story-book at once. Go up to your school-room, and practise your piano for two hours this moment; so that you may be prepared to support your family, should ruin in any case fall upon you. A great girl of sixteen, I pity Charlotte Baynes's feelings of anguish. She can't write a very good hand; she can scarcely answer any question to speak of in any educational books; her pianoforte playing is very, very so-so indeed. If she is to go out and get a living for the family, how, in the name of goodness, is she to set about it? What are they to do with the boys, and the money that has been put away for Ochterlony when he goes to college, and for Moira's commission? "Why, we can't afford to keep them at Dr. Pybus's, where they were doing so well; and they were ever so much better and more gentlemanlike than Colonel Chandler's boys; and to lose the army will break Moira's heart, it will. And the little ones, my little blue-eyed Carrick, and my darling Jany, and my Mary, that I nursed almost miraculously out of her scarlet fever. God help them! God help us all!" thinks the poor mother. No wonder that her nights are wakeful, and her heart in a tumult of alarm at the idea of the impending danger.

And the father of the family? — the stout old general whose battles and campaigns are over, who has come home to rest his war-worn limbs, and make his peace with heaven ere it calls him away — what must be his feelings when he thinks that he has been entrapped by a villain into committing an imprudence, which makes his children penniless and himself dishonoured and a beggar? When he found what Dr. Firmin had done, and how he had been cheated, he went away, aghast, to his lawyer, who could give him no help. Philip's mother's trustee was answerable to Philip for his property. It had been stolen through Baynes's own carelessness, and the law bound him to replace it. General Baynes's man of business could not help him out of his perplexity at all; and I hope my worthy reader is not going to be too angry with the general for what I own he did. You never would, my dear sir, I know. No power on earth would induce you to depart one inch from the path of rectitude; or, having done an act of imprudence, to shrink from bearing the consequence. The long and short of the matter is, that poor Baynes and his wife, after holding agitated, stealthy councils together — after believing that every strange face they saw was a bailiff's coming to arrest them on Philip's account — after horrible days of remorse, misery, guilt — I say the long and the short of the matter was, that these poor people determined to run away. They would go and hide themselves anywhere — in an impenetrable pine forest in Norway — up an inaccessible mountain in Switzerland. They would change their names; dye their mustachios and honest old white hair; fly with their little ones away, away, away, out of the reach of law and Philip; and the first flight lands them on Boulogne Pier, and there is Mr. Philip holding out his hand and actually eyeing them as they got out of the steamer! Eyeing them? It is the eye of heaven that is on those criminals. Holding out his hand to them? It is the hand of fate that is on their wretched shoulders. No wonder they shuddered and turned pale. That which I took for sea-sickness, I am sorry to say, was a guilty conscience: and where is the steward, my dear friends, who can relieve us of that?

As this party came staggering out of the Customhouse, poor Baynes still found Philip's hand stretched out to catch hold of him, and saluted him with a ghastly cordiality. "These are your children, general, and this is Mrs. Baynes?" says Philip, smiling, and taking off his hat.

"Oh, yes! I'm Mrs. General Baynes!" says the poor woman; "and these are the children — yes, yes. Charlotte, this is Mr. Firmin, of whom you have heard us speak; and these are my boys, Moira and Ochterlony."

"I have had the honour of meeting General Baynes at Old Parr Street. Don't you remember, sir?" says Mr. Pendennis, with great affability to the general.

"What, another who knows me?" I daresay the poor wretch thinks; and glances of a dreadful meaning pass between the guilty wife and the guilty husband.

"You are going to stay at any hotel?"

"Hôtel des Bains!" "Hôtel du Nord?" "Hôtel d'Angleterre," here cry twenty commissioners in a breath.

"Hotel? Oh, yes! That is, we have not made up our minds whether we shall go in to-night or whether we shall stay," say those guilty ones, looking at one another, and then down to the ground; on which one of the children, with a roar, says —

"Oh, ma, what a story! You said you'd stay to-night; and I was so sick in the beastly boat, and I won't travel any more!" And tears choke his artless utterance. "And you said Bang to the man who took your keys, you know you did," resumes the innocent, as soon as he can gasp a further remark.

"Who told you to speak?" cried mamma, giving the boy a shake.

"This is the way to the Hôtel des Bains," says Philip, making Miss Baynes another of his best bows. And Miss Baynes makes a curtsy, and her eyes look up at the handsome young man — large brown honest eyes in a comely round face, on each side of which depend two straight wisps of brown hair that were ringlets when they left Folkestone a few hours since.

"Oh, I say, look at those women with the short petticoats! and wooden shoes, by George! Oh! it's jolly, ain't it?" cries one young gentleman.

"By George, there's a man with earrings on! There is, Ocky, upon my word!" calls out another. And the elder boy, turning round to his father, points to some soldiers. "Did you ever see such little beggars?" he says, tossing his head up. "They wouldn't take such fellows into our line."

"I am not at all tired, thank you," says Charlotte.

"I am accustomed to carry him." I forgot to say that the young lady had one of the children asleep on her shoulder: and another was toddling at her side, holding by his sister's dress, and admiring Mr. Firmin's whiskers, that flamed and curled very luminously and gloriously, like to the rays of the setting sun.

"I am very glad we met, sir," says Philip, in the most friendly manner, taking leave of the general at the gate of his hotel. "I hope you won't go away to-morrow, and that I may come and pay my respects to Mrs. Baynes." Again he salutes that lady with a coup de chapeau. Again he bows to Miss Baynes. She makes a pretty curtsy enough, considering that she has a baby asleep on her shoulder. And they enter the hotel, the excellent Marie marshalling them to fitting apartments, where some of them, I have no doubt, will sleep very soundly. How much more comfortably might poor Baynes and his wife have slept had they known what were Philip's feelings regarding them!

We both admired Charlotte, the tall girl who carried her little brother, and around whom the others clung. And we spoke loudly in Miss Charlotte's praises to Mrs. Pendennis, when we joined that lady at dinner. In the praise of Mrs. Baynes we had not a great deal to say, further than that she seemed to take command of the whole expedition, including the general officer, her husband.

Though Marie's beds at the Hôtel des Bains are as comfortable as any beds in Europe, you see that admirable chambermaid cannot lay out a clean, easy conscience upon the clean, fragrant pillow-case; and General and Mrs. Baynes owned, in after days, that one of the most dreadful nights they ever passed was that of their first landing in France. What refugee from his country can fly from himself? Railways were not as yet in that part of France. The general was too poor to fly with a couple of private carriages, which he must have had for his family of "noof," his governess, and two servants. Encumbered with such a train, his enemy would speedily have pursued and overtaken him. It is a fact that, immediately after landing at his hotel, he and his commanding officer went off to see when they could get places for — never mind the name of the place where they really thought of taking refuge. They never told, but Mrs. General Baynes had a sister, Mrs.

Major MacWhirter (married to MacW. of the Bengal Cavalry), and the sisters loved each other very affectionately, especially by letter, for it must be owned that they quarrelled frightfully when together; and Mrs. Mac Whirter never could bear that her younger sister should be taken out to dinner before her, because she was married to a superior officer. Well, their little differences were forgotten when the two ladies were apart. The sisters wrote to each other prodigious long letters, in which household affairs, the children's puerile diseases, the relative prices of veal, eggs, chickens, the rent of lodging and houses in various places, were fully discussed. And as Mrs. Baynes showed a surprising knowledge of Tours, the markets, rents, clergymen, society there, and as Major and Mrs. Mac were staying there, I have little doubt, for my part, from this and another not unimportant circumstance, that it was to that fair city our fugitives were wending their way, when events occurred which must now be narrated, and which caused General Baynes at the head of his domestic regiment to do what the King of France with twenty thousand men is said to have done in old times.

Philip was greatly interested about the family. The truth is, we were all very much bored at Boulogne. We read the feeblest London papers at the reading-room with frantic assiduity. We saw all the boats come in: and the day was lost when we missed the Folkestone boat or the London boat. We consumed much time and absinthe at cafés; and tramped leagues upon that old pier every day. Well, Philip was at the Hôtel des Bains at a very early hour next morning, and there he saw the general, with a woe-worn face, leaning on his stick, and looking at his luggage, as it lay piled in the porte-cochère of the hotel. There they lay, thirty-seven packages in all, including washing-tubes, and a child's India sleeping-cot; and all these packages were ticketed M. le Général Baynes, Officier Anglais, Tours, Touraine, France. I say, putting two and two together; calling to mind Mrs. General's singular knowledge of Tours and familiarity with the place and its prices; remembering that her sister Emily — Mrs. Major MacWhirter, in fact — was there; and seeing thirty-seven trunks, bags and portmanteaus, all directed "M. le GÉNÉRAL Baynes, Officier Anglais, Tours, Touraine," am I wrong in supposing that Tours was the general's destination? On the other hand, we have the old officer's declaration to Philip that he did not know where he was going. Oh, you sly old man! Oh, you grey old fox, beginning to double and to turn at sixty-seven years of age! Well? The general was in retreat, and he did not wish the enemy to know upon what lines he was retreating. What is the harm of that, pray? Besides, he was under the orders of his commanding officer, and when Mrs. General gave her orders, I should have liked to see any officer of hers disobey.

"What a pyramid of portmanteaus! You are not thinking of moving to-day, general?" says Philip.

"It is Sunday, sir," says the general; which you will perceive was not answering the question; but, in truth, except for a very great emergency, the good general would not travel on that day.

"I hope the ladies slept well after their windy voyage."

"Thank you. My wife is an old sailor, and has made two voyages out and home to India." Here, you understand, the old man is again eluding his interlocutor's artless queries.

"I should like to have some talk with you, sir, when you are free," continues Philip, not having leisure as yet to be surprised at the other's demeanour.

"There are other days besides Sunday for talk on business," says that piteous sly-boots of an old officer. Ah, conscience! conscience! Twenty-four Sikhs, sword in hand, two dozen Pindarries, Mahrattas, Ghoorkas, what you please — that old man felt that he would rather have met them than Philip's unsuspecting blue eyes. These, however, now lighted up with rather an angry, "Well, sir, as you don't talk business on Sunday, may I call on you to-morrow morning."

And what advantage had the poor old fellow got by all this doubling and hesitating and artfulness? — a respite until to-morrow morning! Another night of horrible wakefulness and hopeless guilt, and Philip waiting ready the next morning with his little bill, and "Please pay me the thirty thousand which my father spent and you owe me. Please turn out into the streets with your wife and family, and beg and starve. Have the goodness to hand me out your last rupee. Be kind enough to sell your children's clothes and your wife's jewels, and hand over the proceeds to me. I'll call to-morrow. Bye, bye."

Here there came tripping over the marble pavement of the hall of the hotel a tall young lady in a brown silk dress and rich curling ringlets falling upon her fair young neck — (beautiful brown curling ringlets, vous comprenez, not wisps of moistened hair,) and a broad clear forehead, and two honest eyes shining below it, and cheeks not pale as they were yesterday; and lips redder still; and she says, "Papa, papa, won't you come to breakfast? The tea is — " What the precise state of the tea is I don't know — none of us ever shall — for here she says, "Oh, Mr. Firmin!" and makes a curtsy.

To which remark Philip replied, "Miss Baynes, I hope you are very well this morning, and not the worse for yesterday's

rough weather.”

“I am quite well, thank you,” was Miss Baynes’ instant reply. The answer was not witty, to be sure; but I don’t know that under the circumstances she could have said anything more appropriate. Indeed, never was a pleasanter picture of health and good-humour than the young lady presented: a difference more pleasant to note than Miss Charlotte’s face pale from the steamboat on Saturday, and shining, rosy, happy, and innocent in the cloudless Sabbath morn.

“A Madame,

“Madame le Major MacWhirter,

“à Tours,

“Touraine,

“France.

“Tintelleries, Boulogne-sur-Mer,

“Dearest Emily,

“Wednesday, August 24, 18 — .

“After suffering more dreadfully in the two hours’ passage from Folkestone to this place than I have in four passages out and home from India, except in that terrible storm off the Cape, in September, 1824, when I certainly did suffer most cruelly on board that horrible troop-ship; we reached this place last Saturday evening, having a full determination to proceed immediately on our route. Now, you will perceive that our minds are changed. We found this place pleasant, and the lodgings besides most neat, comfortable, and well found in everything, more reasonable than you proposed to get for us at Tours, which I am told also is damp, and might bring on the general’s jungle fever again. Owing to the hooping-cough having just been in the house, which, praised be mercy, all my dear ones have had it, including dear baby, who is quite well through it, and recommended sea air, we got this house more reasonable than prices you mention at Tours. A whole house: little room for two boys; nursery; nice little room for Charlotte, and a den for the general. I don’t know how ever we should have brought our party safe all the way to Tours. Thirty-seven articles of luggage, and Miss Flixby, who announced herself as perfect French governess, acquired at Paris — perfect, but perfectly useless. She can’t understand the French people when they speak to her, and goes about the house in a most bewildering way. I am the interpreter; poor Charlotte is much too timid to speak when I am by. I have rubbed up the old French which we learned at Chiswick at Miss Pinkerton’s; and I find my Hindostanee of great help: which I use it when we are at a loss for a word, and it answers extremely well. We pay for lodgings, the whole house — francs per month. Butchers’ meat and poultry plentiful but dear. A grocer in the Grande Rue sell excellent wine at fifteenpence per bottle; and groceries pretty much at English prices. Mr. Blowman at the English chapel of the Tintelleries has a fine voice, and appears to be a most excellent clergyman. I have heard him only once, however, on Sunday evening, when I was so agitated and so unhappy in my mind that I own I took little note of his sermon.

“The cause of that agitation you know, having imparted it to you in my letters of July, June, and 24th of May, ult. My poor simple, guileless Baynes was trustee to Mrs. Dr. Firmin, before she married that most unprincipled man. When we were at home last, and exchanged to the 120th from the 99th, my poor husband was inveigled by the horrid man into signing a paper which put the doctor in possession of all his wife’s property; whereas Charles thought he was only signing a power of attorney, enabling him to receive his son’s dividends. Dr. F., after the most atrocious deceit, forgery, and criminality of every kind, fled the country; and Hunt and Pegler, our solicitors, informed us that the general was answerable for the wickedness of this miscreant. He is so weak that he has been many and many times on the point of going to young Mr. F. and giving up everything. It was only by my prayers, by my commands, that I have been enabled to keep him quiet; and, indeed, Emily, the effort has almost killed him. Brandy repeatedly I was obliged to administer on the dreadful night of our arrival here.

“For the first person we met on landing was Mr. Philip Firmin, with a pert friend of his, Mr. Pendennis, whom I don’t at all like, though his wife is an amiable person like Emma Fletcher of the Horse Artillery: not with Emma’s style, however, but still amiable, and disposed to be most civil. Charlotte has taken a great fancy to her, as she always does to every new person. Well, fancy our state on landing, when a young gentleman calls out, ‘How do you do, general?’ and turns out to be Mr. Firmin! I thought I should have lost Charles in the night. I have seen him before going into action, as calm, and sleep and smile as sweet, as any babe. It was all I could do to keep up his courage: and, but for me, but for my prayers, but for my agonies, I think he would have jumped out of bed, and gone to Mr. F. that night, and said, ‘Take everything I have.’

“The young man I own has behaved in the most honourable way. He came to see us before breakfast on Sunday, when the poor general was so ill that I thought he would have fainted over his tea. He was too ill to go to church, where I went alone, with my dear ones, having, as I own, but very small comfort in the sermon: but oh, Emily, fancy, on our return, when I went into our room, I found my general on his knees with his Church service before him, crying, crying like a baby! You know I am hasty in my temper sometimes, and his is indeed an angel’s — and I said to him, ‘Charles Baynes, be a man, and don’t cry like a child!’ ‘Ah,’ says he, ‘Eliza, do you kneel, and thank God too;’ on which I said that I thought I did not require instruction in my religion from him or any man, except a clergyman, and many of these are but poor instructors, as you know.

“‘He has been here,’ says Charles; when I said, ‘Who has been here?’ ‘That noble young fellow,’ says my general; ‘that noble, noble Philip Firmin.’ Which noble his conduct I own it has been. ‘Whilst you were at church he came again — here into this very room, where I was sitting, doubting and despairing, with the Holy Book before my eyes, and no comfort out of it. And he said to me, “General, I want to talk to you about my grandfather’s will. You don’t suppose that because my father has deceived you and ruined me, I will carry the ruin farther, and visit his wrong upon children and innocent people?” Those were the young man’s words,’ my general said; and, ‘oh, Eliza!’ says he, ‘what pangs of remorse I felt when I remembered we had used hard words about him,’ which I own we had, for his manners are rough and haughty, and I have heard things of him which I do believe now can’t be true.

“All Monday my poor man was obliged to keep his bed with a smart attack of his fever. But yesterday he was quite bright and well again, and the Pendennis party took Charlotte for a drive, and showed themselves most polite. She reminds me of Mrs. Tom Fletcher of the Horse Artillery, but that I think I have mentioned before. My paper is full; and with our best to MacWhirter and the children, I am always my dearest Emily’s affectionate sister,

“Eliza Baynes.”



VOLUME II.

CHAPTER 1

BREVIS ESSE LABORO.

Never, General Baynes afterwards declared, did fever come and go so pleasantly as that attack to which we have seen Mrs. General advert in her letter to her sister, Mrs. Major MacWhirter. The cold fit was merely a lively, pleasant chatter and rattle of the teeth; the hot fit an agreeable warmth; and though the ensuing sleep, with which I believe such aguish attacks are usually concluded, was enlivened by several dreams of death, demons, and torture, how felicitous it was to wake and find that dreadful thought of ruin removed which had always, for the last few months, ever since Dr. Firmin's flight and the knowledge of his own imprudence, pursued the good-natured gentleman! What, this boy might go to college, and that get his commission; and their meals need be embittered by no more dreadful thoughts of the morrow, and their walks no longer were dogged by imaginary baliffs, or presented a gaol in the vista? It was too much bliss; and again and again the old soldier said his thankful prayers, and blessed his benefactor.

Philip thought no more of his act of kindness, except to be very grateful, and very happy that he had rendered other people so. He could no more have taken the old man's all, and plunged that innocent family into poverty, than he could have stolen the forks off my table. But other folks were disposed to rate his virtue much more highly; and amongst these was my wife, who chose positively to worship this young gentleman, and I believe would have let him smoke in her drawing-room if he had been so minded, and though her genteelest acquaintances were in the room. Goodness knows what a noise and what piteous looks are produced if ever the master of the house chooses to indulge in a cigar after dinner; but then, you understand, I have never declined to claim mine and my children's right because an old gentleman would be inconvenienced: and this is what I tell Mrs. Pen. If I order a coat from my tailor, must I refuse to pay him because a rogue steals it, and ought I to expect to be let off? Women won't see matters of fact in a matter-of-fact point of view; and justice, unless it is tinged with a little romance, gets no respect from them.

So, forsooth, because Philip has performed this certainly most generous, most dashing, most reckless piece of extravagance, he is to be held up as a perfect preux chevalier. The most riotous dinners are ordered for him. We are to wait until he comes to breakfast, and he is pretty nearly always late. The children are to be sent round to kiss uncle Philip, as he is now called. The children? I wonder the mother did not jump up and kiss him too. Elle en était capable. As for the osculations which took place between Mrs. Pendennis and her new-found young friend, Miss Charlotte Baynes, they were perfectly ridiculous; two school children could not have behaved more absurdly; and I don't know which seemed to be the younger of these two. There were colloquies, assignations, meetings on the ramparts, on the pier, where know I? — and the servants and little children of the two establishments were perpetually trotting to and fro with letters from dearest Laura to dearest Charlotte, and dearest Charlotte to her dearest Mrs. Pendennis. Why, my wife absolutely went the length of saying that dearest Charlotte's mother, Mrs. Baynes, was a worthy, clever woman, and a good mother — a woman whose tongue never ceased clacking about the regiment, and all the officers and all the officers' wives, of whom, by the way, she had very little good to tell.

"A worthy mother, is she, my dear?" I say. "But, oh, mercy! Mrs. Baynes would be an awful mother-in-law!"

I shuddered at the thought of having such a commonplace, hard, ill-bred woman in a state of quasi authority over me.

On this Mrs. Laura must break out in quite a petulant tone — "Oh, how stale this kind of thing is Arthur, from a man qui veut passer pour un homme d'esprit! You are always attacking mothers-in-law!"

"Witness Mrs. Mackenzie, my love — Clive Newcome's mother-in-law. That's a nice creature; not selfish, not wicked, not —"

"Not nonsense, Arthur!"

"Mrs. Baynes knew Mrs. Mackenzie in the West Indies, as she knew all the female army. She considers Mrs. Mackenzie was a most elegant, handsome, dashing woman — only a little too fond of the admiration of our sex. There was, I own, a fascination about Captain Goby. Do you remember, my love, that man with the stays and dyed hair, who —"

"Oh, Arthur! When our girls marry, I suppose you will teach their husbands to abuse, and scorn, and mistrust their mother-in-law. Will he, my darlings? will he, my blessings?" (This apart to the children, if you please.) "Go! I have no patience with such talk!"

"Well, my love, Mrs. Baynes is a most agreeable woman; and when I have heard that story about the Highlanders at the Cape of Good Hope a few times more" (I do not tell it here, for it has nothing to do with the present history), "I daresay I shall begin to be amused by it."

"Ah! here comes Charlotte, I'm glad to say. How pretty she is! What a colour! What a dear creature!"

To all which, of course, I could not say a contradictory word, for a prettier, fresher lass than Miss Baynes, with a sweeter voice, face, laughter, it was difficult to see.

"Why does mamma like Charlotte better than she likes us?" says our dear and justly indignant eldest girl. "I could not love her better if I were her mother-in-law," says Laura, running to her young friend, casting a glance at me over her shoulder; and that kissing nonsense begins between the two young ladies. To be sure, the girl looks uncommonly bright and pretty with her pink cheeks, her bright eyes, her slim form, and that charming white India shawl which her father brought home for her.

To this osculatory party enters presently Mr. Philip Firmin, who has been dawdling about the ramparts ever since breakfast. He says he has been reading law there. He has found a jolly quiet place to read. Law, has he? And much good may it do him! Why has he not gone back to his law, and his reviewing?

"You must — you must stay on a little longer. You have only been here five days. Do, Charlotte, ask Philip to stay a little."

All the children sing in a chorus, "Oh, do, uncle Philip, stay a little longer!" Miss Baynes says, "I hope you will stay, Mr. Firmin," and looks at him.

"Five days has he been here? Five years. Five lives. Five hundred years. What do you mean? In that little time of — let me see, a hundred and twenty hours, and at least a half of them for sleep and dinner (for Philip's appetite was very fine) — do you mean that in that little time his heart, cruelly stabbed by a previous monster in female shape, has healed, got quite well, and actually begun to be wounded again? Have two walks on the pier, as many visits to the Tintalleries (where he hears the story of the Highlanders at the Cape of Good Hope with respectful interest), a word or two about the weather, a look or two, a squeezekin, perhaps, of a little handykin — I say, do you mean that this absurd young idiot, and that little round-faced girl, pretty, certainly, but only just out of the school-room — do you mean to say that they have — Upon my word, Laura, this is too bad. Why, Philip has not a penny-piece in the world."

"Yes, he has two hundred pounds, and expects to sell his mare for ninety at least. He has excellent talents. He can easily write three articles a week in the Pall Mall Gazette. I am sure no one writes so well, and it is much better done and more amusing than it used to be. That is three hundred a year. Lord Ringwood must be applied to, and must and shall get him something. Don't you know that Captain Baynes stood by Colonel Ringwood's side at Busaco, and that they were the closest friends? And pray, how did we get on, I should like to know? How did we get on, baby?"

"How did we det on?" says the baby.

"Oh, woman! woman!" yells the father of the family. "Why, Philip Firmin has all the habits of a rich man with the pay of a mechanic. Do you suppose he ever sate in a second-class carriage in his life, or denied himself any pleasure to which he had a mind? He gave five francs to a beggar girl yesterday."

"He had always a noble heart," says my wife. "He gave a fortune to a whole family a week ago; and" (out comes the pocket-handkerchief — oh, of course, the pocket-handkerchief) — "and — 'God loves a cheerful giver!'"

"He is careless; he is extravagant; he is lazy; — I do not know that he is remarkably clever — "

"Oh, yes! he is your friend, of course. Now, abuse him — do, Arthur!"

"And, pray, when did you become acquainted with this astounding piece of news?" I inquire.

"When? From the very first moment when I saw Charlotte looking at him, to be sure. The poor child said to me only yesterday, 'Oh, Laura! he is our preserver!' And their preserver he has been, under heaven."

"Yes. But he has not got a five-pound note!" I cry.

"Arthur, I am surprised at you. Oh, men, men are awfully worldly! Do you suppose heaven will not send him help at its

good time, and be kind to him who has rescued so many from ruin? Do you suppose the prayers, the blessings of that father, of those little ones, of that dear child, will not avail him? Suppose he has to wait a year, ten years, have they not time, and will not the good day come?"

Yes. This was actually the talk of a woman of sense and discernment when her prejudices and romance were not in the way, and she looked forward to the marriage of these folks, some ten years hence, as confidently as if they were both rich, and going to St. George's tomorrow.

As for making a romantic story of it, or spinning out love conversation between Jenny and Jessamy, or describing moonlight raptures and passionate outpourings of two young hearts and so forth — excuse me, s'il vous plait. I am a man of the world, and of a certain age. Let the young people fill in this outline, and colour it as they please. Let the old folks who read, lay down the book a minute, and remember. It is well remembered, isn't it, that time? Yes, good John Anderson, and Mrs. John. Yes, good Darby and Joan. The lips won't tell now what they did once. To-day is for the happy, and to-morrow for the young, and yesterday, is not that dear and here too?

I was in the company of an elderly gentleman, not very long since, who was perfectly sober, who is not particularly handsome, or healthy, or wealthy, or witty; and who, speaking of his past life, volunteered to declare that he would gladly live every minute of it over again. Is a man, who can say that, a hardened sinner, not aware how miserable he ought to be by rights, and therefore really in a most desperate and deplorable condition; or is he fortunatus nimium, and ought his statue to be put up in the most splendid and crowded thoroughfare of the town? Would you, who are reading this, for example, like to live your life over again? What has been its chief joy? What are to-day's pleasures? Are they so exquisite that you would prolong them for ever? Would you like to have the roast beef on which you have dined brought back again to table, and have more beef, and more, and more? Would you like to hear yesterday's sermon over and over again — eternally voluble? Would you like to get on the Edinburgh mail, and travel outside for fifty hours as you did in your youth? You might as well say you would like to go into the flogging-room, and take a turn under the rods: you would like to be thrashed over again by your bully at school: you would like to go to the dentist's, where your dear parents were in the habit of taking you: you would like to be taking hot Epsom salts, with a piece of dry bread to take away the taste: you would like to be jilted by your first love: you would like to be going in to your father to tell him you had contracted debts to the amount of $x + y + z$, whilst you were at the university. As I consider the passionate griefs of childhood, the weariness and sameness of shaving, the agony of corns, and the thousand other ills to which flesh is heir, I cheerfully say for one, I am not anxious to wear it for ever. No. I do not want to go to school again. I do not want to hear Trotman's sermon over again. Take me out and finish me. Give me the cup of hemlock at once. Here's a health to you, my lads. Don't weep, my Simmias. Be cheerful, my Phædon. Ha! I feel the co-o-ld stealing, stealing upwards. Now it is in my ancles — no more gout in my foot: now my knees are numb. What, is — is that poor executioner crying too? Good-by. Sacrifice a cock to Æscu — to Æscula — . . . Have you ever read the chapter in Grote's History? Ah? When the Sacred Ship returns from Delos, and is telegraphed as entering into port, may we be at peace and ready!

What is this funeral chant, when the pipes should be playing gaily, as Love, and Youth, and Spring, and Joy are dancing under the windows? Look you. Men not so wise as Socrates have their demons, who will be heard and whisper in the queerest times and places. Perhaps I shall have to tell of a funeral presently, and shall be outrageously cheerful; or of an execution, and shall split my sides with laughing. Arrived at my time of life, when I see a penniless young friend falling in love and thinking of course of committing matrimony, what can I do but be melancholy? How is a man to marry who has not enough to keep ever so miniature a brougham — ever so small a house — not enough to keep himself, let alone a wife and family? Gracious powers! is it not blasphemy to marry without fifteen hundred a year? Poverty, debt, protested bills, duns, crime, fall assuredly on the wretch who has not fifteen — say at once two thousand a year; for you can't live decently in London for less. And a wife whom you have met a score of times at balls or breakfasts, and with her best dresses and behaviour at a country house; — how do you know how she will turn out; what her temper is; what her relations are likely to be? Suppose she has poor relations, or loud coarse brothers who are always dropping in to dinner? What is her mother like; and can you bear to have that woman meddling and domineering over your establishment? Old General Baynes was very well; a weak, quiet, and presentable old man: but Mrs. General Baynes, and that awful Mrs. Major MacWhirter, — and those hobbledehoes of boys in creaking shoes, hectoring about the premises? As a man of the world I saw all these dreadful liabilities impending over the husband of Miss Charlotte Baynes, and could not view them without horror. Gracefully and slightly, but wittily and in my sarcastic way, I thought it my duty to show up the oddities of the Baynes family to Philip. I

mimicked the boys, and their clumping blucher-boots. I touched off the dreadful military ladies, very smartly and cleverly as I thought, and as if I never supposed that Philip had any idea of Miss Baynes. To do him justice, he laughed once or twice; then he grew very red. His sense of humour is very limited; that even Laura allows. Then he came out with strong expressions, and said it was a confounded shame, and strode off with his cigar. And when I remarked to my wife how susceptible he was in some things, and how little in the matter of joking, she shrugged her shoulders and said, "Philip not only understood perfectly well what I said, but would tell it all to Mrs. General and Mrs. Major on the first opportunity." And this was the fact, as Mrs. Baynes took care to tell me afterwards. She was aware who was her enemy. She was aware who spoke ill of her, and her blessed darling behind our backs. And "do you think it was to see you or any one belonging to your stuck-up house, sir, that we came to you so often, which we certainly did, day and night, breakfast and supper, and no thanks to you? No, sir! ha, ha!" I can see her flaunting out of my sitting-room as she speaks, with a strident laugh, and snapping her dingly-gloved fingers at the door. Oh, Philip, Philip! To think that you were such a coward as to go and tell her! But I pardon him. From my heart I pity and pardon him.

For the step which he is meditating, you may be sure that the young man himself does not feel the smallest need of pardon or pity. He is in a state of happiness so crazy that it is useless to reason with him. Not being at all of a poetical turn originally, the wretch is actually perpetrating verse in secret, and my servants found fragments of his manuscript on the dressing-table in his bedroom. Heart and art, sever and for ever, and so on; what stale rhymes are these? I do not feel at liberty to give in entire the poem which our maid found in Mr. Philip's room, and brought sniggering to my wife, who only said, "Poor thing!" The fact is, it was too pitiable. Such maundering rubbish! Such stale rhymes, and such old thoughts! But then, says Laura, "I daresay all people's love-making is not amusing to their neighbours; and I know who wrote not very wise love-verses when he was young." No, I won't publish Philip's verses, until some day he shall mortally offend me. I can recal some of my own written under similar circumstances with twinges of shame; and shall drop a veil of decent friendship over my friend's folly.

Under that veil, meanwhile, the young man is perfectly contented, nay, uproariously happy. All earth and nature smile round about him. "When Jove meets his Juno, in Homer, sir," says Philip, in his hectoring way, "don't immortal flowers of beauty spring up around them, and rainbows of celestial hues bend over their heads? Love, sir, flings a halo round the loved one. Where she moves, rise roses, hyacinths, and ambrosial odours. Don't talk to me about poverty, sir! He either fears his fate too much or his desert is small, who dares not put it to the touch and win or lose it all! Haven't I endured poverty? Am I not as poor now as a man can be — and what is there in it? Do I want for anything? Haven't I got a guinea in my pocket? Do I owe any man anything? Isn't there manna in the wilderness for those who have faith to walk in it? That's where you fail, Pen. By all that is sacred, you have no faith; your heart is cowardly, sir; and if you are to escape, as perhaps you may, I suspect it is by your wife that you will be saved. Laura has a trust in heaven, but Arthur's morals are a genteel atheism. Just reach me that claret — the wine's not bad. I say your morals are a genteel atheism, and I shudder when I think of your condition. Talk to me about a brougham being necessary for the comfort of a woman! A broomstick to ride to the moon! And I don't say that a brougham is not a comfort, mind you; but that, when it is a necessity, mark you, heaven will provide it! Why, sir, hang it, look at me! Ain't I suffering in the most abject poverty? I ask you is there a man in London so poor as I am? And since my father's ruin do I want for anything? I want for shelter for a day or two. Good. There's my dear Little Sister ready to give it to me. I want for money. Does not that sainted widow's cruse pour its oil out for me? Heaven bless and reward her. Boo!" (Here, for reasons which need not be named, the orator squeezes his fists into his eyes.) "I want shelter; ain't I in good quarters? I want work; haven't I got work, and did you not get it for me? You should just see, sir, how I polished off that book of travels this morning. I read some of the article to Char — to Miss — to some friends, in fact. I don't mean to say that they are very intellectual people, but your common humdrum average audience is the public to try. Recollect Molière and his housekeeper, you know."

"By the housekeeper, do you mean Mrs. Baynes?" I ask, in my *amontillado* manner. (By the way, who ever heard of *amontillado* in the early days of which I write?) "In manner she would do, and I daresay in accomplishments; but I doubt her temper."

"You're almost as wordly as the Twysdens, by George, you are! Unless persons are of a certain monde, you don't value them. A little adversity would do you good, Pen; and I heartily wish you might get it, except for the dear wife and children. You measure your morality by May Fair standards; and if an angel unawares came to you in pattens and a cotton umbrella, you would turn away from her. You would never have found out the Little Sister. A duchess — God bless her! A creature of

an imperial generosity, and delicacy, and intrepidity, and the finest sense of humour, but she drops her h's often, and how could you pardon such a crime? Sir, you are my better in wit and a dexterous application of your powers; but I think, sir," says Phil, curling the flaming mustachios, "I am your superior in a certain magnanimity; though, by Jove! old fellow, man and boy, you have always been one of the best fellows in the world to P. F.; one of the best fellows, and the most generous, and the most cordial, — that you have: only you do rile me when you sing in that confounded May Fair twang."

Here one of the children summoned us to tea — and "Papa was laughing, and uncle Philip was flinging his hands about and pulling his beard off," said the little messenger.

"I shall keep a fine lock of it for you, Nelly, my dear," says uncle Philip. On which the child said, "Oh, no! I know to whom you'll give it, don't I, mamma?" and she goes up to her mamma, and whispers.

Miss Nelly knows? At what age do those little match-makers begin to know, and how soon do they practise the use of their young eyes, their little smiles, wiles, and ogles? This young woman, I believe, coquetted whilst she was yet a baby in arms, over her nurse's shoulder. Before she could speak, she could be proud of her new vermilion shoes, and would point out the charms of her blue sash. She was jealous in the nursery, and her little heart had beat for years and years before she left off pinafores.

For whom will Philip keep a lock of that red, red gold which curls round his face? Can you guess? Of what colour is the hair in that little locket which the gentleman himself occultly wears? A few months ago, I believe, a pale, straw-coloured wisp of hair occupied that place of honour; now it is a chestnut-brown, as far as I can see, of precisely the same colour as that which waves round Charlott Baynes' pretty face, and tumbles in clusters on her neck, very nearly the colour of Mrs. Paynter's this last season. So, you see, we chop and we change: straw gives place to chestnut, and chestnut is succeeded by ebony; and, for our own parts, we defy time; and if you want a lock of my hair, Belinda, take this pair of scissors, and look in that cupboard, in the bandbox marked No. 3, and cut off a thick glossy piece, darling, and wear it, dear, and my blessings go with thee! What is this? Am I sneering because Corydon and Phyllis are wooing and happy? You see I pledged myself not to have any sentimental nonsense. To describe love-making is immoral and immodest; you know it is. To describe it as it really is, or would appear to you and me as lookers-on, would be to describe the most dreary farce, to chronicle the most tautological twaddle. To take a note of sighs, hand-squeezes, looks at the moon, and so forth — does this business become our dignity as historians? Come away from those foolish young people — they don't want us; and dreary as their farce is, and tautological as their twaddle, you may be sure it amuses them, and that they are happy enough without us. Happy? Is there any happiness like it, pray? Was it not rapture to watch the messenger, to seize the note, and fee the bearer? — to retire out of sight of all prying eyes and read:— "Dearest! Mamma's cold is better this morning. The Joneses came to tea, and Julia sang. I did not enjoy it, as my dear was at his horrid dinner, where I hope he amused himself. Send me a word by Buttles, who brings this, if only to say you are your Louisa's own, own," That used to be the kind of thing. In such coy lines artless Innocence used to whisper its little vows. So she used to smile; so she used to warble; so she used to prattle. Young people, at present engaged in the pretty sport, be assured your middle-aged parents have played the game, and remember the rules of it. Yes, under papa's bow-window of a waistcoat is a heart which took very violent exercise when that waist was slim. Now he sits tranquilly in his tent, and watches the lads going in for their innings. Why, look at grandmamma in her spectacles reading that sermon. In her old heart there is a corner as romantic still as when she used to read the *Wild Irish Girl* or the *Scottish Chiefs* in the days of her misshood. And as for your grandfather, my dears, to see him now you would little suppose that that calm, polished, dear old gentleman was once as wild — as wild as Orson. . . . Under my windows, as I write, there passes an itinerant flower-merchant. He has his roses and geraniums on a cart drawn by a quadruped — a little long-eared quadruped, which lifts up its voice, and sings after its manner. When I was young, donkeys used to bray precisely in the same way; and others will heehaw so, when we are silent and our ears hear no more.



CHAPTER 2

DRUM IST'S SO WOHL MIR IN DER WELT.

Our new friends lived for awhile contentedly enough at Boulogne, where they found comrades and acquaintances gathered together from those many regions which they had visited in the course of their military career. Mrs. Baynes, out of the field, was the commanding officer over the general. She ordered his clothes for him, tied his neckcloth into a neat bow, and, on teaparty evenings, pinned his brooch into his shirt-frill. She gave him to understand when he had had enough to eat or drink at dinner, and explained, with great frankness, how this or that dish did not agree with him. If he was disposed to exceed, she would call out, in a loud voice: "Remember, general, what you took this morning!" Knowing his constitution, as she said, she knew the remedies which were necessary for her husband, and administered them to him with great liberality. Resistance was impossible, as the veteran officer acknowledged. "The boys have fought about the medicine since we came home," he confessed, "but she has me under her thumb, by George. She really is a magnificent physician, now. She has got some invaluable prescriptions, and in India she used to doctor the whole station." She would have taken the present writer's little household under her care, and proposed several remedies for my children, until their alarmed mother was obliged to keep them out of her sight. I am not saying this was an agreeable woman. Her voice was loud and harsh. The anecdotes which she was for ever narrating related to military personages in foreign countries with whom I was unacquainted, and whose history failed to interest me. She took her wine with much spirit, whilst engaged in this prattle. I have heard talk not less foolish in much finer company, and known people delighted to listen to anecdotes of the duchess and the marchioness who would yawn over the history of Captain Jones's quarrels with his lady, or Mrs. Major Wolfe's monstrous flirtations with young Ensign Kyd. My wife, with the mischievousness of her sex, would mimic the Baynes' conversation very drolly, but always insisted that she was not more really vulgar than many much greater persons.

For all this, Mrs. General Baynes did not hesitate to declare that we were "stuck-up" people; and from the very first setting eyes on us, she declared, that she viewed us with a constant darkling suspicion. Mrs. P. was a harmless, washed-out creature with nothing in her. As for that high and mighty Mr. P. and his airs, she would be glad to know whether the wife of a British general officer who had seen service in every part of the globe, and met the most distinguished governors, generals, and their ladies, several of whom were noblemen — she would be glad to know whether such people were not good enough for, Who has not met with these difficulties in life, and who can escape them? "Hang it, sir," Phil would say, twirling the red mustachios, "I like to be hated by some fellows;" and it must be owned that Mr. Philip got what he liked. I suppose Mr. Philip's friend and biographer had something of the same feeling. At any rate, in regard of this lady the hypocrisy of politeness was very hard to keep up; wanting us for reasons of her own, she covered the dagger with which she would have stabbed us: but we knew it was there clenched in her skinny hand in her meagre pocket. She would pay us the most fulsome compliments with anger raging out of her eyes — a little hate-bearing woman, envious, malicious, but loving her cubs, and nursing them, and clutching them in her lean arms with a jealous strain. It was "Good-by, darling! I shall leave you here with your friends. Oh, how kind you are to her, Mrs. Pendennis! How can I ever thank you and Mr. P., I am sure?" and she looked as if she could poison both of us, as she went away, curtsying and darting dreary parting smiles.

This lady had an intimate friend and companion in arms, — Mrs. Colonel Bunch, in fact, of the — the Bengal Cavalry, — who was now in Europe with Bunch and their children, who were residing at Paris for the young folks' education. At first, as we have heard, Mrs. Baynes' predilections had been all for Tours, where her sister was living, and where lodgings were cheap and food reasonable in proportion. But Bunch happening to pass through Boulogne on his way to his wife at Paris, and meeting his old comrade, gave General Baynes such an account of the cheapness and pleasures of the French capital, as to induce the general to think of bending his steps thither. Mrs. Baynes would not hear of such a plan. She was all for her dear sister and Tours; but when, in the course of conversation, Colonel Bunch described a ball at the Tuileries, where he and Mrs. B. had been received with the most flattering politeness by the royal family, it was remarked that Mrs. Baynes' mind underwent a change. When Bunch went on to aver that the balls at Government House at Calcutta were nothing compared to those at the Tuileries or the Prefecture of the Seine; that the English were invited and respected everywhere; that the ambassador was most hospitable; that the clergymen were admirable; and that at their boarding-

house, kept by Madame la Générale Baronne de Smolensk, at the Petit Château d'Espagne, Avenue de Valmy, Champs Elysées, they had balls twice a month, the most comfortable apartments, the most choice society, and every comfort and luxury at so many francs per month, with an allowance for children — I say Mrs. Baynes was very greatly moved. "It is not," she said, "in consequence of the balls at the ambassador's or the Tuileries, for I am an old woman; and in spite of what you say, colonel, I can't fancy, after Government House, anything more magnificent in any French palace. It is not for me, goodness knows, I speak: but the children should have education, and my Charlotte an entrée into the world; and what you say of the invaluable clergyman, Mr. X — I have been thinking of it all night: but above all, above all, of the chances of education for my darlings. Nothing should give way to that — nothing!" On this a long and delightful conversation and calculation took place. Bunch produced his bills at the Baroness de Smolensk's. The two gentlemen jotted up accounts, and made calculations all through the evening. It was hard even for Mrs. Baynes to force the figures into such a shape as to make them accord with the general's income; but, driven away by one calculation after another, she returned again and again to the charge, until she overcame the stubborn arithmetical difficulties, and the pounds, shillings, and pence lay prostrate before her. They could save upon this point; they could screw upon that; they must make a sacrifice to educate the children. "Sarah Bunch and her girls go to Court, indeed! Why shouldn't mine go?" she asked. On which her general said, "By George, Eliza, that's the point you are thinking of." On which Eliza said, "No," and repeated "No" a score of times, growing more angry as she uttered each denial. And she declared before heaven she did not want to go to any Court. Had she not refused to be presented at home, though Mrs. Colonel Flack went, because she did not choose to go to the wicked expense of a train? And it was base of the general, base and mean of him to say so. And there was a fine scene, as I am given to understand; not that I was present at this family fight: but my informant was Mr. Firmin; and Mr. Firmin had his information from a little person who, about this time, had got to prattle out all the secrets of her young heart to him; who would have jumped off the pier-head with her hand in his if he had said "Come;" without his hand if he had said "Go:" a little person whose whole life had been changed — changed for a month past — changed in one minute, that minute when she saw Philip's fiery whiskers and heard his great big voice saluting her father amongst the commissioners on the quai before the custom-house.

Tours was, at any rate, a hundred and fifty miles farther off than Paris from — from a city where a young gentleman lived in whom Miss Charlotte Baynes felt an interest; hence, I suppose, arose her delight that her parents had determined upon taking up their residence in the larger and nearer city. Besides, she owned, in the course of her artless confidences to my wife, that, when together, mamma and aunt MacWhirter quarrelled unceasingly; and had once caused her old boys, the major and the general, to call each other out. She preferred, then, to live away from aunt Mac. She had never had such a friend as Laura, never. She had never been so happy as at Boulogne, never. She should always love everybody in our house, that she should, for ever and ever — and so forth, and so forth. The ladies meet; cling together; osculations are carried round the whole family circle, from our wondering eldest boy, who cries, "I say, hullo! what are you kissing me so about?" to darling baby, crowing and sputtering unconscious in the rapturous young girl's embraces. I tell you, these two women were making fools of themselves, and they were burning with enthusiasm for the "preserver" of the Baynes family, as they called that big fellow yonder, whose biographer I have aspired to be. The lazy rogue lay basking in the glorious warmth and sunshine of early love. He would stretch his big limbs out in our garden; pour out his feelings with endless volubility; call upon *hominum divumque voluptas*, *alma Venus*; vow that he had never lived or been happy until now; declare that he laughed poverty to scorn and all her ills; and fume against his masters of the Pall Mall Gazette, because they declined to insert certain love verses which Mr. Philip now composed almost every day. Poor little Charlotte! And didst thou receive those treasures of song; and wonder over them, not perhaps comprehending them altogether; and lock them up in thy heart's inmost casket as well as in thy little desk; and take them out in quiet hours, and kiss them, and bless heaven for giving thee such jewels? I daresay. I can fancy all this without seeing it. I can read the little letters in the little desk, without picking lock or breaking seal. Poor little letters! Sometimes they are not spelt right, quite; but I don't know that the style is worse for that. Poor little letters! You are flung to the winds sometimes and forgotten with all your sweet secrets and loving artless confessions; but not always — no, not always. As for Philip, who was the most careless creature alive, and left all his clothes and haberdashery sprawling on his bed-room floor, he had at this time a breast-pocket stuffed out with papers which crackled in the most ridiculous way. He was always looking down at this precious pocket, and putting one of his great hands over it as though he would guard it. The pocket did not contain bank-notes, you may be sure of that. It contained documents stating that mamma's cold is better; the Joneses came to tea, and Julia sang, Ah, friend, however old

you are now, however cold you are now, however tough, I hope you, too, remember how Julia sang, and the Joneses came to tea.

Mr. Philip stayed on week after week, declaring to my wife that she was a perfect angel for keeping him so long. Bunch wrote from his boarding-house more and more enthusiastic reports about the comforts of the establishment. For his sake, Madame la Baronne de Smolensk would make unheard-of sacrifices, in order to accommodate the general and his distinguished party. The balls were going to be perfectly splendid that winter. There were several old Indians living near; in fact, they could form a regular little club. It was agreed that Baynes should go and reconnoitre the ground. He did go. Madame de Smolensk, a most elegant woman, had a magnificent dinner for him — quite splendid, I give you my word, but only what they have every day. Soup, of course, my love; fish, capital wine, and, I should say, some five or six and thirty made dishes. The general was quite enraptured. Bunch had put his boys to a famous school, where they might “whop” the French boys, and learn all the modern languages. The little ones would dine early; the baroness would take the whole family at an astonishingly cheap rate. In a word, the Baynes’ column got the route for Paris shortly before our family-party was crossing the seas to return to London fogs and duty.

You have, no doubt, remarked how, under certain tender circumstances, women will help one another. They help where they ought not to help. When Mr. Darby ought to be separated from Miss Joan, and the best thing that could happen for both would be a lettre de cachet to whip off Mons. Darby to the Bastille for five years, and an order from her parents to lock up Mademoiselle Jeanne in a convent, some aunt, some relative, some pitying female friend is sure to be found, who will give the pair a chance of meeting, and turn her head away whilst those unhappy lovers are warbling endless good-byes close up to each other’s ears. My wife, I have said, chose to feel this absurd sympathy for the young people about whom we have been just talking. As the days for Charlotte’s departure drew near, this wretched, misguiding matron would take the girl out walking into I know not what unfrequented bye-lanes, quiet streets, rampart-nooks, and the like; and la! by the most singular coincidence, Mr. Philip’s hulking boots would assuredly come tramping after the women’s little feet. What will you say, when I tell you, that I myself, the father of the family, the renter of the oldfashioned house, Rue Roucoule, Haute Ville, Boulognesur-Mer — as I am going into my own study — am met at the threshold by Helen, my eldest daughter, who puts her little arms before the glass-door at which I was about to enter, and says, “You must not go in there, papa! Mamma says we none of us are to go in there.”

“And why, pray?” I ask.

“Because uncle Philip and Charlotte are talking secrets there; and nobody is to disturb them — nobody!”

Upon my word, wasn’t this too monstrous? Am I Sir Pandarus of Troy become? Am I going to allow a penniless young man to steal away the heart of a young girl who has not twopence half-penny to her fortune? Shall I, I say, lend myself to this most unjustifiable intrigue?

“Sir,” says my wife (we happened to have been bred up from childhood together, and I own to have had one or two foolish initiatory flirtations before I settled down to matrimonial fidelity) — “Sir,” says she, “when you were so wild — so spoony, I think is your elegant word — about Blanche, and used to put letters into a hollow tree for her at home, I used to see the letters, and I never disturbed them. These two people have much warmer hearts, and are a great deal fonder of each other, than you and Blanche used to be. I should not like to separate Charlotte from Philip now. It is too late, sir. She can never like anybody else as she likes him. If she lives to be a hundred, she will never forget him. Why should not the poor thing be happy a little, while she may?”

An old house, with a green old courtyard and an ancient mossy wall, through breaks of which I can see the roofs and gables of the quaint old town, the city below, the shining sea, and the white English cliffs beyond; a green old courtyard, and a tall old stone house rising up in it, grown over with many a creeper on which the sun casts flickering shadows; and under the shadows, and through the glass of a tall grey window, I can just peep into a brown twilight parlour, and there I see two hazy figures by a table. One slim figure has brown hair, and one has flame-coloured whiskers. Look! a ray of sunshine has just peered into the room, and is lighting the whiskers up!

“Poor little thing,” whispers my wife, very gently. “They are going away to-morrow. Let them have their talk out. She is crying her little eyes out, I am sure. Poor little Charlotte!”

Whilst my wife was pitying Miss Charlotte in this pathetic way, and was going, I daresay, to have recourse to her own pocket-handkerchief, as I live, there came a burst of laughter from the darkling chamber where the two lovers were billing

and cooing. First came Mr. Philip's great boom (such a roar — such a haw-haw, or hee-haw, I never heard any other two-legged animal perform). Then follows Miss Charlotte's tinkling peal; and presently that young person comes out into the garden, with her round face not bedewed with tears at all, but perfectly rosy, fresh, dimpled, and good-humoured. Charlotte gives me a little curtsy, and my wife a hand and a kind glance. They retreat through the open casement, twining round each other, as the vine does round the window; though which is the vine and which is the window in this simile, I pretend not to say — I can't see through either of them, that is the truth. They pass through the parlour, and into the street beyond, doubtless: and as for Mr. Philip, I presently see his head popped out of his window in the upper floor with his great pipe in his mouth. He can't "work" without his pipe, he says; and my wife believes him. Work, indeed!

Miss Charlotte paid us another little visit that evening, when we happened to be alone. The children were gone to bed. The darlings! Charlotte must go up and kiss them. Mr. Philip Firmin was out. She did not seem to miss him in the least, nor did she make a single inquiry for him. We had been so good to her — so kind. How should she ever forget our great kindness? She had been so happy — oh! so happy! She had never been so happy before. She would write often and often, and Laura would write constantly — wouldn't she? "Yes, dear child!" says my wife. And now a little more kissing, and it is time to go home to the Tintelleries. What a lovely night! Indeed, the moon was blazing in full round in the purple heavens, and the stars were twinkling by myriads.

"Good-by, dear Charlotte; happiness go with you!" I seize her hand. I feel a paternal desire to kiss her fair, round face. Her sweetness, her happiness, her artless good-humour, and gentleness have endeared her to us all. As for me, I love her with a fatherly affection. "Stay, my dear!" I cry, with a happy gallantry. "I'll go home with you to the Tintelleries."

You should have seen the fair round face then! Such a piteous expression came over it! She looked at my wife; and as for that Mrs. Laura she pulled the tail of my coat.

"What do you mean, my dear?" I ask.

"Don't go out on such a dreadful night. You'll catch cold!" says Laura.

"Cold, my love!" I say. "Why, it's as fine a night as ever —"

"Oh! you — you stoopid!" says Laura, and begins to laugh. And there goes Miss Charlotte tripping away from us without a word more!

Philip came in about half an hour afterwards. And do you know, I very strongly suspect that he had been waiting round the corner. Few things escape me, you see, when I have a mind to be observant. And, certainly, if I had thought of that possibility and that I might be spoiling sport, I should not have proposed to Miss Charlotte to walk home with her.

At a very early hour on the next morning my wife arose, and spent, in my opinion, a great deal of unprofitable time, bread, butter, cold beef, mustard and salt, in compiling a heap of sandwiches, which were tied up in a copy of the Pall Mall Gazette. That persistence in making sandwiches, in providing cakes and other refreshments for a journey, is a strange infatuation in women; as if there was not always enough to eat to be had at road inns and railway stations! What a good dinner we used to have at Montreuil in the old days, before railways were, and when the diligence spent four or six and twenty cheerful hours on its way to Paris! I think the finest dishes are not to be compared to that well-remembered fricandeau of youth, nor do wines of the most dainty vintage surpass the rough, honest, blue ordinaire which was served at the plenteous inn-table. I took our bale of sandwiches down to the office of the Messageries, whence our friends were to start. We saw six of the Baynes family packed into the interior of the diligence; and the boys climb cheerily into the rotonde. Charlotte's pretty lips and hands wafted kisses to us from her corner. Mrs. General Baynes commanded the column, pushed the little ones into their places in the ark, ordered the general and young ones hither and thither with her parasol, declined to give the grumbling porters any but the smallest gratuity, and talked a shrieking jargon of French and Hindustanee to the people assembled round the carriage. My wife has that command over me that she actually made me demean myself so far as to deliver the sandwich parcel to one of the Baynes boys. I said, "Take this," and the poor wretch held out his hand eagerly, evidently expecting that I was about to tip him with a five-franc piece or some such coin. Fouette, cocher! The horses squeal. The huge machine jingles over the road, and rattles down the street. Farewell, pretty Charlotte, with your sweet face, and sweet voice, and kind eyes! But why, pray, is Mr. Philip Firmin not here to say farewell too?

Before the diligence got under way, the Baynes boys had fought, and quarrelled, and wanted to mount on the imperial or cabriolet of the carriage, where there was only one passenger as yet. But the conductor called the lads off, saying that the

remaining place was engaged by a gentleman, whom they were to take up on the road. And who should this turn out to be? Just outside the town a man springs up to the imperial; his light luggage, it appears, was on the coach already, and that luggage belonged to Philip Firmin. Ah, monsieur! and that was the reason, was it, why they were so merry yesterday — the parting day? Because, when they were not going to part just then. Because, when the time of execution drew near, they had managed to smuggle a little reprieve! Upon my conscience, I never heard of such imprudence in the whole course of my life! Why, it is starvation — certain misery to one and the other. “I don’t like to meddle in other people’s affairs,” I say to my wife; “but I have no patience with such folly, or with myself for not speaking to General Baynes on the subject. I shall write to the general.”

“My dear, the general knows all about it,” says Charlotte’s, Philip’s (in my opinion) most injudicious friend. “We have talked about it, and, like a man of sense, the general makes light of it. ‘Young folks will be young folks,’ he says; ‘and, by George! ma’am, when I married — I should say, when Mrs. B. ordered me to marry her — she had nothing, and I but my captain’s pay. People get on, somehow. Better for a young man to marry, and keep out of idleness and mischief; and, I promise you, the chap who marries my girl gets a treasure. I like the boy for the sake of my old friend Phil Ringwood. I don’t see that the fellows with the rich wives are much the happier, or that men should wait to marry until they are gouty old rakes.’ And, it appears, the general instanced several officers of his own acquaintance; some of whom had married when they were young and poor; some who had married when they were old and sulky; some who had never married at all. And he mentioned his comrade, my own uncle, the late Major Pendennis, whom he called a selfish old creature, and hinted that the major had jilted some lady in early life, whom he would have done much better to marry.”

And so Philip is actually gone after his charmer, and is pursuing her summá diligentiâ? The Baynes family has allowed this penniless young law student to make love to their daughter, to accompany them to Paris, to appear as the almost recognized son of the house. “Other people, when they were young, wanted to make imprudent marriages,” says my wife (as if that wretched tu quoque were any answer to my remark!) “This penniless law student might have a good sum of money if he choose to press the Baynes family to pay him what, after all, they owe him.” And so poor little Charlotte was to be her father’s ransom! To be sure, little Charlotte did not object to offer herself up in payment of her papa’s debt! And though I objected as a moral man and a prudent man, and a father of a family, I could not be very seriously angry. I am secretly of the disposition of the time-honoured père de famille in the comedies, the irascible old gentleman in the crop wig and George-the-Second coat, who is always menacing “Tom the young dog” with his cane. When the deed is done, and Miranda (the little slyboots!) falls before my squaretoes and shoe-buckles, and Tom the young dog kneels before me in his white ducks, and they cry out in a pretty chorus, “Forgive us, grandpapa!” I say, “Well, you rogue, boys will be boys. Take her, sirrah! Be happy with her; and, hark ye! in this pocket-book you will find ten thousand,” You all know the story: I cannot help liking it, however old it may be. In love, somehow, one is pleased that young people should dare a little. Was not Bessy Eldon famous as an economist, and Lord Eldon celebrated for wisdom and caution? and did not John Scott marry Elizabeth Surtees when they had scarcely twopence a year between them? “Of course, my dear,” I say to the partner of my existence, “now this madcap fellow is utterly ruined, now is the very time he ought to marry. The accepted doctrine is that a man should spend his own fortune, then his wife’s fortune, and then he may begin to get on at the bar. Philip has a hundred pounds, let us say; Charlotte has nothing; so that in about six weeks we may look to hear of Philip being in successful practice — ”

“Successful nonsense!” cries the lady. “Don’t go on like a cold-blooded calculating machine! You don’t believe a word of what you say, and a more imprudent person never lived than you yourself were as a young man.” This was departing from the question, which women will do. “Nonsense!” again says my romantic being of a partner-of-existence. “Don’t tell ME, sir. They WILL be provided for! Are we to be for ever taking care of the morrow, and not trusting that we shall be cared for? You may call your way of thinking prudence. I call it sinful worldliness, sir.” When my life-partner speaks in a certain strain, I know that remonstrance is useless, and argument unavailing; and I generally resort to cowardly subterfuges, and sneak out of the conversation by a pun, a side joke, or some other flippancy. Besides, in this case, though I argue against my wife, my sympathy is on her side. I know Mr. Philip is imprudent and headstrong, but I should like him to succeed, and be happy. I own he is a scapegrace, but I wish him well.

So, just as the diligence of Laffitte and Caillard is clearing out of Boulogne town, the conductor causes the carriage to stop, and a young fellow has mounted up on the roof in a twinkling; and the postilion says, “Hi!” to his horses, and away those squealing greys go clattering. And a young lady, happening to look out of one of the windows of the intérieur, has

perfectly recognized the young gentleman who leaped up to the roof so nimbly; and the two boys who were in the *rotonde* would have recognized the gentleman, but that they were already eating the sandwiches which my wife had provided. And so the diligence goes on, until it reaches that hill, where the girls used to come and offer to sell you apples; and some of the passengers descend and walk, and the tall young man on the roof jumps down, and approaches the party in the interior, and a young lady cries out, "La!" and her mamma looks impenetrably grave, and not in the least surprised; and her father gives a wink of one eye, and says, "It's him, is it, by George!" and the two boys coming out of the *rotonde*, their mouths full of sandwich, cry out, "Hullo! It's Mr. Firmin."

"How do you do, ladies?" he says, blushing as red as an apple, and his heart thumping — but that may be from walking up hill. And he puts a hand towards the carriage-window, and a little hand comes out and lights on his. And Mrs. General Baynes, who is reading a religious work, looks up and says, "Oh! how do you do, Mr. Firmin?" And this is the remarkable dialogue that takes place. It is not very witty; but Philip's tones send a rapture into one young heart: and when he is absent, and has climbed up to his place in the *cabriolet*, the kick of his boots on the roof gives the said young heart inexpressible comfort and consolation. Shine stars and moon! Shriek grey horses through the calm night! Snore sweetly, papa and mamma, in your corners, with your pocket-handkerchiefs tied round your old fronts! I suppose, under all the stars of heaven, there is nobody more happy than that child in that carriage — that wakeful girl, in sweet maiden meditation — who has given her heart to the keeping of the champion who is so near her. Has he not been always their champion and preserver? Don't they owe to his generosity everything in life? One of the little sisters wakes wildly, and cries in the night, and Charlotte takes the child into her arms and soothes her. "Hush, dear! He's there — he's there," she whispers, as she bends over the child. Nothing wrong can happen with him there, she feels. If the robbers were to spring out from yonder dark pines, why, he would jump down, and they would all fly before him! The carriage rolls on through sleeping villages, and as the old team retires all in a halo of smoke, and the fresh horses come clattering up to their pole, Charlotte sees a well-known white face in the gleam of the carriage lanterns. Through the long avenues, the great vehicle rolls on its course. The dawn peers over the poplars: the stars quiver out of sight: the sun is up in the sky, and the heaven is all in a flame. The night is over — the night of nights. In all the round world, whether lighted by stars or sunshine, there were not two people more happy than these had been.

A very short time afterwards, at the end of October, our own little sea-side sojourn came to an end. That astounding bill for broken glass, chairs, crockery, was paid. The London steamer takes us all on board on a beautiful, sunny autumn evening, and lands us at the Custom-house Quay in the midst of a deep, dun fog, through which our cabs have to work their way over greasy pavements, and bearing two loads of silent and terrified children. Ah, that return, if but after a fortnight's absence and holiday! Oh, that heap of letters lying in a ghastly pile, and yet so clearly visible in the dim twilight of master's study! We cheerfully breakfast by candlelight for the first two days after my arrival at home, and I have the pleasure of cutting a part of my chin off because it is too dark to shave at nine o'clock in the morning.

My wife can't be so unfeeling as to laugh and be merry because I have met with an accident which temporarily disfigures me? If the dun fog makes her jocular, she has a very queer sense of humour. She has a letter before her, over which she is perfectly radiant. When she is especially pleased I can see by her face and a particular animation and affectionateness towards the rest of the family. On this present morning her face beams out of the fog-clouds. The room is illuminated by it, and perhaps by the two candles which are placed one on either side of the urn. The fire crackles, and flames, and spits most cheerfully; and the sky without, which is of the hue of brown paper, seems to set off the brightness of the little interior scene.

"A letter from Charlotte, papa," cries one little girl, with an air of consequence. "And a letter from uncle Philip, papa!" cries another; "and they like Paris so much," continues the little reporter.

"And there, sir, didn't I tell you?" cries the lady, handing me over a letter.

"Mamma always told you so," echoes the child, with an important nod of the head; "and I shouldn't be surprised if he were to be very rich, should you, mamma?" continues this arithmetician.

I would not put Miss Charlotte's letter into print if I could, for do you know that little person's grammar was frequently incorrect; there were three or four words spelt wrongly; and the letter was so scored and marked with dashes under every other word, that it is clear to me her education had been neglected; and as I am very fond of her, I do not wish to make fun of her. And I can't print Mr. Philip's letter, for I haven't kept it. Of what use keeping letters? I say, Burn, burn, burn. No heart-pangs. No reproaches. No yesterday. Was it happy, or miserable? To think of it is always melancholy. Go to! I

daresay it is the thought of that fog, which is making this sentence so dismal. Meanwhile there is Madam Laura's face smiling out of the darkness, as pleased as may be; and no wonder, she is always happy when her friends are so.

Charlotte's letter contained a full account of the settlement of the Baynes family at Madame Smolensk's boarding-house, where they appear to have been really very comfortable, and to have lived at a very cheap rate. As for Mr. Philip, he made his way to a crib, to which his artist friends had recommended him, on the Faubourg St. Germain side of the water — the Hôtel Poussin, in the street of that name, which lies, you know, between the Mazarin Library and the Musée des Beaux Arts. In former days, my gentleman had lived in state and bounty in the English hotels and quarter. Now he found himself very handsomely lodged for thirty francs per month and with five or six pounds, he has repeatedly said since, he could carry through the month very comfortably. I don't say, my young traveller, that you can be so lucky now-a-days. Are we not telling a story of twenty years ago? Aye marry. Ere steam-coaches had begun to scream on French rails; and when Louis Philippe was king.

As soon as Mr. Philip Firmin is ruined he must needs fall in love. In order to be near the beloved object, he must needs follow her to Paris, and give up his promised studies for the bar at home; where, to do him justice, I believe the fellow would never have done any good. And he has not been in Paris a fortnight when that fantastic jade Fortune, who had seemed to fly away from him, gives him a smiling look of recognition, as if to say, "Young gentleman, I have not quite done with you."

The good fortune was not much. Do not suppose that Philip suddenly drew a twenty-thousand pound prize in a lottery. But, being in much want of money, he suddenly found himself enabled to earn some in a way pretty easy to himself.

In the first place, Philip found his friends Mr. and Mrs. Mugford in a bewildered state in the midst of Paris, in which city Mugford would never consent to have at laquais de place, being firmly convinced to the day of his death that he knew the French language quite sufficiently for all purposes of conversation. Philip, who had often visited Paris before, came to the aid of his friends in a two-franc dining-house, which he frequented for economy's sake: and they, because they thought the banquet there provided not only cheap, but most magnificent and satisfactory. He interpreted for them, and rescued them from their perplexity, whatever it was. He treated them handsomely to caddy on the bullyvard, as Mugford said on returning home and in recounting the adventure to me. "He can't forget that he had been a swell: and he does do things like a gentleman, that Firmin does. He came back with us to our hotel — Meurice's," said Mr. Mugford, "and who should drive into the yard and step out of his carriage but Lord Ringwood — you know Lord Ringwood; everybody knows him. As he gets out of his carriage — 'What! is that you, Philip?' says his lordship, giving the young fellow his hand. 'Come and breakfast with me to-morrow morning.' And away he goes most friendly."

How came it to pass that Lord Ringwood, whose instinct of self-preservation was strong — who, I fear, was rather a selfish nobleman — and who, of late, as we have heard, had given orders to refuse Mr. Philip entrance at his door — should all of a sudden turn round and greet the young man with cordiality? In the first place, Philip had never troubled his lordship's knocker at all; and second, as luck would have it, on this very day of their meeting his lordship had been to dine with that well-known Parisian resident and bon vivant, my Lord Viscount Trim, who had been governor of the Sago Islands when Colonel Baynes was there with his regiment, the gallant 100th. And the general and his old West India governor meeting at church, my lord Trim straightway asked General Baynes to dinner, where Lord Ringwood was present, along with other distinguished company, whom at present we need not particularize. Now it has been said that Philip Ringwood, my lord's brother, and Captain Baynes in early youth had been close friends, and that the colonel had died in the captain's arms. Lord Ringwood, who had an excellent memory when chose to use it, was pleased on this occasion to remember General Baynes and his intimacy with his brother in old days. And of those old times they talked; the general waxing more eloquent, I suppose, than his wont over Lord Trim's excellent wine. And in the course of conversation Philip was named, and the general, warm with drink, poured out a most enthusiastic eulogium on his young friend, and mentioned how noble and self-denying Philip's conduct had been in his own case. And perhaps Lord Ringwood was pleased at hearing these praises of his brother's grandson; and perhaps he thought of old times, when he had a heart, and he and his brother loved each other. And though he might think Philip Firmin an absurd young blockhead for giving up any claims which he might have on General Baynes, at any rate I have no doubt his lordship thought, "This boy is not likely to come begging money from me!" Hence, when he drove back to his hotel on the very night after this dinner, and in the court-yard saw that Philip Firmin, his brother's grandson the heart of the old nobleman was smitten with a kindly sentiment, and he bade Philip to come and see him.

I have described some of Philip's oddities, and amongst these was a very remarkable change in his appearance, which ensued very speedily after his ruin. I know that the greater number of story readers are young, and those who are ever so old remember that their own young days occurred but a very, very short while ago. Don't you remember, most potent, grave, and reverend senior, when you were a junior, and actually rather pleased with new clothes? Does a new coat or a waistcoat cause you any pleasure now? To a well-constituted middle-aged gentleman, I rather trust a smart new suit causes a sensation of uneasiness — not from the tightness of the fit, which may be a reason — but from the gloss and splendour. When my late kind friend, Mrs. — gave me the emerald tabinet waistcoat, with the gold shamrocks, I wore it once to go to Richmond to dine with her; but I buttoned myself so closely in an upper coat, that I am sure nobody in the omnibus saw what a painted vest I had on. Gold sprigs and emerald tabinet, what a gorgeous raiment! It has formed for ten years the chief ornament of my wardrobe; and though I have never dared to wear it since, I always think with a secret pleasure of possessing that treasure. Do women, when they are sixty, like handsome and fashionable attire, and a youthful appearance? Look at Lady Jezebel's blushing cheek, her raven hair, her splendid garments! But this disquisition may be carried to too great a length. I want to note a fact which has occurred not seldom in my experience — that men who have been great dandies will often and suddenly give up their long-accustomed splendour of dress, and walk about, most happy and contented, with the shabbiest of coats and hats. No. The majority of men are not vain about their dress. For instance, within a very few years, men used to have pretty feet. See in what a resolute way they have kicked their pretty boots off almost to a man, and wear great, thick, formless, comfortable walking boots, of shape scarcely more graceful than a tub!

When Philip Firmin first came on the town there were dandies still; there were dazzling waistcoats of velvet and brocade, and tall stocks with cataracts of satin; there were pins, studs, neck-chains, I know not what fantastic splendours of youth. His varnished boots grew upon forests of trees. He had a most resplendent silver-gilt dressing-case, presented to him by his father (for which, it is true, the doctor neglected to pay, leaving that duty to his son). "It is a mere ceremony," said the worthy doctor, "a cumbrous thing you may fancy at first; but take it about with you. It looks well on a man's dressing-table at a country house. It poses a man, you understand. I have known women come in and peep at it. A trifle you may say, my boy; but what is the use of flinging any chance in life away?" Now, when misfortune came, young Philip flung away all these magnificent follies. He wrapped himself virtute suâ; and I am bound to say a more queer-looking fellow than friend Philip seldom walked the pavement of London or Paris. He could not wear the nap off all his coats, or rub his elbows into rags in six months; but, as he would say of himself with much simplicity, "I do think I run to seed more quickly than any fellow I ever knew. All my socks in holes, Mrs. Pendennis; all my shirt-buttons gone, I give you my word. I don't know how the things hold together, and why they don't tumble to pieces. I suspect I must have a bad laundress." Suspect! My children used to laugh and crow as they sowed buttons on to him. As for the Little Sister, she broke into his apartments in his absence, and said that it turned her hair grey to see the state of his poor wardrobe. I believe that Mrs. Brandon put surreptitious linen into his drawers. He did not know. He wore the shirts in a contented spirit. The glossy boots began to crack and then to burst, and Philip wore them with perfect equanimity. Where were the beautiful lavender and lemon gloves of last year? His great naked hands (with which he gesticulates so grandly) were as brown as an Indian's now. We had liked him heartily in his days of splendour; we loved him now in his thread-bare suit.

I can fancy the young man striding into the room where his lordship's guests were assembled. In the presence of great or small, Philip has always been entirely unconcerned, and he is one of the half-dozen men I have seen in my life upon whom rank made no impression. It appears that, on occasion of this breakfast, there were one or two dandies present who were aghast at Philip's freedom of behaviour. He engaged in conversation with a famous French statesman; contradicted him with much energy in his own language; and when the statesman asked whether monsieur was membre du Parlement? Philip burst into one of his roars of laughter, which almost breaks the glasses on a table, and said, "Je suis journaliste, monsieur, à vos ordres!" Young Timbury, of the Embassy, was aghast at Philip's insolence; and Dr. Botts, his lordship's travelling physician, looked at him with a terrified face. A bottle of claret was brought, which almost all the gentlemen present began to swallow, until Philip, tasting his glass, called out, "Faugh. It's corked!" "So it is, and very badly corked," growls my lord, with one of his usual oaths. "Why didn't some of you fellows speak? Do you like corked wine?" There were gallant fellows round that table who would have drunk corked black dose, had his lordship professed to like senna. The old host was tickled and amused. "Your mother was a quiet soul, and your father used to bow like a dancing-master. You ain't much like him. I dine at home most days. Leave word in the morning with my people, and come when you like, Philip," he growled. A part of this news Philip narrated to us in his letter, and other part was given verbally by Mr. and Mrs. Mugford

on their return to London. "I tell you, sir," says Mugford, "he has been taken by the hand by some of the tiptop people, and I have booked him at three guineas a week for a letter to the Pall Mall Gazette."

And this was the cause of my wife's exultation and triumphant "Didn't I tell you?" Philip's foot was on the ladder; and who so capable of mounting to the top? When happiness and a fond and lovely girl were waiting for him there, would he lose heart, spare exertion, or be afraid to climb? He had no truer well-wisher than myself, and no friend who liked him better, though, I daresay, many admired him much more than I did. But these were women for the most part; and women become so absurdly unjust and partial to persons whom they love, when these latter are in misfortune, that I am surprised Mr. Philip did not quite lose his head in his poverty, with such fond flatterers and sycophants round about him. Would you grudge him the consolation to be had from these sweet uses of adversity? Many a heart would be hardened but for the memory of past griefs; when eyes, now averted, perhaps, were full of sympathy, and hands, now cold, were eager to soothe and succour.



CHAPTER 3

QU'ON EST BIEN A VINGT ANS.

In an old album, which we have at home, a friend has made various sketches of Philip, Charlotte, and all our family circle. To us oldsters the days we are describing seem but as yesterday; yet as I look at the drawings and recal my friend, and ourselves, and the habits in which we were dressed some twenty years since, I can't but think what a commotion we should create were we to enter our own or our neighbour's drawing-room in those garments which appeared perfectly becoming in the year 1840. What would be a woman without a crinoline petticoat, for example? an object ridiculous, hateful, I suppose hardly proper. What would you think of a hero who wore a large high black-satin stock cascading over a figured silk waistcoat; and a blue dress-coat, with brass buttons, mayhap? If a person so attired came up to ask you to dance, could you refrain from laughing? Time was, when young men so decorated found favour in the eyes of damsels who had never beheld hooped petticoats, except in their grandmothers' portraits. Persons who flourished in the first part of the century never thought to see the hoops of our ancestors' age rolled downwards to our contemporaries and children. Did we ever imagine that a period would arrive when our young men would part their hair down the middle, and wear a piece of tape for a neckcloth? As soon should we have thought of their dyeing their bodies with woad, and arraying themselves like ancient Britons. So the ages have their dress and undress; and the gentlemen and ladies of Victoria's time are satisfied with their manner of raiment; as no doubt in Boadicea's court they looked charming tattooed and painted blue.

The times of which we write, the times of Louis Philippe the king, are so altered from the present, that when Philip Firmin went to Paris it was absolutely a cheap place to live in; and he has often bragged in subsequent days of having lived well during a month for five pounds, and bought a neat waistcoat with a part of the money. "A capital bed-room, au premier, for a franc a day, sir," he would call all persons to remark, "a bedroom as good as yours, my lord, at Meurice's. Very good tea or coffee breakfast, twenty francs a month, with lots of bread and butter. Twenty francs a month for washing, and fifty for dinner and pocket-money — that's about the figure. The dinner, I own, is shy, unless I come and dine with my friends; and then I make up for banyan days." And so saying Philip would call out for more truffled partridges, or affably filled his goblet with my Lord Ringwood's best Sillery. "At those shops," he would observe, "where I dine, I have beer: I can't stand the wine. And you see, I can't go to the cheap English ordinaries, of which there are many, because English gentlemen's servants are there, you know, and it's not pleasant to sit with a fellow who waits on you the day after."

"Oh! the English servants go to the cheap ordinaries, do they?" asks my lord, greatly amused, "and you drink bière de Mars at the shop where you dine?"

"And dine very badly, too, I can tell you. Always come away hungry. Give me some champagne — the dry, if you please. They mix very well together — sweet and dry. Did you ever dine at Flicoteau's, Mr. Pecker?"

"I dine at one of your horrible two-franc houses?" cries Mr. Pecker, with a look of terror. "Do you know, my lord, there are actually houses where people dine for two francs?"

"Two francs! Seventeen sous!" bawls out Mr. Firmin. "The soup, the beef, the rôti, the salad, the dessert, and the whitey-brown bread at discretion. It's not a good dinner, certainly — in fact, it is a dreadful bad one. But to dine so would do some fellows a great deal of good."

"What do you say, Pecker? Flicoteau's; seventeen sous. We'll make a little party and try, and Firmin shall do the honours of his restaurant," says my lord, with a grin.

"Mercy!" gasps Mr. Pecker.

"I had rather dine here, if you please, my lord," says the young man. "This is cheaper, and certainly better."

My lord's doctor, and many of the guests at his table, my lord's henchmen, flatterers, and led captains, looked aghast at the freedom of the young fellow in the shabby coat. If they dared to be familiar with their host, there came a scowl over that noble countenance which was awful to face. They drank his corked wine in meekness of spirit. They laughed at his jokes trembling. One after another, they were the objects of his satire; and each grinned piteously, as he took his turn of punishment. Some dinners are dear, though they cost nothing. At some great tables are not toads served along with the

entrées? Yes, and many amateurs are exceedingly fond of the dish.

How do Parisians live at all? is a question which has often set me wondering. How do men, in public offices, with fifteen thousand francs, let us say, for a salary — and this, for a French official, is a high salary — live in handsome apartments; give genteel entertainments; clothe themselves and their families with much more sumptuous raiment than English people of the same station can afford; take their country holiday, a six weeks' sojourn aux eaux; and appear cheerful and to want for nothing? Paterfamilias, with six hundred a year in London, knows what a straitened life his is, with rent high, and beef at a shilling a pound. Well, in Paris, rent is higher, and meat is dearer; and yet madame is richly dressed when you see her; monsieur has always a little money in his pocket for his club or his café; and something is pretty surely put away every year for the marriage portion of the young folks. "Sir," Philip used to say, describing this period of his life, on which and on most subjects regarding himself, by the way, he was wont to be very eloquent, "when my income was raised to five thousand francs a year, I give you my word I was considered to be rich by my French acquaintance. I gave four sous to the waiter at our dining-place:— in that respect I was always ostentatious:— and I believe they called me Milor. I should have been poor in the Rue de la Paix: but I was wealthy in the Luxembourg quarter. Don't tell me about poverty, sir! Poverty is a bully if you are afraid of her, or truckle to her. Poverty is good-natured enough if you meet her like a man. You saw how my poor old father was afraid of her, and thought the world would come to an end if Dr. Firmin did not keep his butler, and his footman, and his fine house, and fine chariot and horses? He was a poor man, if you please. He must have suffered agonies in his struggle to make both ends meet. Everything he bought must have cost him twice the honest price; and when I think of nights that must have been passed without sleep — of that proud man having to smirk and cringe before creditors — to coax butchers, by George, and wheedle tailors — I pity him: I can't be angry any more. That man has suffered enough. As for me, haven't you remarked that since I have not a guinea in the world, I swagger, and am a much greater swell than before?" And the truth is, that a Prince Royal could not have called for his gens with a more magnificent air than Mr. Philip when he summoned the waiter, and paid for his petit verre.

Talk of poverty, indeed! That period, Philip vows, was the happiest of his life. He liked to tell in after days of the choice acquaintance of Bohemians which he had formed. Their jug, he said, though it contained but small beer, was always full. Their tobacco, though it bore no higher rank than that of caporal, was plentiful and fragrant. He knew some admirable medical students; some artists who only wanted talent and industry to be at the height of their profession; and one or two of the magnates of his own calling, the newspaper correspondents, whose houses and tables were open to him. It was wonderful what secrets of politics he learned and transmitted to his own paper. He pursued French statesmen of those days with prodigious eloquence and vigour. At the expense of that old king he was wonderfully witty and sarcastical. He reviewed the affairs of Europe, settled the destinies of Russia, denounced the Spanish marriages, disposed of the Pope, and advocated the liberal cause in France, with an untiring eloquence. "Absinthe used to be my drink, sir," so he was good enough to tell his friends. "It makes the ink run, and imparts a fine eloquence to the style. Mercy upon us, how I would belabour that poor King of the French under the influence of absinthe, in that café opposite the Bourse where I used to make my letter! Who knows, sir, perhaps the influence of those letters precipitated the fall of the Bourbon dynasty! Before I had an office, Gilligan, of the Century, and I used to do our letters at that café; we compared notes and pitched into each other amicably.

Gilligan of the Century, and Firmin of the Pall Mall Gazette, were, however, very minor personages amongst the London newspaper correspondents. Their seniors of the daily press had handsome apartments, gave sumptuous dinners, were closeted with ministers' secretaries, and entertained members of the Chamber of Deputies. Philip, on perfectly easy terms with himself and the world, swaggering about the embassy balls — Philip, the friend and relative of Lord Ringwood — was viewed by his professional seniors and superiors with an eye of favour, which was not certainly turned on all gentlemen following his calling. Certainly poor Gilligan was never asked to those dinners, which some of the newspaper ambassadors gave, whereas Philip was received not inhospitably. Gilligan received but a cold shoulder at Mrs. Morning Messenger's Thursdays; and as for being asked to dinner, "Bedad, that fellow Firmin has an air with him which will carry him through anywhere!" Phil's brother correspondent owned. "He seems to patronize an ambassador when he goes up and speaks to him; and he says to a secretary, 'My good fellow, tell your master that Mr. Firmin, of the Pall Mall Gazette, wants to see him, and will thank him to step over to the Café de la Bourse.'" I don't think Philip for his part would have seen much matter of surprise in a minister stepping over to speak to him. To him all folk were alike, great and small: and it is recorded of him that when, on one occasion, Lord Ringwood paid him a visit at his lodgings in the Faubourg St. Germain,

Philip affably offered his lordship a cornet of fried potatoes, with which, and plentiful tobacco of course, Philip and one or two of his friends were regaling themselves when Lord Ringwood chanced to call on his kinsman.

A crust and a carafon of small beer, a correspondence with a weekly paper, and a remuneration such as that we have mentioned — was Philip Firmin to look for no more than this pittance, and not to seek for more permanent and lucrative employment? Some of his friends at home were rather vexed at what Philip chose to consider his good fortune; namely, his connection with the newspaper and the small stipend it gave him. He might quarrel with his employer any day. Indeed no man was more likely to fling his bread and butter out of window than Mr. Philip. He was losing precious time at the bar; where he, as hundreds of other poor gentlemen had done before him, might make a career for himself. For what are colonies made? Why do bankruptcies occur? Why do people break the peace and quarrel with policemen, but that barristers may be employed as judges, commissioners, magistrates? A reporter to a newspaper remains all his life a newspaper reporter. Philip, if he would but help himself, had friends in the world who might aid effectually to advance him. So it was we pleaded with him, in the language of moderation, urging the dictates of common sense. As if moderation and common sense could be got to move that mule of a Philip Firmin; as if any persuasion of ours could induce him to do anything but what he liked to do best himself!

“That you should be worldly, my poor fellow” (so Philip wrote to his present biographer) — “that you should be thinking of money and the main chance, is no matter of surprise to me. You have suffered under that curse of manhood, that destroyer of generosity in the mind, that parent of selfishness — a little fortune. You have your wretched hundreds” (my candid correspondent stated the sum correctly enough; and I wish it were double or treble; but that is not here the point:) “paid quarterly. The miserable pittance numbs your whole existence. It prevents freedom of thought and action. It makes a screw of a man who is certainly not without generous impulses, as I know, my poor old Harpagon: for hast thou not offered to open thy purse to me? I tell you I am sick of the way in which people in London, especially good people, think about money. You live up to your income’s edge. You are miserably poor. You brag and flatter yourselves that you owe no man anything; but your estate has creditors upon it as insatiable as any usurer, and as hard as any bailiff. You call me reckless, and prodigal, and idle, and all sorts of names, because I live in a single room, do as little work as I can, and go about with holes in my boots: and you flatter yourself you are prudent, because you have a genteel house, a grave flunkey out of livery, and two greengrocers to wait when you give your half-dozen dreary dinner parties. Wretched man! You are a slave: not a man. You are a pauper, with a good house and good clothes. You are so miserably prudent, that all your money is spent for you, except the few wretched shillings which you allow yourself for pocket-money. You tremble at the expense of a cab. I believe you actually look at half-a-crown before you spend it. The landlord is your master. The livery-stablekeeper is your master. A train of ruthless, useless servants are your pitiless creditors, to whom you have to pay exorbitant dividends every day. I, with a hole in my elbow, who live upon a shilling dinner, and walk on cracked boot soles, am called extravagant, idle, reckless, I don’t know what; while you, forsooth, consider yourself prudent. Miserable delusion! You are flinging away heaps of money on useless flunkies, on useless maid servants, on useless lodgings, on useless finery — and you say, ‘Poor Phil! what a sad idler he is! how he flings himself away! in what a wretched, disreputable manner he lives!’ Poor Phil is as rich as you are, for he has enough, and is content. Poor Phil can afford to be idle, and you can’t. You must work in order to keep that great hulking footman, that great rawboned cook, that army of babbling nursery-maids, and I don’t know what more. And if you choose to submit to the slavery and degradation inseparable from your condition; — the wretched inspection of candle-ends, which you call order; — the mean self-denials, which you must daily practise — I pity you, and don’t quarrel with you. But I wish you would not be so insufferably virtuous, and ready with your blame and pity for me. If I am happy, pray need you be disquieted? Suppose I prefer independence, and shabby boots? Are not these better than to be pinched by your abominable varnished conventionalism, and to be denied the liberty of free action? My poor fellow, I pity you from my heart; and it grieves me to think how those fine honest children — honest, and hearty, and frank, and open as yet — are to lose their natural good qualities, and to be swathed and swaddled, and stifled out of health and honesty by that obstinate worldling their father. Don’t tell me about the world, I know it. People sacrifice the next world to it, and are all the while proud of their prudence. Look at my miserable relations, steeped in respectability. Look at my father. There is a chance for him, now he is down and in poverty. I have had a letter from him, containing more of that dreadful worldly advice which you Pharisees give. If it weren’t for Laura and the children, sir, I heartily wish you were ruined like your affectionate — P. F.

“N.B., P.S. — Oh, Pen! I am so happy! She is such a little darling! I bathe in her innocence, sir! I strengthen myself in

her purity. I kneel before her sweet goodness and unconsciousness of guile. I walk from my room, and see her every morning before seven o'clock. I see her every afternoon. She loves you and Laura. And you love her, don't you? And to think that six months ago I was going to marry a woman without a heart! Why, sir, blessings be on the poor old father for spending our money, and rescuing me from that horrible fate! I might have been like that fellow in the Arabian Nights who married Amina — the respectable woman, who dined upon grains of rice, but supped upon cold dead body. Was it not worth all the money I ever was heir to, to have escaped from that ghoul? Lord Ringwood says he thinks I was well out of that. He calls people by Anglo-Saxon names, and uses very expressive monosyllables; and of aunt Twysden, of uncle Twysden, of the girls, and their brother, he speaks in a way which makes me see he has come to just conclusions about them.

"P.S. No. 2. — Ah Pen! She is such a darling. I think I am the happiest man in the world."

And this was what came of being ruined! A scapegrace, who, when he had plenty of money in his pocket, was ill-tempered, imperious, and discontented; now that he is not worth twopence, declares himself the happiest fellow in the world! Do you remember, my dear, how he used to grumble at our claret, and what wry faces he made, when there was only cold meat for dinner? The wretch is absolutely contented with bread and cheese and small-beer — even that bad beer which they have in Paris!

Now and again, at this time, and as our mutual avocations permitted, I saw Philip's friend, the Little Sister. He wrote to her dutifully from time to time. He told her of his love affair with Miss Charlotte; and my wife and I could console Caroline, by assuring her that this time the young man's heart was given to a worthy mistress. I say console, for the news, after all, was sad for her. In the little chamber which she always kept ready for him, he would lie awake, and think of some one dearer to him than a hundred poor Carolines. She would devise something that should be agreeable to the young lady. At Christmas time there came to Miss Baynes a wonderfully worked cambric pocket-handkerchief, with "Charlotte" most beautifully embroidered in the corner. It was this poor widow's mite of love and tenderness which she meekly laid down in the place where she worshipped. "And I have six for him, too, ma'am" Mrs. Brandon told my wife. "Poor fellow! His shirts was in a dreadful way when he went away from here, and that you know, ma'am." So you see this wayfarer, having fallen among undoubted thieves, yet found many kind souls to relieve him, and many a good Samaritan ready with his twopence, if need were.

The reason why Philip was the happiest man in the world of course you understand. French people are very early risers; and, at the little hotel where Mr. Philip lived, the whole crew of the house were up hours before lazy English masters and servants think of stirring. At ever so early an hour Phil had a fine bowl of coffee and milk and bread for his breakfast; and he was striding down to the Invalides, and across the bridge to the Champs Elysées, and the fumes of his pipe preceded him with a pleasant odour. And a short time after passing the Rond Point in the Elysian fields, where an active fountain was flinging up showers of diamonds to the sky, — after, I say, leaving the Rond Point on his right, and passing under umbrageous groves in the direction of the present Castle of Flowers, Mr. Philip would see a little person. Sometimes a young sister or brother came with the little person. Sometimes only a blush fluttered on her cheek, and a sweet smile beamed in her face as she came forward to greet him. For the angels were scarce purer than this young maid; and Una was no more afraid of the lion, than Charlotte of her companion with the loud voice and the tawny mane. I would not have envied that reprobate's lot who should have dared to say a doubtful word to this Una: but the truth is, she never thought of danger, or met with any. The workmen were going to their labour; the dandies were asleep; and considering their age, and the relationship in which they stood to one another, I am not surprised at Philip for announcing that this was the happiest time of his life. In later days, when two gentlemen of mature age happened to be in Paris together, what must Mr. Philip Firmin do but insist upon walking me sentimentally to the Champs Elysées, and looking at an old house there, a rather shabby old house in a garden. "That was the place," sighs he. "That was Madame de Smolensk's. That was the window, the third one, with the green jalousie. By Jove, sir, how happy and how miserable I have been behind that green blind!" And my friend shakes his large fist at the somewhat dilapidated mansion, whence Madame de Smolensk and her boarders have long since departed.

I fear that baroness had engaged in her enterprise with insufficient capital, or conducted it with such liberality that her profits were eaten up by her boarders. I could tell dreadful stories impugning the baroness's moral character. People said she had no right to the title of baroness at all, or to the noble foreign name of Smolensk. People are still alive who knew her under a different name. The baroness herself was what some amateurs call a fine woman, especially at dinner-time, when

she appeared in black satin and with cheeks that blushed up as far as the eyelids. In her peignoir in the morning, she was perhaps the reverse of fine. Contours which were round at night, in the forenoon appeared lean and angular. Her roses only bloomed half-an-hour before dinner-time on a cheek which was quite yellow until five o'clock. I am sure it is very kind of elderly and ill-complexioned people to supply the ravages of time or jaundice, and present to our view a figure blooming and agreeable, in place of an object faded and withered. Do you quarrel with your opposite neighbour for painting his house front or putting roses in his balcony? You are rather thankful for the adornment. Madame de Smolensk's front was so decorated of afternoons. Geraniums were set pleasantly under those first-floor windows, her eyes. Carcel lamps beamed from those windows: lamps which she had trimmed with her own scissors, and into which that poor widow poured the oil which she got somehow and anyhow. When the dingy breakfast papillotes were cast off an afternoon, what beautiful black curls appeared round her brow! The dingy papillotes were put away in the drawer: the peignoir retired to its hook behind the door: the satin raiment came forth, the shining, the ancient, the well-kept, the well-wadded: and at the same moment the worthy woman took that smile out of some cunning box on her scanty toilet-table — that smile which she wore all the evening along with the rest of her toilette, and took out of her mouth when she went to bed, and to think — to think how both ends were to be made to meet.

Philip said he respected and admired that woman: and worthy of respect she was in her way. She painted her face and grinned at poverty. She laughed and rattled with care gnawing at her side. She had to coax the milkman out of his human kindness: to pour oil — his own oil — upon the stormy *épicier's* soul: to melt the buttermilk: to tap the wine-merchant: to mollify the butcher: to invent new pretexts for the landlord: to reconcile the lady boarders, Mrs. General Baynes, let us say, and the honourable Mrs. Boldero, who were always quarrelling: to see that the dinner, when procured, was cooked properly; that *Françoise*, to whom she owed ever so many months' wages, was not too rebellious or intoxicated; that *Auguste*, also her creditor, had his glass clean and his lamps in order. And this work done and the hour of six o'clock arriving, she had to carve and be agreeable to her table; not to hear the growls of the discontented (and at what table-d'hôte are there not grumblers?); to have a word for everybody present; a smile and a laugh for Mrs. Bunch (with whom there had been very likely a dreadful row in the morning); a remark for the colonel; a polite phrase for the general's lady; and even a good word and compliment for sulky *Auguste*, who just before dinner-time had unfolded the napkin of mutiny about his wages.

Was not this enough work for a woman to do? To conduct a great house without sufficient money, and make soup, fish, roasts, and half a dozen entrées out of wind as it were? to conjure up wine in piece and by the dozen? to laugh and joke without the least gaiety? to receive scorn, abuse, rebuffs, insolence, with gay good-humour? and then to go to bed wearied at night, and have to think about figures, and that dreadful, dreadful sum in arithmetic — given, 5l. to pay 6l? Lady Macbeth is supposed to have been a resolute woman: and great, tall, loud, hectoring females are set to represent the character. I say No. She was a weak woman. She began to walk in her sleep, and blab after one disagreeable little incident had occurred in her house. She broke down, and got all the people away from her own table in the most abrupt and clumsy manner, because that drivelling, epileptic husband of hers fancied he saw a ghost. In Lady Smolensk's place Madame de Macbeth would have broken down in a week: and Smolensk lasted for years. If twenty gibbering ghosts had come to the boarding-house dinner, madame would have gone on carving her dishes, and smiling and helping the live guests, the paying guests; leaving the dead guests to gibber away and help themselves. "My poor father had to keep up appearances," Phil would say, recounting these things in after days: "but how? You know he always looked as if he was going to be hung." Smolensk was the gayest of the gay always. That widow would have tripped up to her funeral pile and kissed her hands to her friends with a smiling 'Bon jour!'"

"Pray, who was Monsieur de Smolensk?" asks a simple lady who may be listening to our friend's narrative.

"Ah, my dear lady! there was a pretty disturbance in the house when that question came to be mooted, I promise you," says our friend, laughing, as he recounts his adventures. And, after all, what does it matter to you and me and this story who Smolensk was? I am sure this poor lady had hardships enough in her life campaign, and that Ney himself could not have faced fortune with a constancy more heroic.

Well, when the Bayneses first came to her house, I tell you Smolensk and all round her smiled, and our friends thought they were landed in a real rosy Elysium in the Champs of that name. Madame had a Carrick à l'Indienne prepared in compliment to her guests. She had had many Indians in her establishment. She adored Indians. N' était ce la polygamie — they were most estimable people the Hindus. Surtout, she adored Indian shawls. That of Madame la Générale was

ravishing. The company at Madame's was pleasant. The Honourable Mrs. Boldero was a dashing woman of fashion and respectability, who had lived in the best world — it was easy to see that. The young ladies' duets were very striking. The Honourable Mr. Boldero was away shooting in Scotland at his brother, Lord Strongitharm's, and would take Gaberlunzie Castle and the duke's on his way south. Mrs. Baynes did not know Lady Estridge, the ambassadress? When the Estridges returned from Chantilly, the Honourable Mrs. B. would be delighted to introduce her. "Your pretty girl's name is Charlotte? So is Lady Estridge's — and very nearly as tall; — fine girls the Estridges; fine long necks — large feet — but your girl — lady Baynes' has beautiful feet. Lady Baynes, I said? Well, you must be Lady Baynes soon. The general must be a K. C. B. after his services. What, you know Lord Trim? He will, and must, do it for you. If not, my brother Strongitharm shall." I have no doubt Mrs. Baynes was greatly elated by the attentions of Lord Strongitharm's sister; and looked him out in the Peerage, where his lordship's arms, pedigree, and residence of Gaberlunzie Castle are duly recorded. The Honourable Mrs. Boldero's daughters, the Misses Minna and Brenda Boldero, played some rattling sonatas on a piano which was a good deal fatigued by their exertions, for the young ladies' hands were very powerful. And madame said, "Thank you," with her sweetest smile; and Auguste handed about on a silver tray — I say silver, so that the conveniences may not be wounded — well, say silver that was blushing to find itself copper — handed up on a tray a white drink which made the Baynes boys cry out, "I say, mother, what's this beastly thing?" On which madame, with the sweetest smile, appealed to the company, and said, "They love orgeat, these dear infants!" and resumed her picquet with old M. Bidois — that odd old gentleman in the long brown coat, with the red ribbon, who took so much snuff and blew his nose so often and so loudly. One, two, three rattling sonatas Minna and Brenda played; Mr. Clancy, of Trinity College, Dublin (M. de Clanci, madame called him), turning over the leaves, and presently being persuaded to sing some Irish melodies for the ladies. I don't think Miss Charlotte Baynes listened to the music much. She was listening to another music, which she and Mr. Firmin were performing together. Oh, how pleasant that music used to be! There was a sameness in it, I dare say, but still it was pleasant to hear the air over again. The pretty little duet à quatre mains, where the hands cross over, and hop up and down the keys, and the heads get so close, so close. Oh, duets, oh, regrets! Psha! no more of this. Go downstairs, old dotard. Take your hat and umbrella and go walk by the sea-shore, and whistle a toothless old solo. "These are our quiet nights," whispers M. de Clanci, to the Baynes ladies, when the evening draws to an end. "Madame's Thursdays are, I promise ye, much more fully attended." Good night, good night. A squeeze of a little hand, a hearty hand-shake from papa and mamma, and Philip is striding through the dark Elysian fields and over the Place of Concord to his lodgings in the Faubourg St. Germain. Or, stay! what is that glowworm beaming by the wall opposite Madame de Smolensk's house? — a glowworm that wafts an aromatic incense and odour? I do believe it is Mr. Philip's cigar. And he is watching, watching at a window by which a slim figure flits now and again. Then darkness falls on the little window. The sweet eyes are closed. Oh, blessings, blessings be upon them! The stars shine overhead. And homeward stalks Mr. Firmin, talking to himself, and brandishing a great stick.

I wish that poor Madame Smolensk could sleep as well as the people in her house. But care, with the cold feet, gets under the coverlid, and says, "Here I am; you know that bill is coming due to-morrow." Ah, atra cura! can't you leave the poor thing a little quiet? Hasn't she had work enough all day?



CHAPTER 4

COURSE OF TRUE LOVE.

WE beg the gracious reader to remember that Mr. Philip's business at Paris was only with a weekly London paper as yet; and hence that he had on his hands a great deal of leisure. He could glance over the state of Europe; give the latest news from the salons, imparted to him, I do believe, for the most part, by some brother hireling scribes; be present at all the theatres by deputy; and smash Louis Philippe or Messieurs Guizot and Thiers in a few easily turned paragraphs, which cost but a very few hours' labour to that bold and rapid pen. A wholesome though humiliating thought it must be to great and learned public writers, that their eloquent sermons are but for the day; and that, having read what the philosophers say on Tuesday or Wednesday, we think about their yesterday's sermons or essays no more. A score of years hence, men will read the papers of 1861 for the occurrences narrated — births, marriages, bankruptcies, elections, murders, deaths, and so forth; and not for the leading articles. "Though there were some of my letters," Mr. Philip would say, in after times, "that I fondly fancied the world would not willingly let die. I wanted to have them or see them reprinted in a volume, but I could find no publisher willing to undertake the risk. A fond being, who fancies there is genius in everything I say or write, would have had me reprint my letters to the Pall Mall Gazette; but I was too timid, or she, perhaps, was too confident. The letters never were republished. Let them pass." They have passed. And he sighs, in mentioning this circumstance; and I think tries to persuade himself, rather than others, that he is an unrecognized genius.

"And then, you know," he pleads, "I was in love, sir, and spending all my days at Omphale's knees. I didn't do justice to my powers. If I had had a daily paper, I still think I might have made a good public writer; and that I had the stuff in me — the stuff in me, sir!"

The truth is that, if he had had a daily paper, and ten times as much work as fell to his lot, Mr. Philip would have found means of pursuing his inclination, as he ever through life has done. The being, whom a young man wishes to see, he sees. What business is superior to that of seeing her? Does a little Hellespontine matter keep Leander from his Hero? He would die rather than not see her. Had he swum out of that difficulty on that stormy night, and carried on a few months later, it might have been, "Beloved! my cold and rheumatism are so severe that the doctor says I must not think of cold bathing at-night;" or, "Dearest! we have a party at tea, and you mustn't expect your ever fond Lambda to-night," and so forth, and so forth. But in the heat of his passion water could not stay him; tempests could not frighten him; and in one of them he went down, while poor Hero's lamp was twinkling and spending its best flame in vain. So Philip came from Sestos to Abydos daily — across one of the bridges, and paying a halfpenny toll very likely — and, late or early, poor little Charlotte's virgin lamps were lighted in her eyes, and watching for him.

Philip made many sacrifices, mind you: sacrifices which all men are not in the habit of making. When Lord Ringwood was in Paris, twice, thrice he refused to dine with his lordship, until that nobleman smelt a rat, as the saying is — and said, "Well, youngster, I suppose you are going where there is metal more attractive. When you come to twelve lustres, my boy, you'll find vanity and vexation in that sort of thing, and a good dinner better, and cheaper, too, than the best of them." And when some of Philip's rich college friends met him in his exile, and asked him to the Rocher or the Trois Freres, he would break away from those banquets; and as for meeting at those feasts doubtful companions, whom young men will sometimes invite to their entertainments, Philip turned from such with scorn and anger. His virtue was loud, and he proclaimed it loudly. He expected little Charlotte to give him credit for it, and told her of his self-denial. And she believed anything he said; and delighted in everything he wrote; and copied out his articles for the Pall Mall Gazette; and treasured his poems in her desk of desks: and there never was in all Sestos, in all Abydos, in all Europe, in all Asia Minor or Asia Major, such a noble creature as Leander, Hero thought; never, never! I hope, young ladies, you may all have a Leander on his way to the tower where the light of your love is burning steadfastly. I hope, young gentlemen, you have each of you a beacon in sight, and may meet with no mishap in swimming to it.

From my previous remarks regarding Mrs. Baynes, the reader has been made aware that the general's wife was no more faultless than the rest of her fellowcreatures; and having already candidly informed the public that the writer and his family were no favourites of this lady, I have now the pleasing duty of recording my own opinions regarding her Mrs. General B. was an early riser. She was a frugal woman; fond of her young, or, let us say, anxious to provide for their

maintenance; and here, with my best compliments, I think the catalogue of her good qualities is ended. She had a bad, violent temper; a disagreeable person, attired in very bad taste; a shrieking voice; and two manners, the respectful and the patronizing, which were both alike odious. When she ordered Baynes to marry her, gracious powers! why did he not run away? Who dared first to say that marriages are made in heaven? We know that there are not only blunders, but roguery in the marriage office. Do not mistakes occur every day, and are not the wrong people coupled? Had heaven anything to do with the bargain by which young Miss Blushrose was sold to old Mr. Hoarfrost? Did heaven order young Miss Tripper to throw over poor Tom Spooner, and marry the wealthy Mr. Bung? You may as well say that horses are sold in heaven, which, as you know, are groomed, are doctored, are chanted on to the market, and warranted by dexterous horse-vendors, as possessing every quality of blood, pace, temper, age. Against these Mr. Greenhorn has his remedy sometimes; but against a mother who sells you a warranted daughter, what remedy is there? You have been jockeyed by false representation into bidding for the Cecilia, and the animal is yours for life. She shies, kicks, stumbles, has an infernal temper, is a crib-biter — and she was warranted to you by her mother as the most perfect, good-tempered creature, whom the most timid might manage! You have bought her. She is yours. Heaven bless you! Take her home, and be miserable for the rest of your days. You have no redress. You have done the deed. Marriages were made in heaven, you know; and in yours you were as much sold as Moses Primrose was when he bought the gross of green spectacles.

I don't think poor General Baynes ever had a proper sense of his situation, or knew how miserable he ought by rights to have been. He was not uncheerful at times: a silent man, liking his rubber and his glass of wine; a very weak person in the common affairs of life, as his best friends must own; but, as I have heard, a very tiger in action. "I know your opinion of the general," Philip used to say to me, in his grandiloquent way. "You despise men who don't bully their wives; you do, sir! You think the general weak, I know, I know. Other brave men were so about women, as I daresay you have heard. This man, so weak at home, was mighty on the war-path; and in his wigwam are the scalps of countless warriors."

"In his wig what?" say I. The truth is, on his meek head the general wore a little curling chestnut top-knot, which looked very queer and out of place over that wrinkled and war-worn face.

"If you choose to laugh at your joke, pray do," says Phil, majestically. "I make a noble image of a warrior: You prefer a barber's pole. Bon! Pass me the wine. The veteran whom I hope to salute as father ere long — the soldier of twenty battles; — who saw my own brave grandfather die at his side — die at Busaco, by George; you laugh at an account of his wig. It's a capital joke." And here Phil scowled and slapped the table, and passed his hand across his eyes, as though the death of his grandfather, which occurred long before Philip was born, caused him a very serious pang of grief. Philip's newspaper business brought him to London on occasions. I think it was on one of these visits, that we had our talk about General Baynes. And it was at the same time Philip described the boarding-house to us, and its inmates, and the landlady, and the doings there.

For that struggling landlady, as for all women in distress, our friend had a great sympathy and liking; and she returned Philip's kindness by being very good to Mademoiselle Charlotte, and very forbearing with the general's wife and his other children. The appetites of those little ones were frightful, the temper of Madame la Générale was almost intolerable, but Charlotte was an angel, and the general was a mutton — a true mutton. Her own father had been so. The brave are often muttons at home. I suspect that, though madame could have made but little profit by the general's family, his monthly payments were very welcome to her meagre little exchequer. "Ah! if all my locataires were like him!" sighed the poor lady. "That Madame Boldero, whom the generaless treats always as Honourable, I wish I was as sure of her! And others again!"

I never kept a boarding-house, but I am sure there must be many painful duties attendant on that profession. What can you do if a lady or gentleman doesn't pay his bill? Turn him or her out? Perhaps the very thing that lady or gentleman would desire. They go. Those trunks which you have insanely detained, and about which you have made a fight and a scandal, do not contain a hundred francs' worth of goods, and your creditors never come back again. You do not like to have a row in a boarding-house any more than you would like to have a party with scarlet-fever in your best bedroom. The scarlet-fever party stays, and the other boarders go away. What, you ask, do I mean by this mystery? I am sorry to have to give up names, and titled names. I am sorry to say the Honourable Mrs. Boldero did not pay her bills. She was waiting for remittances, which the Honourable Boldero was dreadfully remiss in sending. A dreadful man! He was still at his lordship's at Gaberlunzie Castle, shooting the wild deer and hunting the roe. And though the Honourable Mrs. B.'s heart was in the Highlands, of course, how could she join her Highland chief without the money to pay madame? The Highlands, indeed! One dull day it came out that the Honourable Boldero was amusing himself in the Highlands of Hesse Homburg;

and engaged in the dangerous sport which is to be had in the green plains about Loch Badenbadenocho!

“Did you ever hear of such depravity? The woman is a desperate and unprincipled adventuress! I wonder madame dares to put me and my children and my general down at table with such people as those, Philip!” cries madame la générale. “I mean those opposite — that woman and her two daughters who haven’t paid madame a shilling for three months — who owes me five hundred francs, which she borrowed until next Tuesday, expecting a remittance — a pretty remittance indeed — from Lord Strongitharm. Lord Strongitharm, I daresay! And she pretends to be most intimate at the embassy; and that she would introduce us there, and at the Tuileries; and she told me Lady Estridge had the small-pox in the house; and when I said all ours had been vaccinated, and I didn’t mind, she fobbed me off with some other excuse; and it’s my belief the woman’s a humbug. Overhear me! I don’t care if she does overhear me. No. You may look as much as you like, my Honourable Mrs. Boldero; and I don’t care if you do overhear me. Ogoost! Pomdytare pour le général! How tough madame’s boof is, and it’s boof, boof, boof every day, till I’m sick of boof. Ogoost! why don’t you attend to my children?” And so forth.

By this report of the worthy woman’s conversation, you will see that the friendship which had sprung up between the two ladies had come to an end, in consequence of painful pecuniary disputes between them; that to keep a boarding-house can’t be a very pleasant occupation; and that even to dine in a boarding-house must be very bad fun when the company is frightened and dull, and when there are two old women at table ready to fling the dishes at each other’s fronts. At the period of which I now write, I promise you, there was very little of the piano-duet business going on after dinner. In the first place, everybody knew the girls’ pieces; and when they began, Mrs. General Baynes would lift up a voice louder than the jingling old instrument, thumped Minna and Brenda ever so loudly. “Perfect strangers to me, Mr. Clancy, I assure you. Had I known her, you don’t suppose I would have lent her the money. Honourable Mrs. Boldero, indeed! Five weeks she has owed me five hundred frongs. Bong swor, Monsieur Bidois! Sang song frong pas payy encor! Prommy, pas payy!” Fancy, I say, what a dreary life that must have been at the select boarding-house, where these two parties were doing battle daily after dinner! Fancy, at the select soirées, the general’s lady seizing upon one guest after another, and calling out her wrongs, and pointing to the wrong-doer; and poor Madame Smolensk, smirking, and smiling, and flying from one end of the salon to the other, and thanking M. Pivoine for his charming romance, and M. Brumm for his admirable performance on the violoncello, and even asking those poor Miss Bolderos to perform their duet — for her heart melted towards them. Not ignorant of evil, she had learned to succour the miserable. She knew what poverty was, and had to coax scowling duns, and wheedle vulgar creditors. “Tenez, Monsieur Philippe,” she said, “the générale is too cruel. There are others here who might complain, and are silent.” Philip felt all this; the conduct of his future mother-in-law filled him with dismay and horror. And some time after these remarkable circumstances, he told me, blushing as he spoke, a humiliating secret. “Do you know, sir,” says he, “that autumn I made a pretty good thing of it with one thing or another. I did my work for the Pall Mall Gazette: and Smith of the Daily Intelligencer, wanting a month’s holiday, gave me his letter and ten francs a day. And at that very time I met Redman, who had owed me twenty pounds ever since we were at college, and who was just coming back flush from Homburg, and paid me. Well, now. Swear you won’t tell. Swear on your faith as a Christian man! With this money I went, sir, privily to Mrs. Boldero. I said if she would pay the dragon — I mean Mrs. Baynes — I would lend her the money. And I did lend her the money, and the Boldero never paid back Mrs. Baynes. Don’t mention it. Promise me you won’t tell Mrs. Baynes. I never expected to get Redman’s money you know, and am no worse off than before. One day of the Grandes Eaux we went to Versailles I think, and the Honourable Mrs. Boldero gave us the slip. She left the poor girls behind her in pledge, who, to do them justice, cried and were in a dreadful way; and when Mrs. Baynes, on our return, began shrieking about her ‘sang song frong,’ Madame Smolensk fairly lost patience for once, and said, ‘Mais, madame, vous nous fatiguez avec vos cinq cents francs;’ on which the other muttered something about ‘Ansolong,’ but was briskly taken up by her husband, who said, ‘By George, Eliza, madame is quite right. And I wish the five hundred francs were in the sea.’”

Thus you understand, if Mrs. General Baynes thought some people were “stuck-up people,” some people can — and hereby do by these presents — pay off Mrs. Baynes, by furnishing the public with a candid opinion of that lady’s morals, manners, and character. How could such a shrewd woman be dazzled so repeatedly by ranks and titles? There used to dine at Madame Smolensk’s boarding-house a certain German baron, with a large finger-ring, upon a dingy finger, towards whom the lady was pleased to cast the eye of favour, and who chose to fall in love with her pretty daughter; young Mr. Clancy, the Irish poet, was also smitten with the charms of the fair young lady; and this intrepid mother encouraged both

suitors, to the unspeakable agonies of Philip Firmin, who felt often that whilst he was away at his work these inmates of Madame Smolensk's house were near his charmer — at her side at lunch, ever handing her the cup at breakfast, on the watch for her when she walked forth in the garden; and I take the pangs of jealousy to have formed a part of those unspeakable sufferings which Philip said he endured in the house whither he came courting.

Little Charlotte, in one or two of her letters to her friends in Queen Square, London, meekly complained of Philip's tendency to jealousy. "Does he think, after knowing him, I can think of these horrid men?" she asked. "I don't understand what Mr. Clancy is talking about, when he comes to me with his 'pomes and potry;' and who can read poetry like Philip himself? Then the German baron — who does not even call himself a baron: it is mamma who will insist upon calling him so — has such very dirty things, and smells so of cigars, that I don't like to come near him. Philip smokes too, but his cigars are quite pleasant. Ah, dear friend, how could he ever think such men as these were to be put in comparison with him! And he scolds so; and scowls at the poor men in the evening when he comes! and his temper is so high! Do say a word to him — quite cautiously and gently, you know — in behalf of your fondly attached and most happy — only he will make me unhappy sometimes; but you'll prevent him, won't you? — Charlotte B."

I could fancy Philip hectoring through the part of Othello, and his poor young Desdemona not a little frightened at his black humours. Such sentiments as Mr. Philip felt strongly, he expressed with an uproar. Charlotte's correspondent, as usual, made light of these little domestic confidences and grievances. "Women don't dislike a jealous scolding," she said. "It may be rather tiresome, but it is always a compliment. Some husbands think so well of themselves, that they can't condescend to be jealous." Yes, I say, women prefer to have tyrants over them. A scolding you think is a mark of attention. Hadn't you better adopt the Russian system at once, and go out and buy me a whip, and present it to me with a curtsy, and your compliments; and a meek prayer that I should use it. "Present you a whip! present you a goose!" says the lady, who encourages scolding in other husbands, it seems, but won't suffer a word from her own.

Both disputants had set their sentimental hearts on the marriage of this young man and this young woman. Little Charlotte's heart was so bent on the match, that it would break, we fancied, if she were disappointed; and in her mother's behaviour we felt, from the knowledge we had of the woman's disposition, there was a serious cause for alarm. Should a better offer present itself, Mrs. Baynes, we feared, would fling over poor Philip: or, it was in reason and nature, that he would come to a quarrel with her, and in the course of the pitched battle which must ensue between them, he would fire off expressions mortally injurious. Are there not many people, in every one's acquaintance, who, as soon as they have made a bargain, repent of it? Philip, as "preserver" of General Baynes, in the first fervour of family gratitude for that act of self-sacrifice on the young man's part, was very well. But gratitude wears out; or suppose a woman says, "It is my duty to my child to recal my word; and not allow her to fling herself away on a beggar." Suppose that you and I, strongly inclined to do a mean action, get a good, available, and moral motive for it? I trembled for poor Philip's course of true love, and little Charlotte's chances, when these surmises crossed my mind. There was a hope still in the honour and gratitude of General Baynes. He would not desert his young friend and benefactor. Now General Baynes was a brave man of war, and so was John of Marlborough a brave man of war; but it is certain that both were afraid of their wives.

We have said by whose invitation and encouragement General Baynes was induced to bring his family to the boarding-house at Paris; the instigation, namely, of his friend and companion in arms, the gallant Colonel Bunch. When the Baynes family arrived, the Bunches were on the steps of madame's house, waving a welcome to the new-comers. It was, "Here we are, Bunch, my boy."

"Glad to see you, Baynes. Right well you're looking, and so's Mrs. B."

And the general replies, "And so are you, Bunch; and so do you, Mrs. B."

"How do, boys? Hoy d'you do, Miss Charlotte? Come to show the Paris fellows what a pretty girl is, hey? Blooming like a rose, Baynes!"

"I'm telling the general," cries the colonel to the general's lady, "the girl's the very image of her mother."

In this case poor Charlotte must have looked like a yellow rose, for Mrs. Baynes was of a bilious temperament and complexion, whereas Miss Charlotte was as fresh pink and white as — what shall we say? — as the very freshest strawberries mingled with the very nicest cream.

The two old soldiers were of very great comfort to one another. They toddled down to Galignani's together daily, and read the papers there. They went and looked at the reviews in the Carrousel, and once or twice to the Champ de Mars; —

recognizing here and there the numbers of the regiments against which they had been engaged in the famous ancient wars. They did not brag in the least about their achievements, they winked and understood each other. They got their old uniforms out of their old boxes, and took a voiture de remise, by Jove! and went to be presented to Louis Philippe. They bought a catalogue; and went to the Louvre, and wagged their honest old heads before the pictures; and, I daresay, winked and nudged each other's brave old sides at some of the nymphs in the statue gallery. They went out to Versailles with their families; loyally stood treat to the ladies at the restaurateur's. (Bunch had taken down a memorandum in his pocket-book from Benyon, who had been the duke's aide-de-camp in the last campaign, to "go to Beauvillier's," only Beauvillier's had been shut up for twenty years.) They took their families and Charlotte to the Théâtre Français, to a tragedy; and they had books: and they said it was the most confounded nonsense they ever saw in their lives; and I am bound to say that Bunch, in the back of the box, snored so, that, though in retirement, he created quite a sensation. "Corneal," he owns, was too much for him: give him Shakspeare: give him John Kemble: give him Mrs. Siddons: give him Mrs. Jordan. But as for this sort of thing? "I think our play days are over, Baynes — hey?" And I also believe that Miss Charlotte Baynes, whose knowledge of the language was slight as yet, was very much bewildered during the tragedy, and could give but an imperfect account of it. But then Philip Firmin was in the orchestra stalls; and had he not sent three bouquets for the three ladies, regretting that he could not come to see somebody in the Champs Elysées, because it was his post day, and he must write his letter for the Pall Mall Gazette? There he was, her Cid; her peerless champion: and to give up father and mother for him? our little Chimène thought such a sacrifice not too difficult. After that dismal attempt at the theatre, the experiment was not repeated. The old gentlemen preferred their whist, to those pompous Alexandrines sung through the nose, which Colonel Bunch, a facetious little colonel, used to imitate, and, I am given to understand, very badly.

The worthy officers compared madame's to an East Indian ship, quarrels and all. Selina went on just in that way on board the Burrumpooter. Always rows about precedence, and the services, and the deuce knows what. Women always will. Selina Bunch went on in that way: and Eliza Baynes also went on in that way: but I should think, from the most trustworthy information, that Eliza was worse than Selina.

"About any person with a title, that woman will make a fool of herself to the end of the chapter," remarked Selina of her friend. "You remember how she used to go on at Barrackpore about that little shrimp Stoney Battersby, because he was an Irish viscount's son? See how she flings herself at the head of this Mrs. Boldero — with her airs, and her paint, and her black front! I can't bear the woman! I know she has not paid madame. I know she is no better than she should be; and to see Eliza Baynes coaxing her, and sidling up to her, and flattering her:— it's too bad, that it is! A woman who owes ever so much to madame! a woman who doesn't pay her washer-woman!"

"Just like the Burrumpooter over again, my dear," cries Colonel Bunch. "You and Eliza Baynes were always quarrelling; that's the fact. Why did you ask her to come here? I knew you would begin again, as soon as you met." And the truth was that these ladies were always fighting and making up again.

"So you and Mrs. Bunch were old acquaintances?" asked Mrs. Boldero of her new friend. "My dear Mrs. Baynes! I should hardly have thought it: your manners are so different! Your friend, if I may be so free as to speak, has the camp manner. You have not the camp manner at all. I should have thought you — excuse me the phrase, but I'm so open, and always speak my mind out — you haven't the camp manner at all. You seem as if you were one of us. Minna! doesn't Mrs. Baynes put you in mind of Lady Hm —?" (The name is inaudible, in consequence of Mrs. Boldero's exceeding shyness in mentioning names; but the girls see the likeness to dear Lady Hm — at once.) "And when you bring your dear girl to London, you'll know the lady I mean, and judge for yourself. I assure you I am not disparaging you, my dear Mrs. Baynes, in comparing you to her!"

And so the conversation goes on. If Mrs. Major MacWhirter at Tours chose to betray secrets, she could give extracts from her sister's letters to show how profound was the impression created in Mrs. General Baynes' mind by the professions and conversation of the Scotch lady.

"Didn't the general shoot and love deer-stalking? The dear general must come to Gaberlunzie Castle, where she would promise him a Highland welcome. Her brother Strongitharm was the most amiable of men; adored her and her girls: there was talk even of marrying Minna to the captain, but she for her part could not endure the marriage of first-cousins. There was a tradition against such marriages in their family. Of three Bolderos and Strongitharms who married their first-cousins, one was drowned in Gaberlunzie lake three weeks after the marriage; one lost his wife by a galloping consumption, and died a monk at Rome; and the third married a fortnight before the battle of Culloden, where he was

slain at the head of the Strongitharms. Mrs. Baynes had no idea of the splendour of Gaberlunzie Castle; seventy bedrooms and thirteen company rooms, besides the picture gallery! In Edinburgh, and Strongitharm had the right to wear his bonnet in the presence of his sovereign." A bonnet! how very odd, my dear! But with ostrich plumes, I daresay it may look well, especially as the Highlanders wear frocks too. "Lord Strongitharm had no house in London, having almost ruined himself in building his princely castle in the north. Mrs. Baynes must come there and meet their noble relatives and all the Scottish nobility." Nor do I care about these vanities, my dear, but to bring my sweet Charlotte into the world: is it not a mother's duty?

Not only to her sister, but likewise to Charlotte's friends of Queen Square, did Mrs. Baynes impart these delightful news. But this is in the first ardour of the friendship which arises between Mrs. Baynes and Mrs. Boldero, and before those unpleasant money disputes of which we have spoken.

Afterwards, when the two ladies have quarrelled regarding the memorable "sang song frong," I think Mrs. Bunch came round to Mrs. Boldero's side. "Eliza Baynes is too hard on her. It is too cruel to insult her before those two unhappy daughters. The woman is an odious woman, and a vulgar woman, and a schemer, and I always said so. But to box her ears before her daughters — her honourable friend of last week! it's a shame of Eliza!"

"My dear, you'd better tell her so!" says Bunch drily. "But if you do, tell her when I'm out of the way, please!" And accordingly, one day when the two old officers return from their stroll, Mrs. Bunch informs the colonel that she has had it out with Eliza; and Mrs. Baynes, with a heated face, tells the general that she and Mrs. Colonel Bunch have quarrelled; and she is determined it shall be for the last time. So that poor Madame de Smolensk has to interpose between Mrs. Baynes and Mrs. Boldero; between Mrs. Baynes and Mrs. Bunch; and to sit surrounded by glaring eyes, and hissing inuendoes, and in the midst of feuds unhealable. Of course, from the women the quarrelling will spread to the gentlemen. That always happens. Poor Madame trembles. Again Bunch gives his neighbour his word that it is like the Burrumpooter East Indiaman — the Burrumpooter in very bad weather, too.

"At any rate, we won't be lugged into it, Baynes, my boy!" says the colonel, who is of a sanguine temperament, to his friend.

"Hey, hey! don't be too sure, Bunch; don't be too sure!" sighs the other veteran, who, it may be, is of a more desponding turn, as, after a battle at luncheon, in which the Amazons were fiercely engaged, the two old warriors take their walk to Galignani's.

Towards his Charlotte's relatives poor Philip was respectful by duty and a sense of interest, perhaps. Before marriage, especially, men are very kind to the relatives of the beloved object. They pay compliments to mamma; they listen to papa's old stories, and laugh appositely; they bring presents for the innocent young ones, and let the little brothers kick their shins. Philip endured the juvenile Bayneses very kindly: he took the boys to Franconi's, and made his conversation as suitable as he could to the old people. He was fond of the old general, a simple and worthy old man; and had, as we have said, a hearty sympathy and respect for Madame Smolensk, admiring her constancy and goodhumour under her many trials. But those who have perused his memoirs are aware that Mr. Firmin could make himself, on occasions, not a little disagreeable. When sprawling on a sofa, engaged in conversation with his charmer, he would not budge when other ladies entered the room. He scowled at them, if he did not like them. He was not at the least trouble to conceal his likes or dislikes. He had a manner of fixing his glass in his eye, putting his thumbs into the armholes of his waistcoat, and talking and laughing very loudly at his own jokes or conceits, which was not pleasant or respectful to ladies.

"Your loud young friend, with the cracked boots, is very maurais ton, my dear Mrs. Baynes," Mrs. Boldero remarked to her new friend, in the first ardour of their friendship. "A relative of Lord Ringwood's, is he? Lord Ringwood is a very queer person. A son of that dreadful Dr. Firmin, who ran away after cheating everybody? Poor young man! He can't help having such a father, as you say, and most good, and kind, and generous of you to say so. And the general and the Honourable Philip Ringwood were early companions together, I daresay. But, having such an unfortunate father as Dr. Firmin, I think Mr. Firmin might be a little less prononcé; don't you? And to see him in cracked boots, sprawling over the sofas, and hear him, when my loves are playing their duets, laughing and talking so very loud, — I confess isn't pleasant to me. I am not used to that kind of monde, nor are my dear loves. You are under great obligations to him, and he has behaved nobly, you say? Of course. To get into your society an unfortunate young man will be on his best behaviour, though he certainly does not condescend to be civil to us. But . . . What! That young man engaged to that lovely, innocent, charming child, your daughter? My dear creature, you frighten me! A man, with such a father; and, excuse me, with such a manner; and without

a penny in the world, engaged to Miss Baynes! Goodness, powers! It must never be. It shall not be, my dear Mrs. Baynes. Why, I have written to my nephew Hector to come over, Strongitharm's favourite son and my favourite nephew. I have told him that there is a sweet young creature here, whom he must and ought to see. How well that dear child would look presiding at Strongitharm Castle? And you are going to give her to that dreadful young man with the loud voice and the cracked boots — that smoky young man — oh, impossible!"

Madame had, no doubt, given a very favourable report of her new lodgers to the other inmates of her house; and she and Mrs. Boldero had concluded that all general officers returning from India were immensely rich. To think that her daughter might be the Honourable Mrs. Strongitharm, Baroness Strongitharm, and walk in a coronation in robes, with a coronet in her hand! Mrs. Baynes yielded in loyalty to no woman, but I fear her wicked desires compassed a speedy royal demise, as this thought passed through her mind of the Honourable Lenox Strongitharm. She looked him out in the Peerage, and found that young nobleman designated as the Captain of Strongitharm. Charlotte might be the Honourable Mrs. Captain of Strongitharm! When poor Phil stalked in after dinner that evening in his shabby boots and smoky paletot, Mrs. Baynes gave him but a grim welcome. He went and prattled unconsciously by the side of his little Charlotte, whose tender eyes dwelt upon his, and whose fair cheeks flung out their blushes of welcome. He prattled away. He laughed out loud whilst Minna and Brenda were thumping their duet. "Taisez-vous donc, Monsieur Philippe," cries madame, putting her finger to her lip. The Honourable Mrs. Boldero looked at dear Mrs. Baynes, and shrugged her shoulders. Poor Philip! would he have laughed so loudly (and so rudely, too, as I own) had he known what was passing in the minds of those women? Treason was passing there: and before that glance of knowing scorn, shot from the Honourable Mrs. Boldero's eyes, dear Mrs. General Baynes faltered. How very curt and dry she was with Philip! how testy with Charlotte! Poor Philip, knowing that his charmer was in the power of her mother, was pretty humble to this dragon; and attempted, by uncouth flatteries, to soothe and propitiate her. She had a queer, dry humour, and loved a joke; but Phil's fell very flat this night. Mrs. Baynes received his pleasantries with an "Oh, indeed!" She was sure she heard one of the children crying in their nursery. "Do, pray, go and see, Charlotte, what that child is crying about." And away goes poor Charlotte, having but dim presentiment of misfortune as yet. Was not mamma often in an ill humour; and were they not all used to her scoldings?

As for Mrs. Colonel Bunch, I am sorry to say that, up to this time, Philip was not only no favourite with her, but was heartily disliked by that lady. I have told you our friend's faults. He was loud: he was abrupt: he was rude often: and often gave just cause of annoyance by his laughter, his disrespect, and his swaggering manner. To those whom he liked he was as gentle as a woman; and treated them with an extreme tenderness and touching rough respect. But those persons about whom he was indifferent, he never took the least trouble to conciliate or please. If they told long stories, for example, he would turn on his heel, or interrupt them by observations of his own on some quite different subject. Mrs. Colonel Bunch, then, positively disliked that young man, and I think had very good reasons for her dislike. As for Bunch, Bunch said to Baynes, "Cool hand, that young fellow!" and winked. And Baynes said to Bunch, "Queer chap. Fine fellow, as I have reason to know pretty well. I play a club. No club? I mark honours and two tricks." And the game went on. Clancy hated Philip: a meek man, whom Firmin had yet managed to offend. "That man," the pote Clancy remarked, "has a manner of treading on me corrans which is intolerable to me!"

The truth is, Philip was always putting his foot on some other foot, and trampling it. And as for the Boldero clan, Mr. Firmin treated them with the most amusing insolence, and ignored them as if they were out of existence altogether. So you see the poor fellow had not with his poverty learned the least lesson of humility, or acquired the very earliest rudiments of the art of making friends. I think his best friend in the house was its mistress, Madame Smolensk. Mr. Philip treated her as an equal: which mark of affability he was not in the habit of bestowing on all persons. Some great people, some rich people, some would-be-fine people, he would patronize with an insufferable audacity. Rank or wealth do not seem somehow to influence this man, as they do common mortals. He would tap a bishop on the waistcoat, and contradict a duke at their first meeting. I have seen him walk out of church during a stupid sermon, with an audible remark perhaps to that effect, and as if it were a matter of course that he should go. If the company bored him at dinner, he would go to sleep in the most unaffected manner. At home we were always kept in a pleasant state of anxiety, not only by what he did and said, but by the idea of what he might do or say next. He did not go to sleep at madame's boarding-house, preferring to keep his eyes open to look at pretty Charlotte's. And were there ever such sapphires as his? she thought. And hers? Ah! if they have tears to shed, I hope a kind fate will dry them quickly!

CHAPTER 5

TREATS OF DANCING, DINING, DYING.

Old schoolboys remember how, when pious Æneas was compelled by painful circumstances to quit his country, he and his select band of Trojans founded a new Troy, where they landed; raising temples to the Trojan gods; building streets with Trojan names; and endeavouring, to the utmost of their power, to recal their beloved native place. In like manner, British Trojans and French Trojans take their Troy everywhere. Algiers I have only seen from the sea; but New Orleans and Leicester Square I have visited; and have seen a quaint old France still lingering on the banks of the Mississippi; a dingy modern France round that great Globe of Mr. Wyld's, which they say is coming to an end. There are French cafés, billiards, estaminets, waiters, markers, poor Frenchmen, and rich Frenchmen, in a new Paris — shabby and dirty, it is true — but offering the emigrant the dominoes, the chopine, the petit verre of the patrie. And do not British Trojans, who emigrate to the continent of Europe, take their Troy with them? You all know the quarters of Paris which swarm with us Trojans. From Peace Street to the Arch of the Star are collected thousands of refugees from our Ilium. Under the arcades of the Rue de Rivoli you meet, at certain hours, as many of our Trojans as of the natives. In the Trojan inns of Meurice, the Louvre, we swarm. We have numerous Anglo-Trojan doctors and apothecaries, who give us the dear pills and doses of Pergamus. We go to Mrs. Guerre or kind Mrs. Colombin, and can purchase the sandwiches of Troy, the pale ale and sherry of Troy, and the dear, dear muffins of home. We live for years, never speaking any language but our native Trojan; except to our servants, whom we instruct in the Trojan way of preparing toast for breakfast; Trojan bread-sauce for fowls and partridges; Trojan corned beef, We have temples where we worship according to the Trojan rites. A kindly sight is that which one beholds of a Sunday in the Elysian fields and the St. Honoré quarter, of processions of English grown people and children, stalwart, red-cheeked, marching to their churches, their gilded prayer-books in hand, to sing in a stranger's land the sacred songs of their Zion. I am sure there are many English in Paris, who never speak to any native above the rank of a waiter or shopman. Not long since I was listening to a Frenchman at Folkestone, speaking English to the waiters and acting as interpreter for his party. He spoke pretty well and very quickly. He was irresistibly comical. I wonder how we maintained our gravity. And you and I, my dear friend, when we speak French? I daresay we are just as absurd. As absurd? And why not? Don't you be discouraged, young fellow. Courage, mon jeune ami! Remember, Trojans have a conquering way with them. When Æneas landed at Carthage, I daresay he spoke Carthaginian with a ridiculous Trojan accent; but, for all that, poor Dido fell desperately in love with him. Take example by the son of Anchises, my boy. Never mind the grammar or the pronunciation, but tackle the lady, and speak your mind to her as best you can.

This is the plan which the Vicomte de Loisy used to adopt. He was following a cours of English according to the celebrated méthode Jobson. The cours assembled twice a week: and the vicomte, with laudable assiduity, went to all English parties to which he could gain an introduction, for the purpose of acquiring the English language, and marrying une Anglaise. This industrious young man even went au Temple on Sundays for the purpose of familiarizing himself with the English language; and as he sat under Doctor Murrough Macmanus of T. C. D., a very eloquent preacher at Paris in those days, the vicomte acquired a very fine pronunciation. Attached to the cause of unfortunate monarchy all over the world, the vicomte had fought in the Spanish Carlist armies. He waltzed well: and madame thought his cross looked nice at her parties. Will it be believed that Mrs. General Baynes took this gentleman into special favour; talked with him at soirée after soirée; never laughed at his English; encouraged her girl to waltz with him (which he did to perfection, whereas poor Philip was but a hulking and clumsy performer); and showed him the very greatest favour, until one day, on going into Mr. Bonus's, the house agent (who lets lodgings, and sells British pickles, tea, sherry, and the like), she found the vicomte occupying a stool as clerk in Mr. Bonus's establishment, where for twelve hundred francs a year he gave his invaluable services during the day! Mrs. Baynes took poor Madame severely to task for admitting such a man to her assemblies. Madame was astonished. Monsieur was a gentleman of ancient family who had met with misfortunes. He was earning his maintenance. To sit in a bureau was not a dishonour. Knowing that boutique meant shop and garçon meant boy, Mrs. Baynes made use of the words boutique garçon the next time she saw the vicomte. The little man wept tears of rage and mortification. There was a very painful scene, at which, thank Mercy, poor Charlotte thought, Philip was not present. Were it not for the general's cheveux blancs (by which phrase the vicomte very kindly designated General Baynes's chestnut

topknot) the vicomte would have had reason from him. "Charming miss," he said to Charlotte, "your respectable papa is safe from my sword! Madame your mamma has addressed me words which I qualify not. But you — you are too 'andsome, too good, to despise a poor soldier, a poor gentleman!" I have heard the vicomte still dances at boarding-houses and is still in pursuit of an Anglaise. He must be a wooer now almost as elderly as the good general whose scalp he respected.

Mrs. Baynes was, to be sure, a heavy weight to bear for poor Madame, but her lean shoulders were accustomed to many a burden; and if the general's wife was quarrelsome and odious, he, as Madame said, was as soft as a mutton; and Charlotte's pretty face and manners were the admiration of all. The yellow Miss Bolderos, those hapless elderly orphans left in pawn, might bite their lips with envy, but they never could make them as red as Miss Charlotte's smiling mouth. To the honour of Madame Smolensk be it said that never by word or hint did she cause those unhappy young ladies any needless pain. She never stinted them of any meal. No full-priced pensioner of Madame's could have breakfast, luncheon, dinners served more regularly. The day after their mother's flight, that good Madame Smolensk took early cups of tea to the girls' rooms, with her own hands; and I believe helped to do the hair of one of them, and otherwise to soothe them in their misfortune. They could not keep their secret. It must be owned that Mrs. Baynes never lost an opportunity of deploring their situation and acquainting all new-comers with their mother's flight and transgression. But she was good-natured to the captives in her grim way: and admired Madame's forbearance regarding them. The two old officers were now especially polite to the poor things: and the general rapped one of his boys over the knuckles for saying to Miss Brenda, "If your uncle is a lord, why doesn't he give you any money?" "And these girls used to hold their heads above mine, and their mother used to give herself such airs!" cried Mrs. Baynes. "And Eliza Baynes used to flatter those poor girls and their mother, and fancy they were going to make a woman of fashion of her!" said Mrs. Bunch. "We all have our weaknesses. Lords are not yours, my dear. Faith, I don't think you know one," says stout little Colonel Bunch. "I wouldn't pay a duchess such court as Eliza paid that woman!" cried Emma; and she made sarcastic inquiries of the general, whether Eliza had heard from her friend the Honourable Mrs. Boldero? But for all this Mrs. Bunch pitied the young ladies, and I believe gave them a little supply of coin from her private purse. A word as to their subsequent history. Their mamma became the terror of boarding-housekeepers: and the poor girls practised their duets all over Europe. Mrs. Boldero's noble nephew, the present Strongitharm (as a friend who knows the fashionable world informs me), was victimized by his own uncle, and a most painful affair occurred between them at a game at "blind hookey." The Honourable Mrs. Boldero is living in the precincts of Holyrood; one of her daughters is happily married to a minister; and the other to an apothecary who was called in to attend her in quinsy. So I am inclined to think that phrase about "select" boarding-houses is a mere complimentary term, and as for the strictest references being given and required, I certainly should not lay out extra money for printing that expression in my advertisement, were I going to set up an establishment myself.

Old college friends of Philip's visited Paris from time to time; and rejoiced in carrying him off to Borel's or the Trois Frères, and hospitably treating him who had been so hospitable in his time. Yes, thanks be to Heaven, there are good Samaritans in pretty large numbers in this world, and hands ready enough to succour a man in misfortune. I could name two or three gentlemen who drive about in chariots and look at people's tongues and write queer figures and queer Latin on note-paper, who occultly made a purse containing some seven or ten score fees, and sent them out to Dr. Firmin in his banishment. The poor wretch had behaved as ill as might be, but he was without a penny or a friend. I daresay Dr. Goodenough, amongst other philanthropists, put his hands into his pocket. Having heartily disliked and mistrusted Firmin in prosperity, in adversity he melted towards the poor fugitive wretch: he even could believe that Firmin had some skill in his profession, and in his practice was not quite a quack.

Philip's old college and school cronies laughed at hearing that, now his ruin was complete, he was thinking about marriage. Such a plan was of a piece with Mr. Firmin's known prudence and foresight. But they made an objection to his proposed union, which had struck us at home previously. Papa-in-law was well enough, or at least inoffensive: but, ah, ye powers! what a mother-in-law was poor Phil laying up for his future days! Two or three of our mutual companions made this remark on returning to work and chambers after their autumn holiday. We never had too much charity for Mrs. Baynes; and what Philip told us about her did not serve to increase our regard.

About Christmas Mr. Firmin's own affairs brought him on a brief visit to London. We were not jealous that he took up his quarters with his little friend, of Thornhaugh Street, who was contented that he should dine with us, provided she could have the pleasure of housing him under her kind shelter. High and mighty people as we were — for under what humble roofs does not Vanity hold her sway? — we, who knew Mrs. Brandon's virtues, and were aware of her early story, would

have condescended to receive her into our society; but it was the little lady herself who had her pride, and held aloof. "My parents did not give me the education you have had, ma'am," Caroline said to my wife. "My place is not here, I know very well; unless you should be took ill, and then, ma'am, you'll see that I will be glad enough to come. Philip can come and see me; and a blessing it is to me to set eyes on him. But I shouldn't be happy in your drawing-room, nor you in having me. The dear children look surprised at my way of talking; and no wonder: and they laugh sometimes to one another, God bless 'em! I don't mind. My education was not cared for. I scarce had any schooling but what I taught myself. My Pa hadn't the means of learning me much: and it is too late to go to school at forty odd. I've got all his stockings and things darned; and his linen, poor fellow! — beautiful: I wish they kep it as nice in France, where he is! You'll give my love to the young lady, won't you, ma'am: and, oh! it's a blessing to me to hear how good and gentle she is! He has a high temper, Philip have: but them he likes can easy manage him. You have been his best kind friends; and so will she be, I trust; and they may be happy though they're poor. But they've time to get rich, haven't they. And it's not the richest that's the happiest, that I can see in many a fine house where Nurse Brandon goes and has her eyes open, though she don't say much, you know." In this way Nurse Brandon would prattle on to us when she came to see us. She would share our meal, always thanking by name the servant who helped her. She insisted on calling our children "Miss" and "Master," and I think those young satirists did not laugh often or unkindly at her peculiarities. I know they were told that Nurse Brandon was very good; and that she took care of her father in his old age; and that she had passed through very great griefs and trials; and that she had nursed uncle Philip when he had been very ill indeed, and when many people would have been afraid to come near him; and that her life was spent in tending the sick, and in doing good to her neighbour.

One day during Philip's stay with us we happen to read in the paper Lord Ringwood's arrival in London. My lord had a grand town house of his own which he did not always inhabit. He liked the cheerfulness of a hotel better. Ringwood House was too large and too dismal. He did not care to eat a solitary mutton chop in a great dining-room surrounded by ghostly images of dead Ringwoods — his dead son, who had died in his boyhood; his dead brother attired in the uniform of his day (in which picture there was no little resemblance to Philip Firmin, the colonel's grandson); Lord Ringwood's dead self, finally, as he appeared still a young man, when Lawrence painted him, and when he was the companion of the Regent and his friends. "Ah! that's the fellow I least like to look at," the old man would say, scowling at the picture, and breaking out into the old-fashioned oaths which garnished many conversations in his young days. "That fellow could ride all day; and sleep all night, or go without sleep as he chose; and drink his four bottles, and never have a headache; and break his collar bone, and see the fox killed three hours after. That was once a man, as old Marlborough said, looking at his own picture. Now my doctor's my master; my doctor and the infernal gout over him. I live upon pap and puddens, like a baby; only I've shed all my teeth, hang 'em. If I drink three glasses of sherry, my butler threatens me. You young fellow, who haven't twopence in your pocket, by George, I would like to change with you. Only you wouldn't, hang you, you wouldn't. Why, I don't believe Todhunter would change with me: would you, Todhunter? — and you're about as fond of a great man as any fellow I ever knew. Don't tell me. You are, sir. Why, when I walked with you on Ryde sands one day, I said to that fellow, "Todhunter, don't you think I could order the sea to stand still?" I did. And you had never heard of King Canute, hanged if you had — and never read any book except the Stud-book and Mrs. Glasse's Cookery, hanged if you did." Such remarks and conversations of his relative has Philip reported to me. Two or three men about town had very good imitations of this toothless, growling, blasphemous old cynic. He was splendid and penurious; violent and easily led; surrounded by flatterers and utterly lonely. He had old-world notions, which I believe have passed out of the manners of great folks now. He thought it beneath him to travel by railway, and his postchaise was one of the last on the road. The tide rolled on in spite of this old Canute, and has long since rolled over him and his postchaise. Why, almost all his imitators are actually dead; and only this year, when old Jack Mummers gave an imitation of him at Bays's (where Jack's mimicry used to be received with shouts of laughter but a few years since), there was a dismal silence in the coffee-room, except from two or three young men at a near table, who said, "What is the old fool mumbling and swearing at now? An imitation of Lord Ringwood, and who was he?" So our names pass away, and are forgotten: and the tallest statues, do not the sands of time accumulate and overwhelm them? I have not forgotten my lord; any more than I have forgotten the cock of my school, about whom, perhaps, you don't care to hear. I see my lord's bald head, and hooked beak, and bushy eyebrows, and tall velvet collar, and brass buttons, and great black mouth, and trembling hand, and trembling parasites round him, and I can hear his voice, and great oaths, and laughter. You parasites of to-day are bowing to other great people; and this great one, who was alive only yesterday, is as dead as George IV. or Nebuchadnezzar.

Well, we happen to read that Philip's noble relative, Lord Ringwood, has arrived at — hotel, whilst Philip is staying with us: and I own that I counsel my friend to go and wait upon his lordship. He had been very kind at Paris: he had evidently taken a liking to Philip. Firmin ought to go and see him. Who knows? Lord Ringwood might be inclined to do something for his brother's grandson.

This was just the point, which any one who knew Philip should have hesitated to urge upon him. To try and make him bow and smile on a great man with a view to future favours, was to demand the impossible from Firmin. The king's men may lead the king's horses to the water, but the king himself can't make them drink. I own that I came back to the subject, and urged it repeatedly on my friend. "I have been," said Philip, sulkily. "I have left a card upon him. If he wants me, he can send to No. 120, Queen Square, Westminster, my present hotel. But if you think he will give me anything beyond a dinner, I tell you you are mistaken."

We dined that day with Philip's employer, worthy Mr. Mugford, of the Pall Mall Gazette, who was profuse in his hospitalities, and especially gracious to Philip. Mugford was pleased with Firmin's letters; and you may be sure that severer critics did not contradict their friend's good-natured patron. We drove to the suburban villa at Hampstead, and steaming odours of soup, mutton, onions, rushed out into the hall to give us welcome, and to warn us of the good cheer in store for the party. This was not one of Mugford's days for countermanding side dishes, I promise you. Men in black, with noble white cotton gloves, were in waiting to receive us, and Mrs. Mugford, in a rich blue satin and feathers, a profusion of flounces, laces, marabouts, jewels, and eau-de-Cologne, rose to welcome us from a stately sofa, where she sat surrounded by her children. These, too, were in brilliant dresses, with shining new-combed hair. The ladies, of course, instantly began to talk about their children, and my wife's unfeigned admiration for Mrs. Mugford's last baby I think won that worthy lady's goodwill at once. I made some remark regarding one of the boys as being the picture of his father, which was not lucky. I don't know why, but I have it from her husband's own admission, that Mrs. Mugford always thinks I am "chaffing" her. One of the boys frankly informed me there was goose for dinner; and when a cheerful cloop was heard from a neighbouring room, told me that was Pa drawing the corks. Why should Mrs. Mugford reprove the outspoken child and say, "James, hold your tongue, do now?" Better wine than was poured forth when those corks were drawn, never flowed from bottle. — I say, I never saw better wine nor more bottles. If ever a table may be said to have groaned, that expression might with justice be applied to Mugford's mahogany. Talbot Twysden would have feasted forty people with the meal here provided for eight by our most hospitable entertainer. Though Mugford's editor was present, all the honours of the entertainment were for the Paris Correspondent, who was specially requested to take Mrs. M. to dinner. As an earl's grand-nephew, and a lord's great-grandson, of course we felt that this place of honour was Firmin's right. How Mrs. Mugford pressed him to eat! She carved — I am very glad she would not let Philip carve for her, for he might have sent the goose into her lap — she carved, I say, and I really think she gave him more stuffing than to any of us, but that may have been mere envy on my part. Allusions to Lord Ringwood were repeatedly made during dinner. "Lord R. has come to town, Mr. F., I perceive," says Mugford, winking. "You've been to see him, of course?" Mr. Firmin glared at me very fiercely, he had to own he had been to call on Lord Ringwood. Mugford led the conversation to the noble lord so frequently that Philip madly kicked my shins under the table. I don't-know how many times I had to suffer from that foot which in its time has trampled on so many persons: a kick for each time Lord Ringwood's name, houses, parks, properties, were mentioned, was a frightful allowance. Mrs. Mugford would say, "May I assist you to a little pheasant, Mr. Firmin? I daresay they are not as good as Lord Ringwood's " (a kick from Philip), or Mugford would exclaim, "Mr. F., try that 'ock! Lord Ringwood hasn't better wine than that." (Dreadful punishment upon my tibia under the table.) "John! Two 'ocks, me and Mr. Firmin! Join us, Mr. P.," and so forth. And after dinner, to the ladies — as my wife, who betrayed their mysteries, informed me — Mrs. Mugford's conversation was incessant regarding the Ringwood family and Firmin's relationship to that noble house. The meeting of the old lord and Firmin in Paris was discussed with immense interest. His lordship called him Philip most affable! he was very fond of Mr. Firmin. A little bird had told Mrs. Mugford that somebody else was very fond of Mr. Firmin. She hoped it would be a match, and that his lordship would do the handsome thing by his nephew. What? My wife wondered that Mrs. Mugford should know about Philip's affairs? (and wonder indeed she did.) A little bird had told Mrs. M — a friend of both ladies, that dear, good little nurse Brandon, who was engaged — and here the conversation went off into mysteries which I certainly shall not reveal. Suffice it that Mrs. Mugford was one of Mrs. Brandon's best, kindest, and most constant patrons — or might I be permitted to say matrons? — and had received a most favourable report of us from the little nurse. And here Mrs. Pendennis gave a verbatim report not only of our hostess's speech, but of her manner and

accent. "Yes, ma'am," says Mrs. Mugford to Mrs. Pendennis, "our friend Mrs. B. has told me of a certain gentleman whose name shall be nameless. His manner is cold, not to say 'aughty. He seems to be laughing at people sometimes — don't say No; I saw him once or twice at dinner, both him and Mr. Firmin. But he is a true friend, Mrs. Brandon says he is. And when you know him, his heart is good." Is it? Amen. A distinguished writer has composed, in not very late days, a comedy of which the cheerful moral is, that we are "not so bad as we seem." Aren't we? Amen, again. Give us thy hearty hand, Iago! Tartuffe, how the world has been mistaken in you! Macbeth! put that little affair of the murder out of your mind. It was a momentary weakness; and who is not weak at times? Blifil, a more maligned man than you does not exist! O humanity! how we have been mistaken in you! Let us expunge the vulgar expression "miserable sinners" out of all prayer-books; open the portholes of all hulks; break the chains of all convicts; and unlock the boxes of all spoons.

As we discussed Mr. Mugford's entertainment on our return home, I improved the occasion with Philip, I pointed out the reasonableness of the hopes which he might entertain of help from his wealthy kinsman, and actually forced him to promise to wait upon my lord the next day. Now when Philip Firmin did a thing against his will, he did it with a bad grace. When he is not pleased, he does not pretend to be happy: and when he is sulky, Mr. Firmin is a very disagreeable companion. Though he never once reproached me afterwards with what happened, I own that I have had cruel twinges of conscience since. If I had not sent him on that dutiful visit to his grand uncle, what occurred might never, perhaps, have occurred at all. I acted for the best, and that I aver; however I may grieve for the consequences which ensued when the poor fellow followed my advice.

If Philip held aloof from Lord Ringwood in London, you may be sure Philip's dear cousins were in waiting on his lordship, and never lost an opportunity of showing their respectful sympathy. Was Lord Ringwood ailing? Mr. Twysden, or Mrs. Twysden, or the dear girls, or Ringwood their brother, were daily in his lordship's antechamber, asking for news of his health. They bent down respectfully before Lord Ringwood's major-domo. They would have given him money, as they always averred, only what sum could they give to such a man as Rudge? They actually offered to bribe Mr. Rudge with their wine, over which he made horrible faces. They fawned and smiled before him always. I should like to have seen that calm Mrs. Twysden, that serene, high-bred woman, who would cut her dearest friend if misfortune befel her, or the world turned its back; — I should like to have seen, and can see her in my mind's eye, simpering and coaxing, and wheedling this footman. She made cheap presents to Mr. Rudge: she smiled on him and asked after his health. And of course Talbot Twysden flattered him too in Talbot's jolly way. It was a wink, and nod, and a hearty how do you do — and (after due inquiries made and answered about his lordship) it would be, "Rudge! I think my housekeeper has a good glass of port wine in her room, if you happen to be passing that way, and my lord don't want you!" And with a grave courtesy, I can fancy Mr. Rudge bowing to Mr. and Mrs. Twysden, and thanking them, and descending to Mrs. Blenkinsop's skinny room where the port wine is ready — and if Mr. Rudge and Mrs. Blenkinsop are confidential, I can fancy their talking over the characters and peculiarities of the folks upstairs. Servants sometimes actually do; and if master and mistress are humbugs these wretched menials sometimes find them out.

Now, no duke could be more lordly and condescending in his bearing than Mr. Philip Firmin towards the menial throng. In those days, when he had money in his pockets, he gave Mr. Rudge out of his plenty; and the man remembered his generosity when he was poor: and declared — in a select society, and in the company of the relative of a person from whom I have the information — declared in the presence of Captain Gann at the Admiral B— ng Club in fact, that Mr. Heff was always a swell; but since he was done, he, Rudge, "was blest if that young chap warn't a greater swell than hever." And Rudge actually liked this poor young fellow better than the family in Walpole Street, whom Mr. R. pronounced to be "a shabby lot." And in fact it was Rudge as well as myself, who advised that Philip should see his lordship.

When at length Philip paid his second visit, Mr. Rudge said, "My lord will see you, sir, I think. He has been speaking of you. He's very unwell. He's going to have a fit of the gout, I think. I'll tell him you are here." And coming back to Philip, after a brief disappearance, and with rather a scared face, he repeated the permission to enter, and again cautioned him, saying, that "my lord was very queer."

In fact, as we learned afterwards, through the channel previously indicated, my lord, when he heard that Philip had called, cried, "He has, has he. Hang him, send him in;" using, I am constrained to say, in place of the monsyllable "hang," a much stronger expression.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" says my lord. "You have been in London ever so long. Twysden told me of you yesterday."

"I have called before, sir," said Philip, very quietly.

"I wonder you have the face to call at all, sir!" cries the old man, glaring at Philip. His lordship's countenance was of a gamboge colour: his noble eyes were blood-shot and starting; his voice, always very harsh and strident, was now specially unpleasant; and from the crater of his mouth, shot loud exploding oaths.

"Face! my lord?" says Philip, still very meek.

"Yes, if you call that a face which is covered over with hair like a baboon!" growled my lord, showing his tusks. "Twysden was here last night, and tells me some pretty news about you."

Philip blushed; he knew what the news most likely would be.

"Twysden says that now you are a pauper, by George, and living by breaking stones in the street, — you have been such an infernal, drivelling, hanged fool, as to engage yourself to another pauper!"

Poor Philip turned white from red; and spoke slowly: "I beg your pardon, my lord, you said —"

"I said you were a hanged fool, sir!" roared the old man; "can't you hear?"

"I believe I am a member of your family, my lord," says Philip, rising up. In a quarrel, he would some times lose his temper, and speak out his mind; or sometimes, and then he was most dangerous, he would be especially calm and Grandisonian.

"Some hanged adventurer, thinking you were to get money from me, has hooked you for his daughter, has he?"

"I have engaged myself to a young lady, and I am the poorer of the two," says Philip.

"She thinks you will get money from me," continues his lordship.

"Does she? I never did!" replied Philip.

"By heaven, you shan't, unless you give up this rubbish."

"I shan't give her up, sir, and I shall do without the money," said Mr. Firmin very boldly.

"Go to Tartarus!" screamed the old man.

On which Philip told us, "I said, 'Seniores priores, my lord,' and turned on my heel. So you see if he was going to leave me something, and he nearly said he was, that chance is passed now, and I have made a pretty morning's work." And a pretty morning's work it was: and it was I who had set him upon it! My brave Philip not only did not rebuke me for having sent him on this errand, but took the blame of the business on himself. "Since I have been engaged," he said, "I am growing dreadfully avaricious, and am almost as sordid about money as those Twysdens. I cringed to that old man: I crawled before his gouty feet. Well, I could crawl from here to Saint James's Palace to get some money for my little Charlotte." Philip cringe and crawl! If there were no posture-masters more supple than Philip Firmin, kotooing would be a lost art, like the Menuet de la Cour. But fear not, ye great! Men's backs were made to bend, and the race of parasites is still in good repute.

When our friend told us how his brief interview with Lord Ringwood had begun and ended, I think those who counselled Philip to wait upon his grand-uncle felt rather ashamed of their worldly wisdom and the advice which they had given. We ought to have known our Huron sufficiently to be aware that it was a dangerous experiment to set him bowing in lords' antechambers. Were not his elbows sure to break some courtly china, his feet to trample and tear some lace train? So all the good we had done was to occasion a quarrel between him and his patron. Lord Ringwood avowed that he had intended to leave Philip money; and by thrusting the poor fellow into the old nobleman's sick chamber, we had occasioned a quarrel between the relatives, who parted with mutual threats and anger. "Oh, dear me!" I groaned in connubial colloquies. "Let us get him away. He will be boxing Mugford's ears next, and telling Mrs. Mugford that she is vulgar, and a bore." He was eager to get back to his work, or rather to his lady-love at Paris. We did not try to detain him. For fear of further accidents we were rather anxious that he should be gone. Crestfallen and sad, I accompanied him to the Boulogne boat. He paid for his place in the second cabin, and stoutly bade us adieu. A rough night: a wet, slippery deck: a crowd of frowzy fellow-passengers: and poor Philip in the midst of them in a thin cloak, his yellow hair and beard blowing about: I see the steamer now, and left her with I know not what feelings of contrition and shame. Why had I sent Philip to call upon that savage, overbearing old patron of his? Why compelled him to that bootless act of submission? Lord Ringwood's brutalities were matters of common notoriety. A wicked, dissolute, cynical old man: and we must try to make friends with this mammon of unrighteousness, and set poor Philip to bow before him and flatter him! Ah, mea culpa, mea culpa! The wind blew hard that winter night, and many tiles and chimney-pots blew down: and as I thought of poor Philip tossing in the frowzy second-cabin, I rolled about my own bed very uneasily.

I looked into Bays's club the day after, and there fell on both the Twysdens. The parasite of a father was clinging to the button of a great man when I entered: the little reptile of a son came to the club in Captain Woolcomb's brougham, and in that distinguished mulatto officer's company. They looked at me in a peculiar way. I was sure they did. Talbot Twysden, pouring his loud, braggart talk in the ear of poor Lord Lepel, eyed me with a glance of triumph, and talked and swaggered so that I should hear. Ringwood Twysden and Woolcomb, drinking absinthe to whet their noble appetites, exchanged glances and grins. Woolcomb's eyes were of the colour of the absinthe he swallowed. I did not see that Twysden tore off one of Lord Lepel's buttons, but that nobleman, with a scared countenance moved away rapidly from his little persecutor. "Hang him, throw him over and come to me!" I heard the generous Twysden say. "I expect Ringwood and one or two more." At this proposition, Lord Lepel, in a tremulous way, muttered that he could not break his engagement, and fled out of the club.

Twysden's dinners, the polite reader has been previously informed, were notorious; and he constantly bragged of having the company of Lord Ringwood. Now it so happened that on this very evening, Lord Ringwood, with three of his followers, henchmen, or led captains, dined at Bays's club, being determined to see a pantomime in which a very pretty young Columbine figured: and some one in the house joked with his lordship, and said, "Why, you are going to dine with Talbot Twysden. He said, just now, that he expected you."

"Did he?" said his lordship. "Then Talbot Twysden told a hanged lie!" And little Tom Eaves, my informant, remembered these remarkable words, because of a circumstance which now almost immediately followed.

A very few days after Philip's departure, our friend, the Little Sister, came to us at our breakfast-table, wearing an expression of much trouble and sadness on her kind little face; the causes of which sorrow she explained to us, as soon as our children had gone away to their school-room. We have mentioned, amongst Mrs. Brandon's friends, and as one of her father's constant companions, the worthy Mr. Ridley, father of the celebrated painter of that name, who was himself of much too honourable and noble a nature to be ashamed of his humble paternal origin. Companionship between father and son could not be very close or intimate; especially as in the younger Ridley's boyhood his father, who knew nothing of the fine arts, had looked upon the child as a sickly, half-witted creature, who would be to his parents but a grief and a burden. But when J. J. Ridley, Esq., began to attain eminence in his profession, his father's eyes were opened; in place of neglect and contempt, he looked up to his boy with a sincere, naïve admiration, and often, with tears, has narrated the pride and pleasure which he felt on the day when he waited on John James at his master's, Lord Todmorden's table. Ridley senior now felt that he had been unkind and unjust to his boy in the latter's early days, and with a very touching humility the old man acknowledged his previous injustice, and tried to atone for it by present respect and affection.

Though fondness for his son, and delight in the company of Captain Gann, often drew Mr. Ridley to Thornhaugh Street, and to the Admiral Byng Club, of which both were leading members, Ridley senior belonged to other clubs at the West End, where Lord Todmorden's butler consorted with the confidential butlers of others of the nobility; and I am informed that in those clubs Ridley continued to be called "Todmorden" long after his connexion with that venerable nobleman had ceased. He continued to be called Lord Todmorden, in fact, just as Lord Popinjoy is still called by his old friends Popinjoy, though his father is dead, and Popinjoy, as everybody knows, is at present Earl of Pintado.

At one of these clubs of their order, Lord Todmorden's man was in the constant habit of meeting Lord Ringwood's man, when their lordships (master and man) were in town. These gentlemen had a regard for each other; and, when they met, communicated to each other their views of society, and their opinions of the characters of the various noble lords and influential commoners whom they served. Mr. Rudge knew everything about Philip Firmin's affairs, about the doctor's flight, about Philip's generous behaviour. "Generous! I call it admiral!" old Ridley remarked, while relating this trait of our friend's, and his present position. And Rudge contrasted Philip's manly behaviour with the conduct of some sneaks which he would not name then, but which they were always speaking ill of the poor young fellow behind his back, and sneaking up to my lord, and greater skinflints and meaner humbugs never were: and there was no accounting for tastes, but he, Rudge, would not marry his daughter to a black man,

Now, that day when Mr. Firmin went to see my Lord Ringwood was one of my lord's very worst days, when it was almost as dangerous to go near him as to approach a Bengal tiger. "When he is going to have a fit of gout, his lordship," Mr. Rudge remarked, "was hawful. He curse and swear, he do, at everybody; even the clergy or the ladies — all's one. On that very day when Mr. Firmin called he had said to Mr. Twysden, 'Get out, and don't come slandering, and backbiting, and bullying that poor devil of a boy any more. Its blackguardly, by George, sir — it's blackguardly.' And Twysden came out

with his tail between his legs, and he says to me — ‘Rudge,’ says he, ‘my lord’s uncommon bad to-day.’ Well. He hadn’t been gone an hour when pore Philip comes, bad luck to him, and my lord, who had just heard from Twysden all about that young woman — that party at Paris, Mr. Ridley — and it is about as great a piece of folly as ever I heard tell of — my lord turns upon the pore young fellar and call him names worse than Twysden. But Mr. Firmin ain’t that sort of man, he isn’t. He won’t suffer any man to call him names; and I suppose he gave my lord his own back again, for I heard my lord swear at him tremendous, I did, with my own ears. When my lord has the gout flying about, I told you he is awful. When he takes his colchicum he’s worse. Now, we have got a party at Whipham at Christmas, and at Whipham we must be. And he took his colchicum night before last, and to-day he was in such a tremendous rage of swearing, cursing, and blowing up everybody, that it was as if he was red hot. And when Twysden and Mrs. Twysden called that day — (if you kick that fellar out at the hall door, I’m blest if he won’t come smirkin’ down the chimney) — and he wouldn’t see any of them. And he bawled out after me, ‘If Firmin comes, kick him downstairs — do you hear?’ with ever so many oaths and curses against the poor fellow, while he vowed he would never see his hanged impudent face again. But this wasn’t all, Ridley. He sent for Bradgate, his lawyer, that very day. He had back his will, which I signed myself as one of the witnesses — me and Wilcox, the master of the hotel — and I know he had left Firmin something in it. Take my word for it. To that poor young fellow he means mischief.” A full report of this conversation Mr. Ridley gave to his little friend Mrs. Brandon, knowing the interest which Mrs. Brandon took in the young gentleman; and with these unpleasant news Mrs. Brandon came off to advise with those, who — the good nurse was pleased to say — were Philip’s best friends in the world. We wished we could give the Little Sister comfort: but all the world knew what a man Lord Ringwood was — how arbitrary, how revengeful, how cruel.

I knew Mr. Bradgate the lawyer, with whom I had business, and called upon him, more anxious to speak about Philip’s affairs than my own. I suppose I was too eager in coming to my point, for Bradgate saw the meaning of my questions, and declined to answer them. “My client and I are not the dearest friends in the world,” Bradgate said, “but I must keep his counsel, and must not tell you whether Mr. Firmin’s name is down in his lordship’s will or not. How should I know? He may have altered his will. He may have left Firmin money; he may have left him none. I hope young Firmin does not count on a legacy. That’s all. He may be disappointed if he does. Why, you may hope for a legacy from Lord Ringwood, and you may be disappointed. I know scores of people who do hope for something, and who won’t get a penny.” And this was all the reply I could get at that time from the oracular little lawyer.

I told my wife, as of course every dutiful man tells everything to every dutiful wife: but though Bradgate discouraged us, there was somehow a lurking hope still that the old nobleman would provide for our friend. Then Philip would marry Charlotte. Then he would earn ever so much more money by his newspaper. Then he would be happy ever after. My wife counts eggs not only before they are hatched, but before they are laid. Never was such an obstinate hopefulness of character. I, on the other hand, take a rational and despondent view of things; and if they turn out better than I expect, as sometimes they will, I affably own that I have been mistaken.

But an early day came when Mr. Bradgate was no longer needful, or when he thought himself released from the obligations of silence with regard to his noble client. It was two days before Christmas, and I took my accustomed afternoon saunter to Bays’s, where other habitués of the club were assembled. There was no little buzzing, and excitement among the frequenters of the place. Talbot Twysden always arrived at Bays’s at ten minutes past four, and scuffled for the evening paper, as if its contents were matter of great importance to Talbot. He would hold men’s buttons, and discourse to them the leading article out of that paper with an astounding emphasis and gravity. On this day, some ten minutes after his accustomed hour, he reached the club. Other gentlemen were engaged in perusing the evening journal. The lamps on the tables lighted up the bald heads, the grey heads, dyed heads, and the wigs of many assembled fogies — murmurs went about the room. “Very sudden.” “Gout in the stomach.” “Dined here only four days ago.” “Looked very well.” “Very well? No! Never saw a fellow look worse in my life.” “Yellow as a guinea.” “Couldn’t eat.” “Swore dreadfully at the waiters, and at Tom Eaves who dined with him.” “Seventy-six, I see. — Born in the same year with the Duke of York.” “Forty thousand a-year.” “Forty? fifty-eight thousand three hundred, I tell you. Always been a saving man.” “Estate goes to his cousin, Sir John Ringwood; not a member here — member of Boodle’s.” “Hated each other furiously. Very violent temper, the old fellow was. Never got over the Reform Bill, they used to say.” “Wonder whether he’ll leave anything to old bowwow Twys —” Here enters Talbot Twysden, Esq. — “Ha, Colonel! How are you? What’s the news to-night? Kept late at my office, making up accounts. Going down to Whipham to-morrow to pass Christmas with my wife’s uncle — Ringwood, you know. Always go down to Whipham at Christmas. Keeps the pheasants for us — no longer a hunting man myself. Lost my nerve,

by George.”

Whilst the braggart little creature indulged in this pompous talk, he did not see the significant looks which were fixed upon him, or if he remarked them, was perhaps pleased by the attention which he excited. Bays’s had long echoed with Twysden’s account of Ringwood, the pheasants, his own loss of nerve in hunting, and the sum which their family would inherit at the death of their noble relative.

“I think I have heard you say Sir John Ringwood inherits after your relative?” asked Mr. Hookham.

“Yes; the estate, not the title. The earldom goes to my lord and his heirs — Hookham. Why shouldn’t he marry again? I often say to him, ‘Ringwood, why don’t you marry, if it’s only to disappoint that Whig fellow Sir John. You are fresh and hale, Ringwood. You may live twenty years, five and twenty years. If you leave your niece and my children anything, we’re not in a hurry to inherit,’ I say; ‘why don’t you marry?’”

“Ah! Twysden, he’s past marrying,” groans Mr. Hookham.

“Not at all. Sober man, now. Stout man. Immense powerful man. Healthy man, but for gout. I often say to him, ‘Ringwood!’ I say — ”

“Oh, for mercy’s sake! stop this,” groans old Mr. Tremlett, who always begins to shudder at the sound of poor Twysden’s voice. “Tell him somebody.”

“Haven’t you heard, Twysden? Haven’t you seen? Don’t you know?” asks Mr. Hookham solemnly.

“Heard, seen, known — what?” cries the other.

“An accident has happened to Lord Ringwood. Look at the paper. Here it is.” And Twysden pulls out his great gold eye-glasses, holds the paper as far as his little arm will reach, and — and merciful Powers! — but I will not venture to depict the agony on that noble face. Like Timanthes, the painter, I hide this Agamemnon with a veil. I cast the Globe newspaper over him. *Illabatur orbis*: and let imagination depict our Twysden under the ruins.

What Twysden read in the Globe was a mere curt paragraph; but in next morning’s Times there was one of those obituary notices to which noblemen of eminence must submit from the mysterious necrographer engaged by that paper.



CHAPTER 6

PULVIS ET UMBRA SUMUS.

The first and only Earl of Ringwood has submitted to the fate which peers and commoners are alike destined to undergo. Hastening to his magnificent seat of Whipham Market, where he proposed to entertain an illustrious Christmas party, his lordship left London scarcely recovered from an attack of gout to which he has been for many years a martyr. The disease must have flown to his stomach, and suddenly mastered him. At Turreys Regum, thirty miles from his own princely habitation, where he had been accustomed to dine on his almost royal progresses to his home, he was already in a state of dreadful suffering, to which his attendants did not pay the attention which his condition ought to have excited; for when labouring under this most painful malady his outcries were loud, and his language and demeanour exceedingly violent. He angrily refused to send for medical aid at Turreys, and insisted on continuing his journey homewards. He was one of the old school, who never would enter a railway (though his fortune was greatly increased by the passage of the railway through his property); and his own horses always met him at Popper's Tavern, an obscure hamlet, seventeen miles from his princely seat. He made no sign on arriving at Popper's, and spoke no word, to the now serious alarm of his servants. When they came to light his carriage-lamps, and look into his postchaise, the lord of many thousand acres, and, according to report, of immense wealth, was dead. The journey from Turreys had been the last stage of a long, a prosperous, and, if not a famous, at least a notorious and magnificent career.

"The late John George Earl and Baron Ringwood and Viscount Cinqbars entered into public life at the dangerous period before the French Revolution; and commenced his career as the friend and companion of the Prince of Wales. When his Royal Highness seceded from the Whig party, Lord Ringwood also joined the Tory side of politicians, and an earldom was the price of his fidelity. But on the elevation of Lord Steyne to a marquise, Lord Ringwood quarrelled for awhile with his royal patron and friend, deeming his own services unjustly slighted as a like dignity was not conferred on himself. On several occasions he gave his vote against Government, and caused his nominees in the House of Commons to vote with the Whigs. He never was reconciled to his late Majesty George IV., of whom he was in the habit of speaking with characteristic bluntness. The approach of the Reform Bill, however, threw this nobleman definitively on the Tory side, of which he has ever since remained, if not an eloquent, at least a violent supporter. He was said to be a liberal landlord, so long as his tenants did not thwart him in his views. His only son died early; and his lordship, according to report, has long been on ill terms with his kinsman and successor, Sir John Ringwood, of Appleshaw, Baronet. The Barony has been in this ancient family since the reign of George I., when Sir John Ringwood was ennobled, and Sir Francis, his brother, a Baron of the Exchequer, was advanced to the dignity of a Baronet by the first of our Hanoverian sovereigns."

This was the article which my wife and I read on the morning of Christmas eve, as our children were decking lamps and looking-glasses with holly and red berries for the approaching festival. I had despatched a hurried note, containing the news, to Philip on the night previous. We were painfully anxious about his fate now, when a few days would decide it. Again my business or curiosity took me to see Mr. Bradgate the lawyer. He was in possession of the news, of course. He was not averse to talk about it. The death of his client unsealed the lawyer's lips partially: and I must say Bradgate spoke in a manner not flattering to his noble deceased client. The brutalities of the late nobleman had been very hard to bear. On occasion of their last meeting his oaths and disrespectful behaviour had been specially odious. He had abused almost every one of his relatives. His heir, he said, was a prating Republican humbug. He had a relative (whom Bradgate said he would not name) who was a scheming, swaggering, swindling lickspittle parasite, always cringing at his heels, and longing for his death. And he had another relative, the impudent son of a swindling doctor, who had insulted him two hours before in his own room; — a fellow who was a pauper, and going to propagate a breed for the workhouse; for, after his behaviour of that day, he would be condemned to the lowest pit of Acheron, before he (Lord Ringwood) would give that scoundrel a penny of his money. "And his lordship desired me to send him back his will," said Mr. Bradgate. "And he destroyed that will before he went away: it was not the first he had burned. And I may tell you, now all is over, that he had left his brother's grandson a handsome legacy in that will, which your poor friend might have had, but that he went to see my lord in his unlucky fit of gout." Ah, mea culpa! mea culpa! And who sent Philip to see his relative in that unlucky fit of gout? Who was so worldly-wise — so Twysden-like, as to counsel Philip to flattery and submission? But for that advice he might be wealthy now; he

might be happy; he might be ready to marry his young sweetheart. Our Christmas turkey choked me as I ate of it. The lights burned dimly, and the kisses and laughter under the mistletoe were but melancholy sport. But for my advice, how happy might my friend have been! I looked askance at the honest faces of my children. What would they say if they knew their father had advised a friend to cringe, and bow, and humble himself before a rich, wicked old man? I sate as mute at the pantomime as at a burial; the laughter of the little ones smote me as with a reproof. A burial? With plumes and lights, and upholsterers' pageantry, and mourning by the yard measure, they were burying my Lord Ringwood, who might have made Philip Firmin rich but for me.

All lingering hopes regarding our friend were quickly put to an end. A will was found at Whipham, dated a year back, in which no mention was made of poor Philip Firmin. Small legacies — disgracefully shabby and small, Twysden said — were left to the Twysden family, with the full-length portrait of the late earl in his coronation robes, which, I should think, must have given but small satisfaction to his surviving relatives; for his lordship was but an ill-favoured nobleman, and the price of the carriage of the large picture from Whipham was a tax which poor Talbot made very wry faces at paying. Had the picture been accompanied by thirty or forty thousand pounds, or fifty thousand — why should he not have left them fifty thousand? — how different Talbot's grief would have been! Whereas when Talbot counted up the dinners he had given to Lord Ringwood, all of which he could easily calculate by his cunning ledgers and journals in which was noted down every feast at which his lordship attended, every guest assembled, and every bottle of wine drunk, Twysden found that he had absolutely spent more money upon my lord than the old man had paid back in his will. But all the family went into mourning, and the Twysden coachman and footman turned out in black worsted epaulettes in honour of the illustrious deceased. It is not every day that a man gets a chance of publicly bewailing the loss of an earl his relative. I suppose Twysden took many hundred people into his confidence on this matter, and bewailed his uncle's death and his own wrongs whilst clinging to many scores of button-holes.

And how did poor Philip bear the disappointment? He must have felt it, for I fear we ourselves had encouraged him in the hope that his grand-uncle would do something to relieve his necessity. Philip put a bit of crape round his hat, wrapped himself in his shabby old mantle, and declined any outward show of grief at all. If the old man had left him money, it had been well. As he did not, — a puff of cigar, perhaps, ends the sentence, and our philosopher gives no further thought to his disappointment. Was not Philip the poor as lordly and independent as Philip the rich? A struggle with poverty is a wholesome wrestling match at three or five and twenty. The sinews are young, and are braced by the contest. It is upon the aged that the battle falls hardly, who are weakened by failing health, and perhaps enervated by long years of prosperity.

Firmin's broad back could carry a heavy burden, and he was glad to take all the work which fell in his way. Phipps, of the Daily Intelligencer, wanting an assistant, Philip gladly sold four hours of his day to Mr. Phipps: translated page after page of newspapers, French and German; took an occasional turn at the Chamber of Deputies, and gave an account of a sitting of importance, and made himself quite an active lieutenant. He began positively to save money. He wore dreadfully shabby clothes, to be sure: for Charlotte could not go to his chamber and mend his rags as the Little Sister had done: but when Mrs. Baynes abused him for his shabby appearance — and indeed it must have been mortifying sometimes to see the fellow in his old clothes swaggering about in Madame Smolensk's apartments, talking loud, contradicting and laying down the law — Charlotte defended her maligned Philip. "Do you know why Monsieur Philip has those shabby clothes?" she asked of Madame de Smolensk. "Because he has been sending money to his father in America." And Smolensk said that Monsieur Philip was a brave young man, and that he might come dressed like an Iroquois to her soirée, and he should be welcome. And Mrs. Baynes was rude to Philip when he was present, and scornful in her remarks when he was absent. And Philip trembled before Mrs. Baynes; and he took her boxes on the ear with much meekness; for was not his Charlotte a hostage in her mother's hands, and might not Mrs. General B. make that poor little creature suffer?

One or two Indian ladies of Mrs. Baynes' acquaintance happened to pass this winter in Paris, and these persons, who had furnished lodgings in the Faubourg St. Honoré, or the Champs Elysées, and rode in their carriages with, very likely, a footman on the box, rather looked down upon Mrs. Baynes for living in a boarding-house, and keeping no equipage. No woman likes to be looked down upon by any other woman, especially by such a creature as Mrs. Batters, the lawyer's wife, from Calcutta, who was not in society, and did not go to Government House, and here was driving about in the Champs Elysées, and giving herself such airs, indeed! So was Mrs. Doctor Macoon, with her lady's -maid, and her man-cook, and her open carriage, and her close carriage. (Pray read these words with the most withering emphasis which you can lay upon them.) And who was Mrs. Macoon, pray? Madame Béret, the French milliner's daughter, neither more nor less. And

this creature must scatter her mud over her betters who went on foot. "I am telling my poor girls, madame," she would say to Madame Smolensk, "that if I had been a milliner's girl, or their father had been a pettifogging attorney, and not a soldier, who has served his sovereign in every quarter of the world, they would be better dressed than they are now, poor chicks! — we might have a fine apartment in the Faubourg St. Honoré — we need not live at a boarding-house."

"And if I had been a milliner, Madame la Générale," cried Smolensk, with spirit, "perhaps I should not have had need to keep a boarding-house. My father was a general officer, and served his emperor too. But what will you? We have all to do disagreeable things, and to live with disagreeable people, madame!" And with this Smolensk makes Mrs. General Baynes a fine curtsy, and goes off to other affairs or guests. She was of the opinion of many of Philip's friends. "Ah, Monsieur Philip," she said to him, "when you are married, you will live far from that woman; is it not?"

Hearing that Mrs. Batters was going to the Tuileries, I am sorry to say a violent emulation inspired Mrs. Baynes, and she never was easy until she persuaded her general to take her to the ambassador's, and to the entertainments of the citizen king who governed France in those days. It would cost little or nothing. Charlotte must be brought out. Her aunt, McWhirter, from Tours, had sent Charlotte a present of money for a dress. To do Mrs. Baynes justice, she spent very little money upon her own raiment, and extracted from one of her trunks a costume which had done duty at Barrackpore and Calcutta. "After hearing that Mrs. Batters went, I knew she never would be easy," General Baynes said, with a sigh. His wife denied the accusation as an outrage, said that men always imputed the worst motives to women, whereas her wish, heaven knows, was only to see her darling child properly presented, and her husband in his proper rank in the world. And Charlotte looked lovely, upon the evening of the ball; and Madame Smolensk dressed Charlotte's hair very prettily, and offered to lend Auguste to accompany the general's carriage; but Ogoost revolted, and said, "Non, merci! he would do anything for the general and Miss Charlotte — but for the générale, no, no, no!" and he made signs of violent abnegation. And though Charlotte looked as sweet as a rosebud, she had little pleasure in her ball, Philip not being present. And how could he be present, who had but one old coat, and holes in his boots?

So, you see, after a sunny autumn, a cold winter comes, when the wind is bad for delicate chests, and muddy for little shoes. How could Charlotte come out at eight o'clock through mud or snow of a winter's morning, if she had been out at an evening party late over night? Mrs. General Baynes began to go out a good deal to the Paris evening parties — I mean to the parties of us Trojans — parties where there are forty English people, three Frenchmen, and a German who plays the piano. Charlotte was very much admired. The fame of her good looks spread abroad. I promise you that there were persons of much more importance than the poor Vicomte de Garçon-boutique, who were charmed by her bright eyes, her bright smiles, her artless, rosy beauty. Why, little Hely of the Embassy actually invited himself to Mrs. Doctor Macoon's, in order to see this young beauty, and danced with her without ceasing. Mr. Hely, who was the pink of fashion, you know; who danced with the royal princesses; and was at all the grand parties of the Faubourg St. Germain. He saw her to her carriage, a very shabby fly, it must be confessed; but Mrs. Baynes told him they had been accustomed to a very different kind of equipage in India. He actually called at the boarding-house, and left his card, M. Walsingham Hely, attaché à l'Ambassade de S. M. Britannique, for General Baynes and his lady. To what balls would Mrs. Baynes like to go? to the Tuileries? to the Embassy? to the Faubourg St. Germain? to the Faubourg St. Honoré? I could name many more persons of distinction who were fascinated by pretty Miss Charlotte. Her mother felt more and more ashamed of the shabby fly, in which our young lady was conveyed to and from her parties; — of the shabby fly, and of that shabby cavalier who was in waiting sometimes to put Miss Charlotte into her carriage. Charlotte's mother's ears were only too acute when disparaging remarks were made about that cavalier. What? engaged to that queer redbearded fellow, with the ragged shirt-collars, who trod upon everybody in the polka? A newspaper writer, was he? The son of that doctor who ran away after cheating everybody? What a very odd thing of General Baynes to think of engaging his daughter to such a person!

So Mr. Firmin was not asked to many distinguished houses, where his Charlotte was made welcome; where there was dancing in the saloon, very mild negus and cakes in the salle-à-manger, and cards in the lady's bed-room. And he did not care to be asked; and he made himself very arrogant and disagreeable when he was asked; and he would upset tea-trays, and burst out into roars of laughter at all times, and swagger about the drawing-room as if he was a man of importance — he indeed — giving himself such airs, because his grandfather's brother was an earl! And what had the earl done for him, pray? And what right had he to burst out laughing when Miss Crackley sang a little out of tune? What could General Baynes mean by selecting such a husband for that nice, modest young girl?

The old general sitting in the best bed-room, placidly playing at whist with the other British fogies, does not hear these

remarks, perhaps, but little Mrs. Baynes with her eager eyes and ears sees and knows everything. Many people have told her that Philip is a bad match for his daughter. She has heard him contradict calmly quite wealthy people. Mr. Hobday, who has a house in Carlton Terrace, London, and goes to the first houses in Paris, Philip has contradicted him point blank, until Mr. Hobday turned quite red, and Mrs. Hobday didn't know where to look. Mr. Peplow, a clergyman and a baronet's eldest son, who will be one day the Rev. Sir Charles Peplow of Peplow Manor, was praising Tomlinson's poems, and offered to read out at Mr. Badger's — and he reads very finely, though a little perhaps through his nose — and when he was going to begin, Mr. Firmin said, "My dear Peplow, for heaven's sake don't give us any of that rot. I would as soon hear one of your own prize poems." Rot, indeed! What an expression! Of course Mr. Peplow was very much annoyed. And this from a mere newspaper writer. Never heard of such rudeness! Mrs. Tuffin said she took her line at once after seeing this Mr. Firmin. "He may be an earl's grand-nephew, for what I care. He may have been at college, he has not learned good manners there. He may be clever, I don't profess to be a judge. But he is most overbearing, clumsy and disagreeable. I shall not ask him to my Tuesdays; and Emma, if he asks you to dance, I beg you will do no such thing!" A bull, you understand, in a meadow, or on a prairie with a herd of other buffalos, is a noble animal: but a bull in a china-shop is out of place; and even so was Philip amongst the crockery of those little simple tea-parties, where his mane, and hoofs, and roar, caused endless disturbance.

These remarks concerning the accepted son-in-law Mrs. Baynes heard and, at proper moments, repeated. She ruled Baynes; but was very cautious, and secretly afraid of him. Once or twice she had gone too far in her dealings with the quiet old man, and he had revolted, put her down and never forgiven her. Beyond a certain point, she dared not provoke her husband. She would say, "Well, Baynes, marriage is a lottery: and I am afraid our poor Charlotte has not pulled a prize:" on which the general would reply, "No more have others, my dear!" and so drop the subject for the time being. On another occasion it would be, "You heard how rude Philip Firmin was to Mr. Hobday?" And the general would answer, "I was at cards, my dear." Again she might say, "Mrs. Tuffin says she will not have Philip Firmin to her Tuesdays, my dear:" and the general's rejoinder would be, "Begad, so much the better for him!" "Ah!" she groans, "he's always offending some one!" "I don't think he seems to please you much, Eliza!" responds the general: and she answers, "No, he don't, and that I confess; and I don't like to think, Baynes, of my sweet child given up to certain poverty, and such a man!" At which the general with some of his garrison phrases would break out with a "Hang, it, Eliza, do you suppose I think it is a very good match?" and turn to the wall, and, I hope, to sleep.

As for poor little Charlotte, her mother is not afraid of little Charlotte: and when the two are alone the poor child knows she is to be made wretched by her mother's assaults upon Philip. Was there ever anything so bad as his behaviour, to burst out laughing when Miss Crackley was singing? Was he called upon to contradict Sir Charles Peplow in that abrupt way, and as good as tell him he was a fool? It was very wrong certainly, and poor Charlotte thinks, with a blush, perhaps, how she was just at the point of admiring Sir Charles Peplow's reading very much, and had been prepared to think Tomlinson's poems delightful, until Philip ordered her to adopt a contemptuous opinion of the poet. And did you see how he was dressed? a button wanting on his waistcoat, and a hole in his boot?

"Mamma!" cries Charlotte, turning very red. "He might have been better dressed — if — if —"

"That is, you would like your own father to be in prison, your mother to beg her bread, your sisters to go in rags, and your brothers to starve, Charlotte, in order that we should pay Philip Firmin back the money of which his father robbed him! Yes. That's your meaning. You needn't explain yourself. I can understand quite well, thank you. Good-night. I hope you'll sleep well. I shan't, after this conversation. Goodnight, Charlotte!" Ah, me! O course of true love, didst thou ever run smooth? As we peep into that boarding-house; whereof I have already described the mistress as wakeful with racking care regarding the morrow; wherein lie the Miss Bolderos, who must naturally be very uncomfortable, being on sufferance, and as it were in pain, as they lie on their beds; — what sorrows do we not perceive brooding over the nightcaps? There is poor Charlotte who has said her prayer for her Philip; and as she lays her young eyes on the pillow, they wet it with their tears. Why does her mother for ever and for ever speak against him? Why is her father so cold when Philip's name is mentioned? Could Charlotte ever think of any but him? Oh, never, never! And so the wet eyes are veiled at last; and close in doubt and fear and care. And in the next room to Charlotte's, a little yellow old woman lies stark awake; and in the bed by her side an old gentleman can't close his eyes for thinking — my poor girl is promised to a beggar. All the fine hopes which we had of his getting a legacy from that lord are over. Poor child, poor child, what will become of her?

Now, Two Sticks, let us fly over the river Seine to Mr. Philip Firmin's quarters: to Philip's house, who has not got a

penny; to Philip's bed, who has made himself so rude and disagreeable at that tea-party. He has no idea that he has offended anybody. He has gone home perfectly well pleased. He has kicked off the tattered boot. He has found a little fire lingering in his stove, by which he has smoked the pipe of thought. Ere he has jumped into his bed he has knelt a moment beside it; and with all his heart — oh! with all his heart and soul — has committed the dearest one to heaven's loving protection! And now he sleeps like a child.



CHAPTER 7

IN WHICH WE STILL HOVER ABOUT THE ELYSIAN FIELDS.

The describer and biographer of my friend Mr. Philip Firmin has tried to extenuate nothing; and, I hope, has set down naught in malice. If Philip's boots had holes in them, I have written that he had holes in his boots. If he had a red beard, there it is red in this story. I might have oiled it with a tinge of brown, and painted it a rich auburn. Towards modest people he was very gentle and tender; but I must own that in general society he was not always an agreeable companion. He was often haughty and arrogant: he was impatient of old stories: he was intolerant of commonplaces. Mrs. Baynes' anecdotes of her garrison experiences in India and Europe got a very impatient hearing from Mr. Philip; and though little Charlotte gently remonstrated with him, saying, "Do, do let mamma tell her story out; and don't turn away and talk about something else in the midst of it; and don't tell her you have heard the story before, you rude man! If she is not pleased with you, she is angry with me, and I have to suffer when you are gone away," — Miss Charlotte did not say how much she had to suffer when Philip was absent; how constantly her mother found fault with him; what a sad life, in consequence of her attachment to him, the young maiden had to lead; and I fear that clumsy Philip, in his selfish thoughtlessness, did not take enough count of the sufferings which his behaviour brought on the girl. You see I am acknowledging that there were many faults on his side, which, perhaps, may in some degree excuse or account for those which Mrs. General Baynes certainly committed towards him. She did not love Philip naturally; and do you suppose she loved him because she was under great obligations to him? Do you love your creditor because you owe him more than you can ever pay? If I never paid my tailor, should I be on good terms with him? I might go, on ordering suits of clothes from now to the year nineteen hundred; but I should hate him worse year after year. I should find fault with his cut and his cloth: I daresay I should end by thinking his bills extortionate, though I never paid them. Kindness is very indigestible. It disagrees with very proud stomachs. I wonder was that traveller who fell among the thieves grateful afterwards to the Samaritan who rescued him? He gave money certainly; but he didn't miss it. The religious opinions of Samaritans are lamentably heterodox. O brother! may we help the fallen still though they never pay us, and may we lend without exacting the usury of gratitude!

Of this I am determined, that whenever I go courting again, I will not pay my addresses to my dear creature — day after day, and from year's end to year's end, very likely, with the dear girl's mother, father, and half a dozen young brothers and sisters in the room. I shall begin by being civil to the old lady, of course. She is flattered at first by having a young fellow coming courting to her daughter. She calls me "dear Edward;" works me a pair of braces; writes to mamma and sisters, and so forth. Old gentleman says, "Brown, my boy" (I am here fondly imagining myself to be a young fellow named Edward Brown, attached, let us say, to Miss Kate Thompson) — Thompson, I say, says, "Brown, my boy, come to dinner at seven. Cover laid for you always;" and of course, delicious thought! that cover is by dearest Kate's side. But the dinner is bad sometimes. Sometimes I come late. Sometimes things are going badly in the city. Sometimes Mrs. Thompson is out of humour; — she always thought Kate might have done better. And in the midst of these doubts and delays, suppose Jones appears, who is older, but of a better temper, a better family, and — plague on him! — twice as rich? What are engagements? What are promises? It is sometimes an affectionate mother's Duty to break her promise, and that duty the resolute matron will do.

Then Edward is Edward no more, but Mr. Brown; or, worse still, nameless in the house. Then the knife and fork are removed from poor Kate's side, and she swallows her own sad meal in tears. Then if one of the little Thompsons says, artlessly, "Papa, I met Teddy Brown in Regent Street; he looked so — " "Hold your tongue, unfeeling wretch!" cries mamma. "Look at that dear child!" Kate is swooning. She has salvolatile. The medical man is sent for. And presently — Charles Jones is taking Kate Thompson to dinner. Long voyages are dangerous; so are long courtships. In long voyages passengers perpetually quarrel (for that Mrs. General could vouch); in long courtships the same danger exists; and how much the more when in that latter ship you have a mother who is for ever putting in her oar! And then to think of the annoyance of that love voyage, when you and the beloved and beloved's papa, mamma, half a dozen brothers and sisters, are all in one cabin! For economy's sake the Bayneses had no sitting-room at madame's — for you could not call that room on the second floor a sittingroom which had two beds in it, and in which the young ones practised the piano, with poor

Charlotte as their mistress. Philip's courting had to take place for the most part before the whole family; and to make love under such difficulties would have been horrible and maddening and impossible almost, only we have admitted that our young friends had little walks in the Champs Elysées; and then you must own that it must have been delightful for them to write each other perpetual little notes, which were delivered occultly under the very nose of papa and mamma, and in the actual presence of the other boarders at madame's, who, of course, never saw anything that was going on. Yes, those sly monkeys actually made little post-offices about the room. There was, for instance, the clock on the mantelpiece in the salon on which was carved the old French allegory, "Le temps fait passer l'amour." One of those artful young people would pop a note into Time's boat, where you may be sure no one saw it. The trictrac board was another post-office. So was the drawer of the music-stand. So was the Sèvres China flower-pot, to each of which repositories in its turn the lovers confided the delicious secrets of their wooing.

Have you ever looked at your love-letters to Darby, when you were courting, dear Joan? They are sacred pages to read. You have his tied up somewhere in a faded ribbon. You scarce need spectacles as you look at them. The hair grows black; the eyes moisten and brighten; the cheeks fill and blush again. I protest there is nothing so beautiful as Darby and Joan in the world. I hope Philip and his wife will be Darby and Joan to the end. I tell you they are married; and don't want to make any mysteries about the business. I disdain that sort of artifice. In the days of the old three-volume novels, didn't you always look at the end, to see that Louisa and the earl (or young clergyman, as the case might be) were happy? If they died, or met with other grief, for my part I put the book away. This pair, then, are well; are married; are, I trust, happy: but before they married, and afterwards, they had great griefs and troubles; as no doubt you have had, dear sir, or madam, since you underwent that ceremony. Married? Of course they are. Do you suppose I would have allowed little Charlotte to meet Philip in the Champs Elysées with only a giddy little boy of a brother for a companion, who would turn away to see Punch, Guignol, the soldiers marching by, the old woman's gingerbread and toffy stall and so forth? Do you, I say, suppose I would have allowed those two to go out together, unless they were to be married afterwards? Out walking together they did go; and, once, as they were arm-in-arm in the Champs Elysées, whom should they see in a fine open carriage but young Twysden and Captain and Mrs. Woolcomb, to whom, as they passed, Philip doffed his hat with a profound bow, and whom he further saluted with a roar of immense laughter. Woolcomb must have heard the peal. I daresay it brought a little blush into Mrs. Woolcomb's cheek; and — and so, no doubt, added to the many attractions of that elegant lady. I have no secrets about my characters, and speak my mind about them quite freely. They said that Woolcomb was the most jealous, stingy, ostentatious, cruel little brute; that he led his wife a dismal life. Well? If he did? I'm sure, I don't care. "There is that swaggering bankrupt beggar Firmin!" cries the tawny bridegroom, biting his moustache. "Impudent ragged blackguard," says Twysden minor, "I saw him."

"Hadn't you better stop the carriage, and abuse him to himself, and not to me?" says Mrs. Woolcomb, languidly, flinging herself back on her cushions.

"Go on. Hang you! Ally! Vite!" cry the gentlemen in the carriage to the laquais de place on the box.

"I can fancy you don't care about seeing him," resumes Mrs. Woolcomb. "He has a violent temper, and I would not have you quarrel for the world." So I suppose Woolcomb again swears at the laquais de place: and the happy couple, as the saying is, roll away to the Bois de Boulogne.

"What makes you laugh so?" says little Charlotte, fondly, as she trips along by her lover's side.

"Because I am so happy, my dearest!" says the other, squeezing to his heart the little hand that lies on his arm. As he thinks on yonder woman, and then looks into the pure eager face of the sweet girl beside him, the scornful laughter occasioned by the sudden meeting which is just over hushes; — and an immense feeling of thankfulness fills the breast of the young man:— thankfulness for the danger from which he has escaped, and for the blessed prize which has fallen to him.

But Mr. Philip's walks were not to be as pleasant as this walk; and we are now coming to history of wet, slippery roads, bad times, and winter weather. All I can promise about this gloomy part is, that it shall not be a long story. You will acknowledge we made very short work with the love-making, which I give you my word I consider to be the very easiest part of the novel-writer's business. As those rapturous scenes between the captain and the heroine are going on, a writer who knows his business may be thinking about anything else — about the ensuing chapter, or about what he is going to have for dinner, or what you will; therefore, as we passed over the raptures and joys of the courting so very curtly, you must please to gratify me by taking the grief in a very short measure. If our young people are going to suffer, let the pain be

soon over. Sit down in the chair, Miss Baynes, if you please, and you, Mr. Firmin, in this. Allow me to examine you; just open your mouth if you please; and — oh, oh, my dear miss — there it is out! A little eau-de-Cologne and water, my dear. And now, Mr. Firmin, if you please, we will — what fangs! what a big one! Two guineas. Thank you. Good morning. Come to me once a year. John, show in the next party. About the ensuing painful business, then, I protest I don't intend to be much longer occupied than the humane and dexterous operator to whom I have made so bold as to liken myself. If my pretty Charlotte is to have a tooth out, it shall be removed as gently as possible, poor dear. As for Philip, and his great red-bearded jaw, I don't care so much if the tug makes him roar a little. And yet they remain, they remain and throb in after life, those wounds of early days. Have I not said how, as I chanced to walk with Mr. Firmin in Paris, many years after the domestic circumstances here recorded, he paused before the window of that house near the Champs Elysées where Madame Smolensk once held her pension, shook his fist at a jalousie of the now dingy and dilapidated mansion, and intimated to me that he had undergone severe sufferings in the chamber lighted by yonder window? So have we all suffered; so, very likely, my dear young miss, or master, who peruses this modest page, will you have to suffer in your time. You will not die of the operation, most probably: but it is painful: it makes a gap in the mouth, voyez-vous? and years and years, maybe, after, as you think of it, the smart is renewed, and the dismal tragedy enacts itself over again.

Philip liked his little maiden to go out, to dance, to laugh, to be admired, to be happy. In her artless way she told him of her balls, her tea-parties, her pleasures, her partners. In a girl's first little season nothing escapes her. Have you not wondered to hear them tell about the events of the evening, about the dresses of the dowagers, about the compliments of the young men, about the behaviour of the girls, and what not?

Little Charlotte used to enact the over-night's comedy for Philip, pouring out her young heart in her prattle as her little feet skipped by his side. And to hear Philip roar with laughter! It would have done you good. You might have heard him from the Obelisk to the Etoile. People turned round to look at him, and shrugged their shoulders wonderingly, as good-natured French folks will do. How could a man who had been lately ruined, a man who had just been disappointed of a great legacy from the earl his great uncle, a man whose boots were in that lamentable condition, laugh so, and have such high spirits? To think of such an impudent ragged blackguard (as Ringwood Twysden called his cousin) daring to be happy! The fact is, that clap of laughter smote those three Twysden people like three boxes on the ear, and made all their cheeks tingle and blush at once. At Philip's merriment, clouds which had come over Charlotte's sweet face would be chased away. As she clung to him doubts which throbbed at the girl's heart would vanish. When she was acting those scenes of the past night's entertainment, she was not always happy. As she talked and prattled, her own spirits would rise; and hope and natural joy would spring in her heart again, and come flushing up to her cheek. Charlotte was being a hypocrite, as, thank heaven, all good women sometimes are. She had griefs: she hid them from him. She had doubts and fears: they fled when he came in view, and she clung to his strong arm, and looked in his honest blue eyes. She did not tell him of those painful nights when her eyes were wakeful and tearful. A yellow old woman in a white jacket, with a nightcap and a night-light, would come, night after night, to the side of her little bed; and there stand, and with her grim voice bark against Philip. That old woman's lean finger would point to all the rents in poor Philip's threadbare paletot of a character — point to the holes, and tear them wider open. She would stamp on those muddy boots. She would throw up a peaked nose at the idea of the poor fellow's pipe — his pipe, his great companion and comforter when his dear little mistress was away. She would discourse on the partners of the night; the evident attentions of this gentleman, the politeness and high breeding of that.

And when that dreary nightly torture was over, and Charlotte's mother had left the poor child to herself, sometimes Madame Smolensk, sitting up over her ledgers and bills, and wakeful with her own cares, would steal up and console poor Charlotte; and bring her some tisane, excellent for the nerves; and talk to her about — about the subject of which Charlotte best liked to hear. And though Smolensk was civil to Mrs. Baynes in the morning, as her professional duty obliged her to be, she has owned that she often felt a desire to strangle Madame la Générale for her conduct to her little angel of a daughter; and all because Monsieur Philippe smells the pipe, parbleu! "What? a family that owes you the bread which they eat; and they draw back for a pipe! The cowards, the cowards! A soldier's daughter is not afraid of it. Merci! Tenez, M. Philippe," she said to our friend when matters came to an extremity. "Do you know what in your place I would do? To a Frenchman I would not say so; that understands itself. But these things make themselves otherwise in England. I have no money, but I have a cachemire. Take him; and if I were you, I would make a little voyage to Gretna Grin."

And now, if you please, we will quit the Champs Elysées. We will cross the road from madame's boarding-house. We will make our way into the Faubourg St. Honoré, and actually enter a gate over which the L-on, the Un-c-rn, and the R-y-l

Cr-wn and A-ms of the Three K-ngd-ms are sculptured, and going under the porte-cochère, and turning to the right, ascend a little stair, and ask of the attendant on the landing, who is in the chancellerie? The attendant says that several of those messieurs y sont. In fact, on entering the room, you find Mr. Motcomb, — let us say — Mr. Lowndes, Mr. Halkin, and our young friend Mr. Walsingham Hely, seated at their respective tables in the midst of considerable smoke. Smoking in the midst of these gentlemen, and bestriding his chair, as though it were his horse, sits that gallant young Irish chieftain, The O'Rourke. Some of the gentlemen are copying, in a large handwriting, despatches on foolscap paper. I would rather be torn to pieces by O'Rourke's wildest horses, than be understood to hint at what those despatches, at what those despatch-boxes contain. Perhaps they contain some news from the Court of Spain, where some intrigues are carried on, a knowledge of which would make your hair start off your head; perhaps that box, for which a messenger is waiting in a neighbouring apartment, has locked up twenty-four yards of Chantilly lace for Lady Belweather, and six new French farces for Tom Tiddler of the Foreign Office, who is mad about the theatre. It is years and years ago; how should I know what there is in those despatch-boxes?

But the work, whatever it may be, is not very pressing — for there is only Mr. Chesham — [Did I say Chesham before, by the way? You may call him Mr. Sloanestreet if you like]. There is only Chesham (and he always takes things to the grand serious) who seems to be much engaged in writing; and the conversation goes on.

“Who gave it?” asks Motcomb.

“The black man, of course, gave it. We would not pretend to compete with such a long purse as his. You should have seen what faces he made at the bill! Thirty francs a bottle for Rhine wine. He grinned with the most horrible agony when he read the addition. He almost turned yellow. He sent away his wife early. How long that girl was hanging about London; and think of her hooking a millionaire at last! Othello is a frightful screw, and diabolically jealous of his wife.”

“What is the name of the little man who got so dismally drunk, and began to cry about old Ringwood?”

“Twysden — the woman's brother. Don't you know Humbug Twysden, the father? The youth is more offensive than the parent.”

“A most disgusting little beast. Would come to the Variétés, because we said we were going: would go to Lamoignon's, where the Russians gave a dance and a lansquenet. Why didn't you come, Hely?”

Mr. Hely. — I tell you I hate the whole thing. Those painted old actresses give me the horrors. What do I want with winning Motcomb's money who hasn't got any? Do you think it gives me any pleasure to dance with old Carodol? She puts me in mind of my grandmother — only she is older. Do you think I want to go and see that insane old Boutzoff leering at Corinne and Palmyrine, and making a group of three old women together? I wonder how you fellows can go on. Aren't you tired of truffles and écrevisses à la Bordelaise; and those old opera people, whose withered old carcasses are stuffed with them?

The O'R. — There was Cérisette, I give ye me honour. Ye never saw. She feel asleep in her cheer —

Mr. Lowndes. — In her hwhat, O' R.?

The O'R. — Well, in her Chair then! And Figaroff smayred her feece all over with the craym out of a Charlotte Roose. She's a regular bird, and mustache, you know, Cérisette has.

Mr. Hely. — Charlotte, Charlotte! Oh! (He clutches his hair madly. His elbows are on the table.)

Mr. Lowndes. — It's that girl he meets at the teaparties, where he goes to be admired.

Mr. Hely. — It is better to drink tea than, like you fellows, to muddle what brains you have with bad champagne. It is better to look, and to hear, and to see, and to dance with a modest girl, than, like you fellows, to be capering about in taverns with painted old hags like that old Cérisette, who has got a face like pomme cuite, and who danced before Lord Malmesbury at the Peace of Amiens. She did, I tell you; and before Napoleon.

Mr. Chesham. — (Looks up from his writing.) — There was no Napoleon then. It is of no consequence, but —

Lowndes. — Thank you, I owe you one. You're a most valuable man, Chesham, and a credit to your father and mother.

Mr. Chesham. — Well, the First Consul was Bonaparte.

Lowndes. — I am obliged to you. I say I am obliged to you, Chesham, and if you would like any refreshment order it meis sumptibus, old boy — at my expense.

Chesham. — These fellows will never be serious. (He resumes his writing.)

Hely. — (Iterum, but very low.) — Oh, Charlotte, Char —

Mr. Lowndes. — Hely is raving about that girl — that girl with the horrible old mother in yellow, don't you remember? and old father — good old military party, in a shabby old coat — who was at the last ball. What was the name? O'Rourke, what is the rhyme for Baynes?

The O'R. — Pays, and be hanged to you. You're always makin fun on me, you little cockney!

Mr. Motcomb. — Hely was just as bad about the Danish girl. You know, Walse, you composed ever so many verses to her, and wrote home to your mother to ask leave to marry her!

The O'R. — I'd think him big enough to marry without anybody's leave — only they wouldn't have him because he's so ugly.

Mr. Hely. — Very good, O'Rourke. Very neat and good. You were diverting the company with an anecdote. Will you proceed?

The O'R. — Well, then, the Cérisette had been dancing both on and off the stage till she was dead tired, I suppose, and so she fell dead asleep, and Figaroff, taking the whatdycallem out of the Charlotte Roose, smayred her face all —

Voice without. — Deet Mosho Ringwood Twysden, sivoplay, poor l'honorable Moshoo Lownds!

Servant. — Monsieur Twisden!

Mr. Twysden. — Mr. Lowndes, how are you?

Mr. Lowndes. — Very well, thank you; how are you?

Mr. Hely. — Lowndes is uncommonly brilliant to-day.

Mr. Twysden. — Not the worse for last night? Some of us were a little elevated, I think!

Mr. Lowndes. — Some of us quite the reverse. (Little cad, what does he want? Elevated! he couldn't keep his little legs!)

Mr. Twysden. — Eh! Smoking, I see. Thank you. I very seldom do — but as you are so kind — puff. Eh — uncommonly handsome person that, eh — Madame Cérisette.

The O'R. — Thank ye for telling us.

Mr. Lowndes. — If she meets with your applause, Mr. Twysden, I should think Mademoiselle Cérisette is all right.

The O'R. — Maybe they'd raise her salary if ye told her.

Mr. Twysden. — Heh — I see you're chaffing me. We have a good deal of that kind of thing in Somerset — in our — in — hem! This tobacco is a little strong. I am a little shaky this morning. Who, by the way, is that Prince Boutzoff who played lansquenet with us? Is he one of the Livonian Boutzoffs, or one of the Hessian Boutzoffs? I remember at my poor uncle's, Lord Ringwood, meeting a Prince Blucher de Boutzoff, something like this man, by the way. You knew my poor uncle?

Mr. Lowndes. — Dined with him here three months ago at the "Trois Frères."

Mr. Twysden. — Been at Whipham, I daresay? I was bred up there. It was said once that I was to have been his heir. He was very fond of me. He was my godfather.

The O'R. — Then he gave you a mug, and it wasn't a beauty (sotto voce).

Mr. Twysden. — You said somethin? I was speaking of Whipham, Mr. Lowndes — one of the finest places in England, I should say, except Chatsworth, you know, and that sort of thing. My grandfather built it — I mean my great grandfather, for I'm of the Ringwood family.

Mr. Lowndes. — Then was Lord Ringwood your grandfather, or your grand godfather.

Mr. Twysden. — He! he! My mother was his own niece. My grandfather was his own brother, and I am —

Mr. Lowndes. — Thank you. I see now.

Mr. Halkin. — Das ist sehr interessant. Ich versichere ihnen das ist SEHR interessant.

Mr. Twysden. — Said somethin? (This cigar is really — I'll throw it away, please.) I was sayin that at Whipham, where I was bred up, we would be forty at dinner, and as many more in the upper servants' hall.

Mr. Lowndes. — And you dined in the — you had pretty good dinners?

Mr. Twysden. — A French chef. Two aids, besides turtle from town. Two or three regular cooks on the establishment, besides kitchen-maids, roasters, and that kind of thing, you understand. How many have you here now? In Lord Estridge's

kitchen you can't do, I should say, at least without, — let me see — why, in our small way — and if you come to London my father will be dev'lish glad to see you — we —

Mr. Lowndes. — How is Mrs. Woolcomb this morning? That was a fair dinner Woolcomb gave us yesterday.

Mr. Twysden. — He has plenty of money, plenty of money. I hope, Lowndes, when you come to town — the first time you come, mind — to give you a hearty welcome and some of my father's old por —

Mr. Hely. — Will nobody kick this little beast out?

Servant. — Monsieur Chesham peut-il voir M. Firmin?

Mr. Chesham. — Certainly. Come in, Firmin!

Mr. Twysden. — Mr. Fearmang — Mr. Fir — Mr. who? You don't mean to say you receive that fellow, Mr. Chesham?

Mr. Chesham. — What fellow? and what do you mean, Mr. Whatdycallem?

Mr. Twysden. — That blackg — oh — that is, I— I beg your —

Mr. Firmin — (entering and going up to Mr. Chesham). — I say, give me a bit of news of to-day. What you were saying about that — hum and hum and haw — mayn't I have it? (He is talking confidentially with Mr. Chesham, when he sees Mr. Twysden.) What! you have got that little cad here?

Mr. Lowndes. — You know Mr. Twysden, Mr. Firmin? He was just speaking about you.

Mr. Firmin. — Was he? So much the worse for me.

Mr. Twysden. — Sir! We don't speak. You've no right to speak to me in this manner! Don't speak to me: and I won't speak to you, sir — there! Good morning, Mr. Lowndes! Remember your promise to come and dine with us when you come to town. And — one word — (he holds Mr. Lowndes by the button. By the way, he has very curious resemblances to Twysden senior) — we shall be here for ten days certainly. I think Lady Estridge has something next week. I have left our cards, and —

Mr. Lowndes. — Take care. He will be there (pointing to Mr. Firmin).

Mr. Twysden. — What? That beggar? You don't mean to say Lord Estridge will receive such a fellow as — Good-by, good-by! (Exit Mr. Twysden.)

Mr. Firmin. — I caught that little fellow's eye. He's my cousin, you know. We have had a quarrel. I am sure he was speaking about me.

Mr. Lowndes. — Well, now you mention it, he was speaking about you.

Mr. Firmin. — Was he? Then, don't believe him, Mr. Lowndes. That is my advice.

Mr. Hely(at his desk composing). — "Maiden of the blushing cheek, maiden of the — oh, Charlotte, Char — " [He bites his pen and dashes off rapid rhymes on Government paper.]

Mr. Firmin. — What does he say? He said Charlotte.

Mr. Lowndes. — He is always in love and breaking his heart, and he puts it into poems; he wraps it up in paper, and falls in love with somebody else. Sit down and smoke a cigar, won't you?

Mr. Firmin. — Can't stay. Must make up my letter. We print to-morrow.

Mr. Lowndes. — Who wrote that article pitching into Peel?

Mr. Firmin. — Family secret — can't say — good-by. (Exit Mr. Firmin.)

Mr. Chesham. — In my opinion, a most ill-advised and intemperate article. That journal, the Pall Mall Gazette, indulges in a very needless acrimony, I think.

Mr. Lowndes. — Chesham does not like to call a spade a spade. He calls it a horticultural utensil. You have a great career before you, Chesham. You have a wisdom and gravity beyond your years. You bore us slightly, but we all respect you — we do, indeed. What was the text at church last Sunday? Oh, by the way, Hely, you little miscreant, you were at church?

Mr. Chesham. — You need not blush, Hely. I am not a joking man: but this kind of jesting does not strike me as being particularly amusing, Lowndes.

Mr. Lowndes. — You go to church because you are good, because your aunt was a bishop or something. But Hely goes because he is a little miscreant. You hypocritical little beggar, you got yourself up as if you were going to a déjeûné, and you had your hair curled, and you were seen singing out of the same hymn-book with that pretty Miss Baynes, you little

wheedling sinner; and you walked home with the family — my sisters saw you — to a boarding-house where they live — by Jove! you did. And I'll tell your mother!

Mr. Chesham. — I wish you would not make such a noise, and let me do my work, Lowndes. You —

Here Asmodeus whisks us out of the room, and we lose the rest of the young men's conversation. But enough has been overheard, I think, to show what direction young Mr. Hely's thoughts had taken. Since he was seventeen years of age (at the time when we behold him he may be twenty-three) this romantic youth has been repeatedly in love: with his elderly tutor's daughter, of course; with a young haberdasher at the university; with his sister's confidential friend; with the blooming young Danish beauty last year; and now, I very much fear, a young acquaintance of ours has attracted the attention of this imaginative Don Juan. Whenever Hely is in love, he fancies his passion will last for ever, makes a confidant of the first person at hand, weeps plenteously, and writes reams of verses. Do you remember how in a previous chapter we told you that Mrs. Tuffin was determined she would not ask Philip to her soirées, and declared him to be a forward and disagreeable young man? She was glad enough to receive young Walsingham Hely, with his languid air, his drooping head, his fair curls, and his flower in his button-hole; and Hely, being then in hot pursuit of one of the tall Miss Blacklocks, went to Mrs. Tuffin's, was welcomed there with all the honours; and there, fluttering away from Miss Blacklock, our butterfly lighted on Miss Baynes. Now Miss Baynes would have danced with a mopstick, she was so fond of dancing: and Hely, who had practised in a thousand Chaumières, Mabilles (or whatever was the public dance-room then in vogue), was a most amiable, agile, and excellent partner. And she told Philip next day what a nice little partner she had found — poor Philip, who was not asked to that paradise of a party. And Philip said that he knew the little man; that he believed he was rich; that he wrote pretty little verses:— in a word, Philip, in his leonine way, regarded little Hely as a lion regards a lapdog.

Now this little slyboots had a thousand artful little ways. He had a very keen sensibility and a fine taste, which was most readily touched by innocence and beauty. He had tears, I won't say at command; for they were under no command, and gushed from his fine eyes in spite of himself. Charlotte's innocence and freshness smote him with a keen pleasure. Bon Dieu! What was that great, tall Miss Blacklock, who had tramped through a thousand ball-rooms, compared to this artless, happy creature? He danced away from Miss Blacklock, and after Charlotte, the moment he saw our young friend; and the Blacklocks, who knew all about him, and his money, and his mother, and his expectations — who had his verses in their poor album — by whose carriage he had capered day after day in the Bois de Boulogne — stood scowling and deserted, as this young fellow danced off with that Miss Baynes, who lived in a boarding-house, and came to parties in a cab with her horrid old mother! The Blacklocks were as though they were not henceforth for Mr. Hely. They asked him to dinner. Bless my soul, he utterly forgot all about it! He never came to their box on their night at the opera. Not one twinge of remorse had he. Not one pang of remembrance. If he did remember them, it was when they bored him, like those tall tragic women in black who are always coming in their great long trains to sing sermons to Don Juan. Ladies, your name is down in his lordship's catalogue; his servant has it; and you, Miss Anna, are number one thousand and three.

But as for Miss Charlotte, that is a different affair. What innocence! What a fraîcheur! What a merry good humour! Don Slyboots is touched, he is tenderly interested: her artless voice thrills through his frame; he trembles as he waltzes with her; as his fine eyes look at her, psha! what is that film coming over them? O Slyboots, Slyboots! And as she has nothing to conceal, she has told him all he wants to know before long. This is her first winter in Paris: her first season of coming out. She has only been to two balls before, and two plays and an opera. And her father met Mr. Hely at Lord Trim's. That was her father playing at whist. And they lived at Madame Smolensk's boarding-house in the Champs Elysées. And they had been to Mr. Dash's, and to Mrs. Blank's, and she believed they were going to Mrs. Star's on Friday. And did they go to church? Of course they went to church, to the Rue d'Aguesseau, or wherever it might be. And Slyboots went to church next Sunday. You may perhaps guess to what church. And he went the Sunday after. And he sang his own songs, accompanying himself on the guitar at his lodgings. And he sang elsewhere. And he had a very pretty little voice, Slyboots had. I believe those poems under the common title of "Gretchen" in our Walsingham's charming volume were all inspired by Miss Baynes. He began to write about her and himself the very first night after seeing her. He smoked cigarettes and drank green tea. He looked so pale — so pale and sad, that he quite pitied himself in the looking-glass in his apartments in the Rue Miroménil. And he compared himself to a wrecked mariner, and to a grave, and to a man entranced and brought to life. And he cried quite freely and satisfactorily by himself. And he went to see his mother and sister next day at the Hôtel de la Terrasse; and cried to them and said he was in love this time for ever and ever. And his sister called him a

goose. And after crying he ate an uncommonly good dinner. And he took every one into his confidence, as he always did whenever he was in love: always telling, always making verses, and always crying. As for Miss Blacklock, he buried the dead body of that love deep in the ocean of his soul. The waves engulfed Miss B. The ship rolled on. The storm went down. And the stars rose, and the dawn was in his soul, Well, well! The mother was a vulgar woman, and I am glad you are out of it. And what sort of people are General Baynes and Mrs. Baynes?

“Oh, delightful people! Most distinguished officer, the father; modest — doesn’t say a word. The mother, a most lively, brisk, agreeable woman. You must go and see her, ma’am. I desire you’ll go immediately.”

“And leave cards with P. P. C. for the Miss Blacklocks!” says Miss Hely, who was a plain, lively person. And both mother and sister spoiled this young Hely; as women ought always to spoil a son, a brother, a father, husband, grandfather — any male relative, in a word.

To see this spoiled son married was the good-natured mother’s fond prayer. An eldest son had died a rake; a victim to too much money, pleasure, idleness. The widowed mother would give anything to save this one from the career through which the elder had passed. The young man would be one day so wealthy, that she knew many and many a schemer would try and entrap him. Perhaps, she had been made to marry his father because he was rich; and she remembered the gloom and wretchedness of her own union. Oh, that she could see her son out of temptation, and the husband of an honest girl! It was the young lady’s first season? So much the more likely that she should be unworldly. “The general — don’t you remember a nice old gentleman — in a — well, in a wig — that day we dined at Lord Trim’s, when that horrible old Lord Ringwood was there? That was General Baynes; and he broke out so enthusiastically in defence of a poor young man — Dr. Firmin’s son — who was a bad man, I believe; but I shall never have confidence in another doctor again, that I shan’t. And we’ll call on these people, Fanny. Yes, in a brown wig — the general, I perfectly well remember him, and Lord Trim said he was a most distinguished officer. And I have no doubt his wife will be a most agreeable person. Those generals’ wives who have travelled over the world must have acquired a quantity of delightful information. At a boarding-house, are they? I daresay very pleasant and amusing. And we’ll drive there and call on them immediately.”

On that day, as MacGrigor and Moira Baynes were disporting in the little front garden of Madame Smolensk’s; I think Moira was just about to lick MacGrigor, when his fratricidal hand was stopped by the sight of a large yellow carriage — a large London dowager family carriage — from which descended a large London family footman, with side-locks begrimed with powder, with calves such as only belong to large London family footmen, and with cards in his hand. “Ceci Madam Smolensk?” says the large menial. “Oui,” says the boy, nodding his head; on which the footman was puzzled, for he thought from his readiness in the use of the French language that the boy was a Frenchman.

“Ici demure General Bang?” continued the man.

“Hand us over the cards, John. Not at home,” said Moira.

“Who ain’t at ‘ome?” inquired the menial.

“General Baynes, my father, ain’t at home. He shall have the pasteboard when he comes in. Mrs. Hely? Oh, Mac, it’s the same name as that young swell who called the other day! Ain’t at home, John. Gone out to pay some visits. Had a fly on purpose. Gone out with my sister. ‘Pon my word, they have, John.” And from this accurate report of the boy’s behaviour, I fear that the young Baynes must have been brought up at a classical and commercial academy, where economy was more studied than politeness.

Philip comes trudging up to dinner, and as this is not his post day, arrives early. He hopes, perhaps, for a walk with Miss Charlotte, or a coze in Madame Smolensk’s little private room. He finds the two boys in the forecourt; and they have Mrs. Hely’s cards in their hand; and they narrate to him the advent and departure of the lady in the swell carriage, the mother of the young swell with the flower in his button-hole, who came the other day on such a jolly horse. Yes. And he was at church last Sunday, Philip, and he gave Charlotte a hymn-book. And he sang: he sang like the piper who played before Moses, Pa said. And Ma said it was wicked, but it wasn’t: only Pa’s fun, you know. And Ma said you never came to church. Why don’t you?

Philip had no taint of jealousy in his magnanimous composition, and would as soon have accused Charlotte of flirting with other men, as of stealing madame’s silver spoons. “So you have had some fine visitors,” he says, as the fly drives up. “I remember that rich Mrs. Hely, a patient of my father’s. My poor mother used to drive to her house.”

“Oh, we have seen a great deal of Mr. Hely, Philip!” cries Miss Charlotte, not heeding the scowls of her mother, who is

nodding and beckoning angrily at the girl.

"You never once mentioned him. He is one of the greatest dandies about Paris: quite a lion," remarks Philip.

"Is he? What a funny little lion! I never thought about him," says Miss Charlotte, quite simply. Oh, ingratitude! ingratitude! And we have told how Mr. Walsingham was crying his eyes out for her.

"She never thought about him?" cries Mrs. Baynes, quite eagerly.

"The piper, is it, you're talking about?" asks papa. "I called him Piper, you see, because he piped so sweetly at ch — Well, my love?"

Mrs. Baynes was nudging her general at this moment. She did not wish that the piper should form the subject of conversation, I suppose.

"The piper's mother is very rich, and the piper will inherit after her. She has a fine house in London. She gives very fine parties. She drives in a great carriage, and she has come to call upon you, and ask you to her balls, I suppose."

Mrs. Baynes was delighted at this call. And when she said, "I'm sure I don't value fine people, or their fine parties, or their fine carriages, but I wish that my dear child should see the world," — I don't believe a word which Mrs. Baynes said. She was much more pleased than Charlotte at the idea of visiting this fine lady; or else, why should she have coaxed, and wheedled, and been so particularly gracious to the general all the evening? She wanted a new gown. The truth is, her yellow was very shabby; whereas Charlotte, in plain white muslin, looked pretty enough to be able to dispense with the aid of any French milliner. I fancy a consultation with madame and Mrs. Bunch. I fancy a fly ordered, and a visit to the gown is settled with the milliner, I fancy the terror on Mrs. Baynes' wizened face when she ascertains the amount of the bill. To do her justice, the general's wife had spend little upon her own homely person. She chose her gowns ugly, but cheap. There were so many backs to clothe in that family that the thrifty mother did not heed the decoration of her own.



CHAPTER 8

NEC DULCES AMORES SPERNE, PUER, NEQUE TU CHOREAS.

“My dear,” Mrs. Baynes said to her daughter, “you are going out a great deal in the world now. You will go to a great number of places where poor Philip cannot hope to be admitted.”

“Not admit Philip, mamma! then I’m sure I don’t want to go,” cries the girl.

“Time enough to leave off going to parties when you can’t afford it, and marry him. When I was a lieutenant’s wife, I didn’t go to any parties out of the regiment, my dear!”

“Oh, then, I am sure I shall never want to go out!” Charlotte declares.

“You fancy he will always stop at home, I daresay. Men are not all so domestic as your papa. Very few love to stop at home like him. Indeed, I may say that I have made his home comfortable. But one thing is clear, my child. Philip can’t always expect to go where we go. He is not in the position in life. Recollect, your father is a general officer, C. B., and may be K.C.B. soon, and your mother is a general officer’s lady. We may go anywhere. I might have gone to the drawing-room at home if I chose. Lady Biggs would have been delighted to present me. Your aunt has been to the drawing-room, and she is only Mrs. Major Mac Whirter; and most absurd it was of Mac to let her go. But she rules him in everything, and they have no children. I have, goodness knows! I sacrifice myself for my children. You little know what I deny myself for my children. I said to Lady Biggs, ‘No, Lady Biggs; my husband may go. He should go. He has his uniform, and it will cost him nothing except a fly and a bouquet for the man who drives; but I will not spend money on myself for the hire of diamonds and feathers, and, though I yield in loyalty to no person, I daresay my Sovereign won’t miss me.’ And I don’t think her Majesty did. She has other things to think of besides Mrs. General Baynes, I suppose. She is a mother, and can appreciate a mother’s sacrifices for her children.” — If I have not hitherto given you detailed reports of Mrs. General Baynes’ conversation, I don’t think, my esteemed reader, you will be very angry.

“Now, child,” the general’s lady continued, “let me warn you not to talk much to Philip about those places to which you go without him, and to which his position in life does not allow of his coming. Hide anything from him? Oh, dear, no! Only for his own good, you understand. I don’t tell everything to your papa. I should only worrit him and vex him. When anything will please him, and make him happy, then I tell him. And about Philip. Philip, I must say it, my dear — I must as a mother say it — has his faults. He is an envious man. Don’t look shocked. He thinks very well of himself; and having been a great deal spoiled, and made too much of in his unhappy father’s time, he is so proud and haughty that he forgets his position, and thinks he ought to live with the highest society. Had Lord Ringwood left him a fortune, as Philip led us to expect when we gave our consent to this most unlucky match — for that my dear child should marry a beggar is most unlucky and most deplorable; I can’t help saying so, Charlotte, — if I were on my deathbed I couldn’t help saying so; and I wish with all my heart we had never seen or heard of him. — There! Don’t go off in one of your tantrums! What was I saying, pray? I say that Philip is in no position, or rather in a very humble one, which — a mere newspaper-writer and a subaltern too — everybody acknowledges to be. And if he hears us talking about our parties, to which we have a right to go — to which you have a right to go with your mother, a general officer’s lady — why, he’ll be offended. He won’t like to hear about them and think he can’t be invited; and you had better not talk about them at all, or about the people you meet, you dance with. At Mrs. Hely’s you may dance with Lord Headbury, the ambassador’s son. And if you tell Philip he will be offended. He will say that you boast about it. When I was only a lieutenant’s wife at Barrackpore, Mrs. Captain Capers used to go to Calcutta to the Government House balls. I didn’t go. But I was offended, and I used to say that Flora Capers gave herself airs, and was always boasting of her intimacy with the Marchioness of Hastings. We don’t like our equals to be better off than ourselves. Mark my words. And if you talk to Philip about the people whom you meet in society, and whom he can’t from his unfortunate station expect to know, you will offend him. That was why I nudged you to-day when you were going on about Mr. Hely. Anything so absurd! I saw Philip getting angry at once, and biting his moustaches, as he always does when he is angry — and swears quite out loud — so vulgar! There! you are going to be angry again, my love; I never saw anything like you! Is this my Charly who never was angry? I know the world, dear, and you don’t. Look at me, how I manage your papa, and I tell you don’t talk to Philip about things which offend him! No, dearest, kiss your poor old mother who loves you. Go upstairs and bathe your eyes, and come down happy to dinner.” And at dinner Mrs. General

Baynes was uncommonly gracious to Philip: and when gracious she was especially odious to Philip, whose magnanimous nature accommodated itself ill to the wheedling artifices of an ill-bred old woman.

Following this wretched mother's advice, my poor Charlotte spoke scarcely at all to Philip of the parties to which she went, and the amusements which she enjoyed without him. I daresay Mrs. Baynes was quite happy in thinking that she was "guiding" her child rightly. As if a coarse woman, because she is mean, and greedy, and hypocritical, and fifty years old, has a right to lead a guileless nature into wrong! Ah! if some of us old folks were to go to school to our children, I am sure, madam, it would do us a great deal of good. There is a fund of good sense and honourable feeling about my great-grandson Tommy, which is more valuable than all his grandpapa's experience and knowledge of the world. Knowledge of the world forsooth! Compromise, selfishness modified, and double dealing. Tom disdains a lie. When he wants a peach, he roars for it. If his mother wishes to go to a party, she coaxes, and wheedles, and manages, and smirks, and curtsies for months, in order to get her end; takes twenty rebuffs, and comes up to the scratch again smiling; — and this woman is for ever lecturing her daughters, and preaching to her sons upon virtue, honesty, and moral behaviour!

Mrs. Hely's little party at the Hôtel de la Terrasse was very pleasant and bright; and Miss Charlotte enjoyed it, although her swain was not present. But Philip was pleased that his little Charlotte should be happy. She beheld with wonderment Parisian duchesses, American millionnaires, dandies from the embassies, deputies and peers of France with large stars and wigs like papa. She gaily described her party to Philip; described, that is to say, everything but her own success, which was undoubted. There were many beauties at Mrs. Hely's, but nobody fresher or prettier. The Miss Blacklocks retired very early and in the worst possible temper. Prince Slyboots did not in the least heed their going away. His thoughts were all fixed upon little Charlotte. Charlotte's mamma saw the impression which the girl made, and was filled with a hungry joy. Good-natured Mrs. Hely complimented her on her daughter. "Thank God, she is as good as she is pretty," said the mother, I am sure speaking seriously this time regarding her daughter. Prince Slyboots danced with scarce anybody else. He raised a perfect whirlwind of compliments round about Charlotte. She was quite a simple person, and did not understand one-tenth part of what he said to her. He strewed her path with roses of poesy: he scattered garlands of sentiment before her all the way from the ante-chamber downstairs, and so to the fly which was in waiting to take her and her parents home to the boarding-house. "By George, Charlotte, I think you have smitten that fellow," cries the general, who was infinitely amused by young Hely — his raptures, his affectations, his long hair, and what Baynes called his low dress. A slight white tape and a ruby button confined Hely's neck. His hair waved over his shoulders. Baynes had never seen such a specimen. At the mess of the stout 120th, the lads talked of their dogs, horses, and sport. A young civilian, smattering in poetry, chattering in a dozen languages, scented, smiling, perfectly at ease with himself and the world, was a novelty to the old officer.

And now the Queen's birthday arrived — and that it may arrive for many scores of years yet to come is, I am sure, the prayer of all of us — and with the birthday his Excellency Lord Estridge's grand annual fête in honour of his sovereign. A card for the ball was left at Madame Smolensk's, for General, Mrs. and Miss Baynes; and no doubt Monsieur Slyboots Walsingham Hely was the artful agent by whom the invitation was forwarded. Once more the general's veteran uniform came out from the tin-box, with its dingy epaulets and little cross and ribbon. His wife urged on him strongly the necessity of having a new wig, wigs being very cheap and good at Paris — but Baynes said a new wig would make his old coat look very shabby; and a new uniform would cost more money than he would like to afford. So shabby he went de cape à pied, with a moulting feather, a threadbare suit, a tarnished wig, and a worn-out lace, *sibi constans*. Boots, trousers, sash, coat, were all old and worse for wear, and "faith," says he, "my face follows suit." A brave, silent man was Baynes; with a twinkle of humour in his lean, wrinkled face.

And if General Baynes was shabbily attired at the Embassy ball, I think I know a friend of mine who was shabby too. In the days of his prosperity, Mr. Philip was *parcus cultor et infrequens* of balls, routes, and ladies' company. Perhaps because his father was angered at Philip's neglect of his social advantages and indifference as to success in the world, Philip was the more neglectful and indifferent. The elder's comedy-smiles, and solemn hypocritical politeness, caused scorn and revolt on the part of the younger man. Philip despised the humbug, and the world to which such humbug could be welcome. He kept aloof from tea-parties then: his evening-dress clothes served him for a long time. I cannot say how old his dress-coat was at the time of which we are writing. But he had been in the habit of respecting that garment and considering it new and handsome for many years past. Meanwhile the coat had shrunk, or its wearer had grown stouter; and his grand embroidered, embossed, illuminated, carved and gilt velvet dress waistcoat, too, had narrowed, had become absurdly tight

and short, and I daresay was the laughing-stock of many of Philip's acquaintances, whilst he himself, poor simple fellow, was fancying that it was a most splendid article of apparel. You know in the Palais Royal they hang out the most splendid reach-me-down dressing-gowns, waistcoats, and so forth. "No," thought Philip, coming out of his cheap dining-house, and swaggering along the arcades, and looking at the tailors' shops, with his hands in his pockets. "My brown velvet dress waistcoat with the gold sprigs, which I had made at college, is a much more tasty thing than these gaudy ready-made articles. And my coat is old certainly, but the brass buttons are still very bright and handsome, and, in fact, it is a most becoming and gentlemanlike thing." And under this delusion the honest fellow dressed himself in his old clothes, lighted a pair of candles, and looked at himself with satisfaction in the looking-glass, drew on a pair of cheap gloves which he had bought, walked by the Quays, and over the Deputies' Bridge, across the Place Louis XV., and strutted up the Faubourg St. Honoré to the Hotel of the British Embassy. A half-mile queue of carriages was formed along the street, and of course the entrance to the hotel was magnificently illuminated.

A plague on those cheap gloves! Why had not Philip paid three francs for a pair of gloves, instead of twenty-nine sous? Mrs. Baynes had found a capital cheap glove shop, whither poor Phil had gone in the simplicity of his heart; and now as he went in under the grand illuminated porte-cochère, Philip saw that the gloves had given way at the thumbs, and that his hands appeared through the rents, as red as red as raw beefsteaks. It is wonderful how red hands will look through holes in white gloves. "And there's that hole in my boot, too," thought Phil; but he had put a little ink over the seam, and so the rent was imperceptible. The coat and waistcoat were tight, and of a past age. Never mind. The chest was broad, the arms were muscular and long, and Phil's face, in the midst of a halo of fair hair and flaming whiskers, looked brave, honest, and handsome. For a while his eyes wandered fiercely and restlessly all about the room from group to group; but now — ah! now — they were settled. They had met another pair of eyes, which lighted up with glad welcome when they beheld him. Two young cheeks mantled with a sweet blush. These were Charlotte's cheeks: and hard by them were mamma's, of a very different colour. But Mrs. General Baynes had a knowing turban on, and a set of garnets round her old neck, like gooseberries set in gold.

They admired the rooms: they heard the names of the great folks who arrived, and beheld many famous personages. They made their curtsies to the ambassadress. Confusion! With a great rip, the thumb of one of those cheap gloves of Philip's parts company from the rest of the glove, and he is obliged to wear it crumpled up in his hand: a dreadful mishap — for he is going to dance with Charlotte, and he will have to give his hand to the vis-à-vis.

Who comes up smiling, with a low neck, with waving curls and whiskers, pretty little hands exquisitely gloved, and tiny feet? 'Tis Hely Walsingham, lightest in the dance. Most affably does Mrs. General Baynes greet the young fellow. Very brightly and happily do Charlotte's eyes glance towards her favourite partner. It is certain that poor Phil can't hope at all to dance like Hely. "And see what nice neat feet and hands he has got," says Mrs. Baynes. "Comme il est bien ganté! A gentleman ought to be always well gloved."

"Why did you send me to the twenty-nine-sous-shop?" says poor Phil, looking at his tattered handshoes, and red obtrusive thumb.

"Oh, you!" — (here Mrs. Baynes shrugs her yellow old shoulders.) "Your hands would burst through any gloves! How do you do, Mr. Hely! Is your mamma here? Of course she is! What a delightful party she gave us! The dear ambassadress looks quite unwell — most pleasing manners, I am sure; Lord Estridge, what a perfect gentleman!"

The Bayneses were just come. For what dance was Miss Baynes disengaged? "As many as ever you like!" cries Charlotte, who, in fact, called Hely her little dancing-master, and never thought of him except as a partner. "Oh, too much happiness! Oh, that this could last for ever!" sighed Hely, after a waltz, polka, mazurka, I know not what, and fixing on Charlotte the full blaze of his beauteous blue eyes. "For ever?" cries Charlotte, laughing. "I'm very fond of dancing, indeed; and you dance beautifully; but I don't know that I should like to dance for ever." Ere the words are over, he is whirling her round the room again. His little feet fly with surprising agility. His hair floats behind him. He scatters odours as he spins. The handkerchief with which he fans his pale brow is like a cloudy film of muslin — and poor old Philip sees with terror that his pocket-handkerchief has got three great holes in it. His nose and one eye appeared through one of the holes while Phil was wiping his forehead. It was very hot. He was very hot. He was hotter, though standing still, than young Hely who was dancing. "He! he! I compliment you on your gloves, and your handkerchief, I'm sure," sniggers Mrs. Baynes, with a toss of her turban. Has it not been said that a bull is a strong, courageous, and noble animal, but that a bull in a china-shop is not in his place? "There you go. Thank you! I wish you'd go somewhere else," cries Mrs. Baynes in a fury. Poor Philip's

foot has just gone through her flounce. How red he is! how much hotter than ever! There go Hely and Charlotte, whirling round like two operadancers! Philip grinds his teeth, he buttons his coat across his chest. How very tight it feels! How savagely his eyes glare! Do young men still look savage and solemn at balls? An ingenuous young Englishman ought to do that duty of dancing, of course. Society calls upon him. But I doubt whether he ought to look cheerful during the performance, or flippantly engage in so grave a matter.

As Charlotte's sweet round face beamed smiles upon Philip over Hely's shoulders, it looked so happy that he never thought of grudging her her pleasure: and happy he might have remained in this contemplation, regarding not the circle of dancers who were galloping and whirling on at their usual swift rate, but her, who was the centre of all joy and pleasure for him; — when suddenly a shrill voice was heard behind him, crying, "Get out of the way, hang you!" and suddenly there bounced against him Ringwood Twysden, pulling Miss Flora Trotter round the room, one of the most powerful and intrepid dancers of that season at Paris. They hurtled past Philip; they shot him forward against a pillar. He heard a screech, an oath, and another loud laugh from Twysden, and beheld the scowls of Miss Trotter as that rapid creature bumped at length into a place of safety.

I told you about Philip's coat. It was very tight. The daylight had long been struggling to make an entry at the seams. As he staggered up against the wall, crack! went a great hole at his back; and crack! one of his gold buttons came off, leaving a rent in his chest. It was in those days when gold buttons still lingered on the breasts of some brave men, and we have said simple Philip still thought his coat a fine one.

There was not only a rent of the seam, there was not only a burst button, but there was also a rip in Philip's rich cut-velvet waistcoat, with the gold sprigs, which he thought so handsome — a great, heartrending scar. What was to be done? Retreat was necessary. He told Miss Charlotte of the hurt he had received, whose face wore a very comical look of pity at his misadventure — he covered part of his wound with his gibus hat — and he thought he would try and make his way out by the garden of the hotel, which, of course, was illuminated, and bright, and crowded, but not so very bright and crowded as the saloons, galleries, supper-rooms, and halls of gilded light in which the company, for the most part, assembled.

So our poor wounded friend wandered into the garden, over which the moon was shining with the most blank indifference at the fiddling, feasting, and particoloured lamps. He says that his mind was soothed by the aspect of yonder placid moon and twinkling stars, and that he had altogether forgotten his trumpery little accident and torn coat and waistcoat: but I doubt about the entire truth of this statement, for there have been some occasions when he, Mr. Philip, has mentioned the subject, and owned that he was mortified and in a rage.

Well. He went into the garden: and was calming himself by contemplating the stars, when, just by that fountain where there is Pradier's little statue of — Moses in the Bulrushes, let us say — round which there was a beautiful row of illuminated lamps, lighting up a great coronal of flowers, which my dear readers are at liberty to select and arrange according to their own exquisite taste; — near this little fountain he found three gentlemen talking together.

The high voice of one Philip could hear, and knew from old days. Ringwood Twysden, Esquire, always liked to talk and to excite himself with other persons' liquor. He had been drinking the Sovereign's health with great assiduity, I suppose, and was exceedingly loud and happy. With Ringwood was Mr. Woolcomb, whose countenance the lamps lit up in a fine lurid manner, and whose eyeballs gleamed in the twilight: and the third of the group was our young friend Mr. Lowndes.

"I owed him one, you see, Lowndes," said Mr. Ringwood Twysden. "I hate the fellow! Hang him, always did! I saw the great hulkin brute standing there. Couldn't help myself. Give you my honour, couldn't help myself. I just drove Miss Trotter at him — sent her elbow well into him, and spun him up against the wall. The buttons cracked off the beggar's coat, begad! What business had he there, hang him? Gad, sir, he made a cannon off an old woman in blue, and went into. . . ."

Here Mr. Ringwood's speech came to an end: for his cousin stood before him, grim and biting his mustachios.

"Hullo!" piped the other. "Who wants you to overhear my conversation? Dammy, I say! I . . ."

Philip put out that hand with the torn glove. The glove was in a dreadful state of disruption now. He worked the hand well into his kinsman's neck, and twisting Ringwood round into a proper position, brought that poor old broken boot so to bear upon the proper quarter, that Ringwood was discharged into the little font, and lighted amidst the flowers, and the water, and the oil-lamps, and made a dreadful mess and splutter amongst them. And as for Philip's coat, it was torn worse than ever.

I don't know how many of the brass buttons had revolted and parted company from the poor old cloth, which cracked,

and split, and tore under the agitation of that beating angry bosom. I blush as I think of Mr. Firmin in this ragged state, a great rent all across his back, and his prostrate enemy lying howling in the water, amidst the sputtering, crashing oil-lamps at his feet. When Cinderella quitted her first ball, just after the clock struck twelve, we all know how shabby she looked. Philip was a still more disreputable object when he slunk away. I don't know by what side door Mr. Lowndes eliminated him. He also benevolently took charge of Philip's kinsman and antagonist, Mr. Ringwood Twysden. Mr. Twysden's hands, coat-tails, were very much singed and scalded by the oil, and cut by the broken glass, which was all extracted at the Beaujon Hospital, but not without much suffering on the part of the patient. But though young Lowndes spoke up for Philip, in describing the scene (I fear not without laughter), his Excellency caused Mr. Firmin's name to be erased from his party lists: and I am sure no sensible man will defend Philip's conduct for a moment.

Of this lamentable fracas which occurred in the Hotel Garden, Miss Baynes and her parents had no knowledge for awhile. Charlotte was too much occupied with her dancing, which she pursued with all her might: papa was at cards with some sober male and female veterans: and mamma was looking with delight at her daughter, whom the young gentlemen of many embassies were charmed to choose for a partner. When Lord Headbury, Lord Estridge's son, was presented to Miss Baynes, her mother was so elated that she was ready to dance too. I do not envy Mrs. Major MacWhirter, at Tours, the perusal of that immense manuscript in which her sister recorded the events of the ball. Here was Charlotte, beautiful, elegant, accomplished, admired everywhere, with young men, young noblemen of immense property and expectations, wild about her; and engaged by a promise to a rude, ragged, presumptuous, ill-bred young man, without a penny in the world — wasn't it provoking? Ah, poor Philip! How that little sour, yellow mother-in-law elect did scowl at him when he came with rather a shamefaced look to pay his duty to his sweetheart on the day after the ball! Mrs. Baynes had caused her daughter to dress with extra smartness, had forbidden the poor child to go out, and coaxed her, and wheedled her, and dressed her with I know not what ornaments of her own, with a fond expectation that Lord Headbury, that the yellow young Spanish attaché, that the sprightly Prussian secretary, and Walsingham Hely, Charlotte's partners at the ball, would certainly call; and the only equipage that appeared at Madame Smolensk's gate was a hack cab, which drove up at evening, and out of which poor Philip's well-known tattered boots came striding. Such a fond mother as Mrs. Baynes may well have been out of humour.

As for Philip, he was unusually shy and modest. He did not know in what light his friends would regard his escapade of the previous evening. He had been sitting at home all the morning in state, and in company with a Polish colonel, who lived in his hotel, and whom Philip had selected to be his second in case the battle of the previous night should have any suite. He had left that colonel in company with a bag of tobacco and an order for unlimited beer, whilst he himself ran up to catch a glimpse of his beloved. The Bayneses had not heard of the battle of the previous night. They were full of the ball, of Lord Estridge's affability, of the Golconda ambassador's diamonds, of the appearance of the royal princes who honoured the fête, of the most fashionable Paris talk in a word. Philip was scolded, snubbed, and coldly received by mamma; but he was used to that sort of treatment, and greatly relieved by finding that she was unacquainted with his own disorderly behaviour. He did not tell Charlotte about the quarrel; a knowledge of it might alarm the little maiden; and so for once our friend was discreet, and held his tongue.

But if he had any influence with the editor of Galignani's Messenger, why did he not entreat the conductors of that admirable journal to forego all mention of the fracas at the embassy ball? Two days after the fête, I am sorry to say, there appeared a paragraph in the paper narrating the circumstances of the fight. And the guilty Philip found a copy of that paper on the table before Mrs. Baynes and the general when he came to the Champs Elysées according to his wont. Behind that paper sate Major-General Baynes, C. B., looking confused, and beside him his lady frowning like Rhadamanthus. But no Charlotte was in the room.



CHAPTER 9

INFANDI DOLORES.

Philip's heart beat very quickly at seeing this grim pair, and the guilty newspaper before them, on which Mrs. Baynes' lean right hand was laid. "So, sir," she cried, "you still honour us with your company: after distinguishing yourself as you did the night before last. Fighting and boxing like a porter at his Excellency's ball. It's disgusting! I have no other word for it: disgusting!" And here I suppose she nudged the general, or gave him some look or signal by which he knew he was to come into action; for Baynes straightway advanced and delivered his fire.

"Faith, sir, more bub-ub-blackguard conduct I never heard of in my life! That's the only word for it: the only word for it," cries Baynes.

"The general knows what blackguard conduct is, and yours is that conduct, Mr. Firmin! It is all over the town: is talked of everywhere: will be in all the newspapers. When his lordship heard of it, he was furious. Never, never, will you be admitted into the Embassy again, after disgracing yourself as you have done," cries the lady.

"Disgracing yourself, that's the word. — And disgraceful your conduct was, begad!" cries the officer second in command.

"You don't know my provocation," pleaded poor Philip. "As I came up to him Twysden was boasting that he had struck me — and — and laughing at me."

"And a pretty figure you were to come to a ball! Who could help laughing, sir?"

"He bragged of having insulted me, and I lost my temper, and struck him in return. The thing is done and can't be helped," growled Philip.

"Strike a little man before ladies! Very brave indeed!" cries the lady.

"Mrs. Baynes!"

"I call it cowardly. In the army we consider it cowardly to quarrel before ladies," continues Mrs. General B.

"I have waited at home for two days to see if he wanted any more," groaned Philip.

"Oh, yes! After insulting and knocking a little man down, you want to murder him! And you call that the conduct of a Christian — the conduct of a gentleman!"

"The conduct of a ruffian, by George!" says General Baynes.

"It was prudent of you to choose a very little man, and to have the ladies within hearing!" continues Mrs. Baynes. "Why, I wonder you haven't beaten my dear children next. Don't you, general, wonder he has not knocked down our poor boys? They are quite small. And it is evident that laides being present is no hindrance to Mr. Firmin's boxing-matches."

"The conduct is gross, and unworthy of a gentleman," reiterates the general.

"You hear what that man says — that old man, who never says an unkind word? That veteran, who has been in twenty battles, and never struck a man before women yet? Did you, Charles? He has given you his opinion. He has called you a name which I won't soil my lips with repeating, but which you deserve. And do you suppose, sir, that I will give my blessed child to a man who has acted as you have acted, and been called a —? Charles! General! I will go to my grave rather than see my daughter given up to such a man!"

"Good heavens!" said Philip, his knees trembling under him. "You don't mean to say that you intend to go from your word, and —"

"Oh! you threaten about money, do you? Because your father was a cheat, you intend to try and make us suffer, do you?" shrieks the lady. "A man who strikes a little man before ladies will commit any act of cowardice, I daresay. And if you wish to beggar my family, because your father was a rogue —"

"My dear!" interposes the general.

"Wasn't he a rogue, Baynes? Is there any denying it? Haven't you said so a hundred and a hundred times? A nice family to marry into! No, Mr. Firmin! You may insult me as you please. You may strike little men before ladies. You may lift your great wicked hand against that poor old man, in one of your tipsy fits: but I know a mother's love, a mother's duty

— and I desire that we see you no more.”

“Great Powers!” cries Philip, aghast. “You don’t mean to — to separate me from Charlotte, general! I have your word. You encouraged me. I shall break my heart. I’ll go down on my knees to that fellow. I’ll — oh! — you don’t mean what you say!” And, scared and sobbing, the poor fellow clasped his strong hands together, and appealed to the general.

Baynes was under his wife’s eye. “I think,” he said, “your conduct has been confoundedly bad, disorderly, and ungentlemanlike. You can’t support my child, if you marry her. And if you have the least spark of honour in you, as you say you have, it is you, Mr. Firmin, who will break off the match, and release the poor child from certain misery. By George, sir, how is a man who fights and quarrels in a nobleman’s ball-room, to get on in the world? How is a man, who can’t afford a decent coat to his back, to keep a wife? The more I have known you, the more I have felt that the engagement would bring misery upon my child! Is that what you want? A man of honour — ” (“Honour!” in italics, from Mrs. Baynes.) “Hush, my dear! — A man of spirit would give her up, sir. What have you to offer but beggary, by George? Do you want my girl to come home to your lodgings, and mend your clothes?” — “I think I put that point pretty well, Bunch, my boy,” said the general, talking of the matter afterwards. “I hit him there, sir.”

The old soldier did indeed strike his adversary there with a vital stab. Philip’s coat, no doubt, was ragged, and his purse but light. He had sent money to his father out of his small stock. There were one or two servants in the old house in Parr Street, who had been left without their wages, and a part of these debts Philip had paid. He knew his own violence of temper, and his unruly independence. He thought very humbly of his talents, and often doubted of his capacity to get on in the world. In his less hopeful moods, he trembled to think that he might be bringing poverty and unhappiness upon his dearest little maiden, for whom he would joyfully have sacrificed his blood, his life. Poor Philip sank back sickening and fainting almost under Baynes’s words.

“You’ll let me — you’ll let me see her?” he gasped out.

“She’s unwell. She is in her bed. She can’t appear to-day!” cried the mother.

“Oh, Mrs. Baynes! I must — I must see her,” Philip said; and fairly broke out in a sob of pain.

“This is the man that strikes men before women!” said Mrs. Baynes. “Very courageous, certainly!”

“By George, Eliza!” the general cried out, starting up, “it’s too bad — ”

“Infirm of purpose, give me the daggers!” Philip yelled out, whilst describing the scene to his biographer in after days. “Macbeth would never have done the murders but for that little quiet woman at his side. When the Indian prisoners are killed, the squaws always invent the worst tortures. You should have seen that fiend and her livid smile, as she was drilling her gimlets into my heart! I don’t know how I offended her. I tried to like her, sir. I had humbled myself before her. I went on her errands. I played cards with her. I sate and listened to her dreadful stories about Barrackpore and the governor-general. I wallowed in the dust before her, and she hated me. I can see her face now: her cruel yellow face, and her sharp teeth, and her gray eyes. It was the end of August, and pouring a storm that day. I suppose my poor child was cold and suffering up-stairs, for I heard the poking of a fire in her little room. When I hear a fire poking of a fire in her little room. When I hear a fire poked over-head now — twenty years after — the whole thing comes back to me; and I suffer over again that infernal agony. Were I to live a thousand years, I could not forgive her. I never did her a wrong, but I can’t forgive her. Ah, my heaven, how that woman tortured me!”

“I think I know one or two similar instances,” said Mr. Firmin’s biographer.

“You are always speaking ill of women!” said Mr. Firmin’s biographer’s wife.

“No, thank heaven!” said the gentleman. “I think I know some of whom I never thought or spoke a word of evil. My dear, will you give Philip some more tea?” and with this the gentleman’s narrative is resumed.

The rain was beating down the avenue as Philip went into the street. He looked up at Charlotte’s window: but there was no sign. There was a flicker of a fire there. The poor girl had the fever, and was shuddering in her little room, weeping and sobbing on Madame Smolensk’s shoulder, *que c’était pitié à voir*, madame said. Her mother had told her she must break from Philip; had invented and spoken a hundred calumnies against him; declared that he never cared for her; that he had loose principles, and was for ever haunting theatres and bad company. “It’s not true, mother, it’s not true!” the little girl had cried, flaming up in revolt for a moment: but she soon subsided in tears and misery, utterly broken by the thought of her calamity. Then her father had been brought to her, who had been made to believe some of the stories against poor Philip, and who was commanded by his wife to impress them upon the girl. And Baynes tried to obey orders; but he was

scared and cruelly pained by the sight of his little maiden's grief and suffering. He attempted a weak expostulation, and began a speech or two. But his heart failed him. He retreated behind his wife. She never hesitated in speech or resolution, and her language became more bitter as her ally faltered. Philip was a drunkard; Philip was a prodigal; Philip was a frequenter of dissolute haunts, and loose companions. She had the best authority for what she said. Was not a mother anxious for the welfare of her own child? ("Begad, you don't suppose your own mother would do anything that was not for your welfare, now?" broke in the general, feebly.) "Do you think if he had not been drunk he would have ventured to commit such an atrocious outrage as that at the Embassy? And do you suppose I want a drunkard and a beggar to marry my daughter? Your ingratitude, Charlotte, is horrible!" cries mamma. And poor Philip, charged with drunkenness, had dined for seventeen sous, with a carafon of beer, and had counted on a supper that night by little Charlotte's side. So, while the child lay sobbing on her bed, the mother stood over her, and lashed her. For General Baynes — a brave man, a kind-hearted man — to have to look on whilst this torture was inflicted, must have been a hard duty. He could not eat the boarding-house dinner, though he took his place at the table at the sound of the dismal bell. Madame herself was not present at the meal; and you know poor Charlotte's place was vacant. Her father went upstairs, and paused by her bedroom door, and listened. He heard murmurs within, and madame's voice, as he stumbled at the door, cried harshly, "Qui est là?" He entered. Madame was sitting on the bed, with Charlotte's head on her lap. The thick brown tresses were falling over the child's white nightdress, and she lay almost motionless, and sobbing feebly. "Ah, it is you, general!" said madame. "You have done a pretty work, sir!" "Mamma says, won't you take something, Charlotte, dear?" faltered the old man. "Will you leave her tranquil?" said madame, with her deep voice. The father retreated. When madame went out presently to get that panacea, une tasse de thé, for her poor little friend, she found the old gentleman seated on a portmanteau at his door. "Is she — is she a little better now?" he sobbed out. Madame shrugged her shoulders, and looked down on the veteran with superb scorn. "Vous n'êtes qu'un poltron, général!" she said, and swept downstairs. Baynes was beaten indeed. He was suffering horrible pain. He was quite unmanned, and tears were trickling down his old cheeks as he sate wretchedly there in the dark. His wife did not leave the table as long as dinner and dessert lasted. She read Galignani resolutely afterwards. She told the children not to make a noise, as their sister was upstairs with a bad headache. But she revoked that statement as it were (as she revoked at cards presently), by asking the Miss Bolderos to play one of their duets.

I wonder whether Philip walked up and down before the house that night? Ah! it was a dismal night for all of them: a racking pain, a cruel sense of shame, throbbed under Baynes's cotton tassel; and as for Mrs. Baynes, I hope there was not much rest or comfort under her old nightcap. Madame passed the greater part of the night in a great chair in Charlotte's bedroom, where the poor child heard the hours toll one after the other, and found no comfort in the dreary rising of the dawn.

At a very early hour of the dismal rainy morning, what made poor little Charlotte fling her arms round madame, and cry out, "Ah, que je vous aime! ah, que vous etes bonne, madame!" and smile almost happily through her tears? In the first place, madame went to Charlotte's dressing-table, whence she took a pair of scissors. Then the little maid sat up on her bed, with her brown hair clustering over her shoulders; and madame took a lock of it, and cut a thick curl; and kissed poor little Charlotte's red eyes; and laid her pale cheek on the pillow, and carefully covered her; and bade her, with many tender words, to go to sleep. "If you are very good, and will go to sleep, he shall have it in half an hour," madame said. "And as I go downstairs, I will tell Françoise to have some tea ready for you when you ring." And this promise, and the thought of what madame was going to do, comforted Charlotte in her misery. And with many fond, fond prayers for Philip, and consoled by thinking, "Now she must have gone the greater part of the way; now she must be with him; now he knows I will never, never love any but him," she fell asleep at length on her moistened pillow: and was smiling in her sleep, and I daresay dreaming of Philip, when the noise of the fall of a piece of furniture roused her, and she awoke out of her dream to see the grim old mother, in her white nightcap and white dressing-gown, standing by her side.

Never mind. "She has seen him now. She has told him now," was the child's very first thought as her eyes fairly opened. "He knows that I never, never will think of any but him." She felt as if she was actually there in Philip's room, speaking herself to him; murmuring vows which her fond lips had whispered many and many a time to her lover. And now he knew she would never break them, she was consoled and felt more courage.

"You have had some sleep, Charlotte?" asks Mrs. Baynes.

"Yes, I have been asleep, mamma." As she speaks, she feels under the pillow a little locket containing — what? I suppose a scrap of Mr. Philip's lank hair.

"I hope you are in a less wicked frame of mind than when I left you last night," continues the matron.

"Was I wicked for loving Philip? Then I am wicked still, mamma!" cries the child, sitting up in her bed. And she clutches that little lock of hair which nestles under her pillow.

"What nonsense, child! This is what you get out of your stupid novels. I tell you he does not think about you. He is quite a reckless, careless libertine."

"Yes, so reckless and careless that we owe him the bread we eat. He doesn't think of me! Doesn't he? Ah — " Here she paused as a clock in a neighbouring chamber began to strike. "Now," she thought, "he has got my message!" A smile dawned over her face. She sank back on her pillow, turning her head from her mother. She kissed the locket, and murmured: "Not think of me! Don't you, don't you, my dear!" She did not heed the woman by her side, hear her voice, or for a moment seem aware of her presence. Charlotte was away in Philip's room; she saw him talking with her messenger; heard his voice so deep, and so sweet; knew that the promises he had spoken he never would break. With gleaming eyes and flushing cheeks she looked at her mother, her enemy. She held her talisman locket and pressed it to her heart. No, she would never be untrue to him! No, he would never, never desert her! And as Mrs. Baynes looked at the honest indignation beaming in the child's face, she read Charlotte's revolt, defiance, perhaps victory. The meek child who never before had questioned an order, or formed a wish which she would not sacrifice at her mother's order, was now in arms asserting independence. But I should think mamma is not going to give up the command after a single act of revolt; and that she will try more attempts than one to cajole or coerce her rebel.

Meanwhile let Fancy leave the talisman locket nestling on Charlotte's little heart (in which soft shelter methinks it were pleasant to linger.) Let her wrap a shawl round her, and affix to her feet a pair of stout goloshes; let her walk rapidly through the muddy Champs Elysées, where, in this inclement season, only few a policemen and artisans are to be found moving. Let her pay a halfpenny at the Pont des Invalides, and so march stoutly along the quays, by the Chamber of Deputies, where as yet deputies assemble: and trudge along the river-side, until she reaches Seine Street, into which, as you all know, the Rue Poussin debouches. This was the road brave Madame Smolensk took on a gusty, rainy autumn morning, and on foot, for five-franc pieces were scarce with the good woman. Before the Hôtel Poussin (ah, qu'on y était bien à vingt ans!) is a little painted wicket which opens, ringing; and then there is the passage, you know, with the stair leading to the upper regions, to Monsieur Philippe's room, which is on the first floor, as is that of Bouchard, the painter, who has his atelier over the way. A bad painter is Bouchard, but a worthy friend, a cheery companion, a modest, amiable gentleman. And a rare good fellow is Laberge of the second floor, the poet from Carcassonne, who pretends to be studying law, but whose heart is with the Muses, and whose talk is of Victor Hugo and Alfred de Musset, whose verses he will repeat to all comers. Near Laberge (I think I have heard Philip say) lived Escasse, a Southern man too — a capitalist — a clerk in a bank, quoi! — whose apartment was decorated sumptuously with his own furniture, who had Spanish wine and sausages in cupboards, and a bag of dollars for a friend in need. Is Escasse alive still? Philip Firmin wonders, and that old colonel, who lived on the same floor, and who had been a prisoner in England? What wonderful descriptions that Colonel Dujarret had of les meess anglaises and their singularities of dress and behaviour! Though conquered and a prisoner, what a conqueror and enslaver he was, when in our country! You see, in his rough way, Philip used to imitate these people to his friends, and we almost fancied we could see the hotel before us. It was very clean; it was very cheap; it was very dark; it was very cheerful; — capital coffee and bread-and-butter for breakfast for fifteen sous; capital bedroom au premier for thirty francs a month; — dinner, if you would, for I forget how little; and a merry talk round the pipes and the grog afterwards — the grog, or the modest eau sucrée. Here Colonel Dujarret recorded his victories over both sexes. Here Colonel Tymowski sighed over his enslaved Poland. Tymowski was the second who was to act for Philip, in case the Ringwood Twysden affair should have come to any violent conclusion. Here Laberge bawled poetry to Philip, who no doubt in his turn confided to the young Frenchman his own hopes and passion. Deep into the night he would sit talking of his love, of her goodness, of her beauty, of her innocence, of her dreadful mother, of her good old father — que sçais-je? Have we not said that when this man had anything on his mind, straightway he bellowed forth his opinions to the universe? Philip, away from his love, would roar out her praises for hours and hours to Laberge, until the candles burned down, until the hour for rest was come and could be delayed no longer. Then he would hie to bed with a prayer for her; and the very instant he awoke begin to think of her, and bless her, and thank God for her love. Poor as Mr. Philip was, yet as the possessor of health, content, honour, and that priceless pure jewel the girl's love, I think we will not pity him much; though, on the night when he received his dismissal from Mrs. Baynes, he must have passed an awful time, to be sure. Toss, Philip, on your bed of pain,

and doubt, and fear. Toll, heavy hours, from night till dawn. Ah! 'twas a weary night through which two sad young hearts heard you tolling.

At a pretty early hour the various occupants of the crib at the Rue Poussin used to appear in the dingy little *salle-à-manger*, and partake of the breakfast there provided. Monsieur Menou, in his shirt-sleeves, shared and distributed the meal. Madame Menou, with a Madras handkerchief round her grizzling head, laid down the smoking coffee on the shining oil-cloth, whilst each guest helped himself out of a little museum of napkins to his own particular towel. The room was small: the breakfast was not fine: the guests who partook of it were certainly not remarkable for the luxury of clean linen; but Philip — who is many years older now than when he dwelt in this hotel, and is not pinched for money at all, you will be pleased to hear (and, between ourselves, has become rather a gourmand) — declares he was a very happy youth at this humble Hôtel Poussin, and sighs for the days when he was sighing for Miss Charlotte.

Well, he has passed a dreadful night of gloom and terror. I doubt that he has bored Laberge very much with his tears and despondency. And now morning has come, and, as he is having his breakfast with one or more of the before-named worthies, the little boy-of-all-work enters, grinning, his *plumet* under his arm, and cries “Une dame pour M. Philippe!”

“Une dame,” says the French colonel, looking up from his paper; “*allez, mauvais sujet!*”

“Grand Dieu! what has happened?” cries Philip, running forward, as he recognizes madame’s tall figure in the passage. They go up to his room, I suppose, regardless of the grins and sneers of the little boy with the *plumet*, who aids the maid servant to make the beds; and who thinks Monsieur Philippe has a very elderly acquaintance.

Philip closes the door upon his visitor, who looks at him with so much hope, kindness, confidence in her eyes, that the poor fellow is encouraged almost ere she begins to speak. “Yes, you have reason; I come from the little person,” Madame Smolensk said; “the means of resisting that poor dear angel! She has passed a sad night. What? You, too, have not been to bed, poor young man!” Indeed Philip had only thrown himself on his bed, and had kicked there, and had groaned there, and had tossed there; and had tried to read, and, I daresay, remembered afterwards, with a strange interest, the book he read, and that other thought which was throbbing in his brain all the time whilst he was reading, and whilst the wakeful hours went wearily tolling by.

“No, in effect,” says poor Philip, rolling a dismal cigarette; “the night has not been too fine. And she has suffered too? Heaven bless her!” And then Madame Smolensk told how the little dear angel had cried all the night long, and how the Smolensk had not succeeded in comforting her, until she promised she would go to Philip, and tell him that his Charlotte would be his for ever and ever; that she never could think of any man but him; that he was the best, and the dearest, and the bravest, and the truest Philip, and that she did not believe one word of those wicked stories told against him by — “Hold, Monsieur Philippe, I suppose Madame la Générale has been talking about you, and loves you no more,” cried Madame Smolensk. “We other women are assassins — assassins, see you! But Madame la Générale went too far with the little maid. She is an obedient little maid, the dear Miss! — trembling before her mother, and always ready to yield — only now her spirit is roused; and she is yours and yours only. The little dear, gentle child! Ah, how pretty she was, leaning on my shoulder. I held her there — yes, there, my poor *garçon*, and I cut this from her neck, and brought it to thee. Come, embrace me. Weep; that does good, Philip. I love thee well. Go — and thy little — It is an angel!” And so, in the hour of their pain, myriads of manly hearts have found woman’s love ready to soothe their anguish.

Leaving to Philip that thick curling lock of brown hair (from a head where now, mayhap, there is a line or two of matron silver), this Samaritan plods her way back to her own house, where her own cares await her. But though the way is long, madame’s step is lighter now, as she thinks how Charlotte at the journey’s end is waiting for news of Philip; and I suppose there are more kisses and embraces, when the good soul meets with the little suffering girl, and tells her how Philip will remain for ever true and faithful; and how true love must come to a happy ending; and how she Smolensk, will do all in her power to aid, comfort, and console her young friends. As for the writer of Mr. Philip’s memoirs, you see I never try to make any concealments. I have told you, all along, that Charlotte and Philip are married, and I believe they are happy. But it is certain that they suffered dreadfully at this time of their lives; and my wife says that Charlotte, it she alludes to the period and the trial, speaks as though they had both undergone some hideous operation, the remembrance of which for ever causes a pang to the memory. So, my young lady, will you have your trial one day, to be borne, pray heaven, with a meek spirit. Ah, how surely the turn comes to all of us! Look at Madame Smolensk at her luncheon-table, this day after her visit to Philip at his lodging, after comforting little Charlotte in her pain. How brisk she is! How goodnatured! How she smiles! How she speaks to all her company, and carves for her guests! You do not suppose she has

no griefs and cares of her own? You know better. I daresay she is thinking of her creditors; of her poverty: of that accepted bill which will come due next week, and so forth. The Samaritan who rescues you, most likely, has been robbed and has bled in his day; and it is a wounded arm that bandages yours when bleeding.

If Anatole, the boy who scoured the plain at the Hôtel Poussin, with his plumet in his jacket-pocket, and his slippers soled with scrubbing brushes, saw the embrace between Philip and his good friend, I believe, in his experience at that hotel, he never witnessed a transaction more honourable, generous, and blameless. Put what construction you will on the business, Anatole, you little imp of mischief! your mother never gave you a kiss more tender than that which Madame Smolensk bestowed on Philip — than that which she gave Philip? — than that which she carried back from him and faithfully placed on poor little Charlotte's pale round cheek. The world is full of love and pity, I say. Had there been less suffering, there would have been less kindness. I, for one, almost wish to be ill again, so that the friends who succoured me might once more come to my rescue.

To poor little wounded Charlotte in her bed, our friend the mistress of the boarding-house brought back inexpressible comfort. Whatever might betide, Philip would never desert her! "Think you I would ever have gone on such an embassy for a French girl, or interfered between her and her parents?" madame asked, "Never, never! But you and Monsieur Philippe are already betrothed before heaven; and I should despise you, Charlotte, I should despise him, were either to draw back." This little point being settled in Miss Charlotte's mind, I can fancy she is immensely soothed and comforted; that hope and courage settle in her heart; that the colour comes back to her young cheeks; that she can come and join her family as she did yesterday. "I told you she never cared about him," says Mrs. Baynes to her husband. "Faith, no: she can't have cared for him much," says Baynes, with something of a sorrow that his girl should be so lightminded. But you and I, who have been behind the scenes, who have peeped into Philip's bed-room, and behind poor Charlotte's modest curtains, know that the girl had revolted from her parents; and so children will if the authority exercised over them is too tyrannical or unjust. Gentle Charlotte, who scarce ever resisted, was aroused and in rebellion: honest Charlotte, who used to speak all her thoughts, now hid them, and deceived father and mother; yes, deceived:— what a confession to make regarding a young lady, the prima donna of our opera! Mrs. Baynes is, as usual, writing her lengthy scrawls to sister Mac Whirter at Tours, and informs the major's lady that she has very great satisfaction in at last being able to announce "that that most imprudent and in all respects ineligible engagement between her Charlotte and a certain young man, son of a bankrupt London physician, is come to an end. Mr. F.'s conduct has been so wild, so gross, so disorderly and ungentlemanlike, that the general (and you know, Maria, how soft and sweet a tempered man Baynes is) has told Mr. Firmin his opinion in unmistakable words, and forbidden him to continue his visits. After seeing him every day for six months, during which time she has accustomed herself to his peculiarities, and his often coarse and odious expressions and conduct, no wonder the separation has been a shock to dear Char, though I believe the young man feels nothing who has been the cause of all this grief. That he cares but little for her, has been my opinion all along, though she, artless child, gave him her whole affection. He has been accustomed to throw over women; and the brother of a young lady whom Mr. F. had courted and left (and who has made a most excellent match since,) showed his indignation at Mr. F.'s conduct at the embassy ball the other night, on which the young man took advantage of his greatly superior size and strength to begin a vulgar boxing-match, in which both parties were severely wounded. Of course you saw the paragraph in *Galvani* about the whole affair. I sent our dresses, but it did not print them, though our names appeared as amongst the company. Anything more singular than the appearance of Mr. F. you cannot well imagine. I wore my garnets; Charlotte (who attracted universal admiration) was in, Of course, the separation has occasioned her a good deal of pain; for Mr. F. certainly behaved with much kindness and forbearance on a previous occasion. But the general will not hear of the continuance of the connection. He says the young man's conduct has been too gross and shameful; and when once roused, you know, I might as well attempt to chain a tiger as Baynes. Our poor Char will suffer no doubt in consequence of the behaviour of this brute, but she has ever been an obedient child, who knows how to honour her father and mother. She bears up wonderfully, though, of course, the dear child suffers at the parting. I think if she were to go to you and Mac Whirter at Tours for a month or two, she would be all the better for change of air, too, dear Mac. Come and fetch her, and we will pay the dawk. She would go to certain poverty and wretchedness did she marry this most violent and disreputable young man. The general sends regards to Mac, and I am,"

That these were the actual words of Mrs. Baynes's letter I cannot, as a veracious biographer, take upon myself to say. I never saw the document, though I have had the good fortune to peruse others from the same hand. Charlotte saw the letter

some time after, upon one of those not unfrequent occasions, when a quarrel occurred between the two sisters — Mrs. Major and Mrs. General — and Charlotte mentioned the contents of the letter to a friend of mine who has talked to me about his affairs, and especially his love affairs, for many and many a long hour. And shrewd old woman as Mrs. Baynes may be, you may see how utterly she was mistaken in fancying that her daughter's obedience was still secure. The little maid had left father and mother, at first with their eager sanction; her love had been given to Firmin; and an inmate — a prisoner if you will — under her father's roof, her heart remained with Philip, however time or distance might separate them.

And now, as we have the command of Philip's desk, and are free to open and read the private letters which relate to his history, I take leave to put in a document which was penned in his place of exile by his worthy father, upon receiving the news of the quarrel described in the last chapter of these memoirs:—

“Astor House, New York, September 27.

“Dear Philip, — I received the news in your last kind and affectionate letter with not unmingled pleasure; but ah, what pleasure in life does not carry its amari aliquid along with it! That you are hearty, cheerful, and industrious, earning a small competence, I am pleased indeed to think: that you talk about being married to a penniless girl I can't say gives me a very sincere pleasure. With your good looks, good manners, attainments, you might have hoped for a better match than a half-pay officer's daughter. But 'tis useless speculating on what might have been. We are puppets in the hands of fate, most of us. We are carried along by a power stronger than ourselves. It has driven me, at sixty years of age, from competence, general respect, high position, to poverty and exile. So be it! laudo manentem, as my delightful old friend and philosopher teaches me — si celeres quatit pennas — you know the rest. Whatever our fortune may be, I hope that my Philip and his father will bear it with the courage of gentlemen.

“Our papers have announced the death of your poor mother's uncle, Lord Ringwood, and I had a fond lingering hope that he might have left some token of remembrance to his brother's grandson. He has not. You have probam pauperiem sine dote. You have courage, health, strength, and talent. I was in greater straits than you are at your age. My father was not as indulgent as yours, I hope and trust, has been. From debt and dependence I worked myself up to a proud position by my own efforts. That the storm overtook me and engulfed me afterwards, is true. But I am like the merchant of my favourite poet: I still hope — ay, at 63! — to mend my shattered ships, indocilis pauperiem pati. I still hope to pay back to my dear boy that fortune which ought to have been his, and which went down in my own shipwreck. Something tells me I must — I will!

“I agree with you that your escape from Agnes Twysden has been a piece of good fortune for you, and am much diverted by your account of her dusky innamorato! Between ourselves, the fondness of the Twysdens for money amounted to meanness. And though I always received Twysden in dear Old Parr Street, as I trust a gentleman should, his company was insufferably tedious to me, and his vulgar loquacity odious. His son also was little to my taste. Indeed I was heartily relieved when I found your connection with that family was over, knowing their rapacity about money, and that it was your fortune, not you, they were anxious to secure for Agnes.

“You will be glad to hear that I am in not inconsiderable practice already. My reputation as a physician had preceded me to this country. My work on Gout was favourably noticed here, and in Philadelphia, and in Boston, by the scientific journals of those great cities. People are more generous and compassionate towards misfortune here than in our cold-hearted island. I could mention several gentlemen of New York who have suffered shipwreck like myself, and are now prosperous and respected. I had the good fortune to be of considerable professional service to Colonel J. B. Fogle, of New York, on our voyage out; and the colonel, who is a leading personage here, has shown himself not at all ungrateful. Those who fancy that at New York people cannot appreciate and understand the manners of a gentleman, are not a little mistaken; and a man who, like myself, has lived with the best society in London, has, I flatter myself, not lived in that society quite in vain. The colonel is proprietor and editor of one of the most brilliant and influential journals of the city. You know that arms and the toga are often worn here by the same individual, and —

“I had actually written thus far when I read in the colonel's paper — the New York Emerald — an account of your battle with your cousin at the Embassy ball! Oh, you pugnacious Philip! Well, young Twysden was very vulgar, very rude and overbearing, and, I have no doubt, deserved the chastisement you gave him. By the way, the correspondent of the Emerald makes some droll blunders regarding you in his letter. We are all fair game for publicity in this country, where the press is free with a vengeance; and your private affairs, or mine, or the President's, or our gracious Queen's, for the matter of that,

are discussed with a freedom which certainly amounts to licence. The colonel's lady is passing the winter in Paris, where I should wish you to pay your respects to her. Her husband has been most kind to me. I am told that Mrs. F. lives in the very choicest French society, and the friendship of this family may be useful to you as to your affectionate father,

"G. B. F.

"Address as usual, until you hear further from me, as Dr. Brandon, New York. I wonder whether Lord Estridge has asked you after his old college friend? When he was Headbury and at Trinity, he and a certain pensioner whom men used to nickname Brummell Firmin were said to be the best dressed men in the university. Estridge has advanced to rank, to honours! You may rely on it, that he will have one of the very next vacant garters. What a different, what an unfortunate career, has been his quondam friend's! — an exile, an inhabitant of a small room in a great hotel, where I sit at a scrambling public table with all sorts of coarse people! The way in which they bolt their dinner, often with a knife, shocks me. Your remittance was most welcome, small as it was. It shows my Philip has a kind heart. Ah! why, why are you thinking of marriage, who are so poor? By the way, your encouraging account of your circumstances has induced me to draw upon you for 100 dollars. The bill will go to Europe by the packet which carries this letter, and has kindly been cashed for me by my friends, Messrs. Plaster and Shinman, of Wall Street, respected bankers of this city. Leave your card with Mrs. Fogle. Her husband himself may be useful to you and your ever attached

"Father."

We take the New York Emerald at Bays's, and in it I had read a very amusing account of our friend Philip, in an ingenious correspondence entitled "Letters from an Attaché," which appeared in that journal. I even copied the paragraph to show to my wife, and perhaps to forward to our friend.

"I promise you," wrote the attaché, "the new country did not disgrace the old at the British Embassy ball on Queen Vic's birthday. Colonel Z. B. Hoggins's lady, of Albany, and the peerless bride of Elijah J. Dibbs, of Twenty-ninth Street in your city, were the observed of all observers for splendour, for elegance, for refined native beauty. The Royal Dukes danced with nobody else; and at the attention of one of the Princes to the lovely Miss Dibbs, I observed his Royal Duchess looked as black as thunder. Supper handsome. Back Delmonico to beat it. Champagne so-so. By the way, the young fellow who writes here for the Pall Mall Gazette got too much of the champagne on board — as usual, I am told. The Honourable R. Twysden, of London, was rude to my young chap's partner, or winked at him offensively, or trod on his toe, or I don't know what — but young F. followed him into the garden; hit out at him; sent him flying, like a spread eagle into the midst of an illumination, and left him there sprawling. Wild, rampageous fellow this young F.; has already spent his own fortune, and ruined his poor old father, who has been forced to cross the water. Old Louis Philippe went away early. He talked long with our minister about his travels in our country. I was standing by, but in course ain't so ill-bred as to say what passed between them."

In this way history is written. I daresay about others besides Philip, in English papers as well as American, have fables been narrated.



CHAPTER 10

CONTAINS A TUG OF WAR.

Who was the first to spread the report that Philip was a prodigal, and had ruined his poor confiding father? I thought I knew a person who might be interested in getting under any shelter, and sacrificing even his own son for his own advantage. I thought I knew a man who had done as much already, and surely might do so again; but my wife flew into one of her tempests of indignation, when I hinted something of this, clutched her own children to her heart, according to her maternal wont, asked me was there any power would cause me to belie them? and sternly rebuked me for daring to be so wicked, heartless, and cynical. My dear creature, wrath is no answer. You call me heartless and cynic, for saying men are false and wicked. Have you never heard to what lengths some bankrupts will go? To appease the wolves who chase them in the winter forest, have you not read how some travellers will cast all their provisions out of the sledge? then, when all the provisions are gone, don't you know that they will fling out perhaps the sister, perhaps the mother, perhaps the baby, the little, dear, tender innocent? Don't you see him tumbling among the howling pack, and the wolves gnashing, gnawing, crashing, gobbling him up in the snow? Oh, horror — horror! My wife draws all the young ones to her breast as I utter these fiendish remarks. She hugs them in her embrace, and says, "For shame!" and that I am a monster, and so on. Go to! Go down on your knees, woman, and acknowledge the sinfulness of our humankind. How long had our race existed ere murder and violence began? and how old was the world ere brother slew brother?

Well, my wife and I came to a compromise. I might have my opinion, but was there any need to communicate it to poor Philip? No, surely. So I never sent him the extract from the New York Emerald; though, of course, some other good-natured friend did, and I don't think my magnanimous friend cared much. As for supposing that his own father, to cover his own character, would lie away his son's — such a piece of artifice was quite beyond Philip's comprehension, who has been all his life slow in appreciating roguery, or recognizing that there is meanness and double-dealing in the world. When he once comes to understand the fact; when he once comprehends that Tartuffe is a humbug and swelling Bufo is a toady; then my friend becomes as absurdly indignant and mistrustful as before he was admiring and confiding. Ah, Philip! Tartuffe has a number of good, respectable qualities; and Bufo, though an underground odious animal, may have a precious jewel in his head. 'Tis you are cynical. I see the good qualities in these rascals whom you spurn. I see. I shrug my shoulders. I smile: and you call me cynic. It was long before Philip could comprehend why Charlotte's mother turned upon him, and tried to force her daughter to forsake him. "I have offended the old woman in a hundred ways," he would say. "My tobacco annoys her; my old clothes offend her; the very English I speak is often Greek to her, and she can no more construe my sentences than I can the Hindostanee jargon she talks to her husband at dinner." "My dear fellow, if you had ten thousand a year she would try and construe your sentences, or accept them even if not understood," I would reply. And some men, whom you and I know to be mean, and to be false, and to be flatterers and parasites, and to be inexorably hard and cruel in their own private circles, will surely pull a long face to-morrow, and say, "Oh! the man's so cynical!"

I acquit Baynes of what ensued. I hold Mrs. B. to have been the criminal — the stupid criminal. The husband, like many other men extremely brave in active life, was at home timid and irresolute. Of two heads that lie side by side on the same pillow for thirty years, one must contain the stronger power, the more enduring resolution. Baynes, away from his wife, was shrewd, courageous, gay at times; when with her he was fascinated, torpid under the power of this baleful superior creature. "Ah, when we were subs together in camp in 1803, what a lively fellow Charley Baynes was!" his comrade, Colonel Bunch, would say. "That was before he ever saw his wife's yellow face; and what a slave she has made of him!"

After that fatal conversation which ensued after the ball, Philip did not come to dinner at madame's according to his custom. Mrs. Baynes told no family stories, and Colonel Bunch, who had no special liking for the young gentleman, did not trouble himself to make any inquiries about him. One, two, three days passed, and no Philip. At last the colonel says to the general, with a sly look at Charlotte, "Baynes, where is our young friend with the mustachios? We have not seen him these three days." And he gives an arch look at poor Charlotte. A burning blush flamed up in little Charlotte's pale face, as she looked at her parents and then at their old friend. "Mr. Firmin does not come, because papa and mamma have forbidden him," says Charlotte. "I suppose he only comes where he is welcome." And, having made this audacious speech, I suppose

the little maid tossed her little head up; and wondered, in the silence which ensued, whether all the company could hear her heart thumping.

Madame, from her central place, where she is carving, sees, from the looks of her guests, the indignant flushes on Charlotte's face, the confusion on her father's, the wrath on Mrs. Baynes's, that some dreadful words are passing; and in vain endeavours to turn the angry current of talk. "Un petit canard délicieux, goûtez-en, madame!" she cries. Honest Colonel Bunch sees the little maid with eyes flashing with anger, and trembling in every limb. The offered duck having failed to create a diversion, he, too, tries a feeble commonplace. "A little difference, my dear," he says in an under voice. "There will be such in the best regulated families. Canard sauvage tres bong, madame, avec — " but he is allowed to speak no more, for —

"What would you do, Colonel Bunch," little Charlotte breaks out with her poor little ringing, trembling voice — "that is, if you were a young man, if another young man struck you, and insulted you?" I say she utters this in such a clear voice, that Françoise, the femme-de-chambre, that Auguste, the footman, that all the guests hear, that all the knives and forks stop their clatter.

"Faith, my dear, I'd knock him down, if I could," says Bunch; and he catches hold of the little maid's sleeve, and would stop her speaking if he could.

"And that is what Philip did," cries Charlotte aloud; "and mamma has turned him out of the house — yes, out of the house, for acting like a man of honour!"

"Go to your room this instant, miss!" shrieks mamma. As for old Baynes, his stained old uniform is not more dingy-red than his wrinkled face and his throbbing temples. He blushes under his wig, no doubt, could we see beneath that ancient artifice.

"What is it? madame your mother dismisses you of my table? I will come with you, my dear Miss Charlotte!" says madame, with much dignity. "Serve the sugared plate, Auguste! My ladies, you will excuse me! I go to attend the dear miss, who seems to me ill." And she rises up, and she follows poor little blushing, burning, weeping Charlotte: and again, I have no doubt, takes her in her arms, and kisses, and cheers, and caresses her — at the threshold of the door — there by the staircase, among the cold dishes of the dinner, where Moira and MacGrigor had one moment before been marauding.

"Courage, ma fille, courage, mon enfant! Tenez! Behold something to console thee!" and madame takes out of her pocket a little letter, and gives it to the girl, who at sight of it kisses the superscription, and then in an anguish of love, and joy, and grief, falls on the neck of the kind woman, who consoles her in her misery. Whose writing is it Charlotte kisses? Can you guess by any means? Upon my word, Madame Smolensk, I never recommend ladies to take daughters to your boarding-house. And I like you so much, I would not tell of you, but you know the house is shut up this many a long day. Oh! the years slip away fugacious; and the grass has grown over graves; and many and many joys and sorrows have been born and have died since then for Charlotte and Philip: but that grief aches still in their bosoms at times; and that sorrow throbs at Charlotte's heart again whenever she looks at a little yellow letter in her trinket-box: and she says to her children, "Papa wrote that to me before we were married, my dears." There are scarcely half-a-dozen words in the little letter, I believe; and two of them are "for ever."

I could draw a ground-plan of madame's house in the Champs Elysées if I liked, for has not Philip shown me the place and described it to me many times? In front, and facing the road and garden, were madame's room and the salon; to the back was the salle-à-manger; and a stair ran up the house (where the dishes used to be laid during dinner-time, and where Moira and MacGrigor fingered the meats and puddings). Mrs. General Baynes's rooms were on the first floor, looking on the Champs Elysées, and into the garden-court of the house below. And on this day, as the dinner was necessarily short (owing to unhappy circumstances), and the gentlemen were left alone glumly drinking their wine or grog, and Mrs. Baynes had gone upstairs to her own apartment, had slapped her boys, and was looking out of window — was it not provoking that of all days in the world young Hely should ride up to the house on his capering mare, with his flower in his button-hole, with his little varnished toe-tips just touching his stirrups, and after performing various caracolades and gambadoes in the garden, kiss his yellow-kidded hand to Mrs. General Baynes at the window, hope Miss Baynes was quite well, and ask if he might come in and take a cup of tea? Charlotte, lying on madame's bed in the ground-floor room, heard Mr. Hely's sweet voice asking after her health, and the crunching of his horse's hoofs on the gravel, and she could even catch glimpses of that little form as the horse capered about in the court, though of course he could not see her where she was lying on the

bed with her letter in her hand. Mrs. Baynes at her window had to wag her withered head from the casement, to groan out, "My daughter is lying down, and has a bad headache, I am sorry to say," and then she must have had the mortification to see Hely caper off, after waving her a genteel adieu. The ladies in the front salon, who assembled after dinner, witnessed the transaction, and Mrs. Bunch, I daresay, had a grim pleasure at seeing Eliza Baynes's young spring of fashion, of whom Eliza was for ever bragging, come at last, and obliged to ride away, not bootless, certainly, for where were feet more beautifully chaussés? but after a bootless errand.

Meanwhile the gentlemen sate awhile in the dining-room, after the British custom which such veterans liked too well to give up. Other two gentlemen boarders went away, rather alarmed by that storm and outbreak in which Charlotte had quitted the dinner-table, and left the old soldiers together, to enjoy, according to their after-dinner custom, a sober glass of "something hot," as the saying is. In truth, madame's wine was of the poorest; but what better could you expect for the money?

Baynes was not eager to be alone with Bunch, and I have no doubt began to blush again when he found himself tête-à-tête with his old friend. But what was to be done? The general did not dare to go up-stairs to his own quarters, where poor Charlotte was probably crying, and her mother in one of her tantrums. Then in the salon there were the ladies of the boarding-house party, and there Mrs. Bunch would be sure to be at him. Indeed, since the Bayneses were launched in the great world, Mrs. Bunch was untiringly sarcastic in her remarks about lords, ladies, attachés, ambassadors, and fine people in general. So Baynes sate with his friend, in the falling evening, in much silence, dipping his old nose in the brandy-and-water.

Little square-faced, red-faced, whisker-dyed Colonel Bunch sate opposite his old companion, regarding him not without scorn. Bunch had a wife. Bunch had feelings. Do you suppose those feelings had not been worked upon by that wife in private colloquies? Do you suppose — when two old women have lived together in pretty much the same rank of life, — if one suddenly gets promotion, is carried off to higher spheres, and talks of her new friends, the countesses, duchesses, ambassadresses, as of course she will — do you suppose, I say, that the unsuccessful woman will be pleased at the successful woman's success? Your knowledge of your own heart, my dear lady, must tell you the truth in this matter. I don't want you to acknowledge that you are angry because your sister has been staying with the Duchess of Fitzbattleaxe, but you are, you know. You have made sneering remarks, to your husband on the subject, and such remarks, I have no doubt, were made by Mrs. Colonel Bunch to her husband, regarding her poor friend Mrs. General Baynes.

During this parenthesis we have left the general dipping his nose in the brandy-and-water. He can't keep it there for ever. He must come up for air presently. His face must come out of the drink, and sigh over the table.

"What's this business, Baynes?" says the colonel. "What's the matter with poor Charley?"

"Family affairs — differences will happen," says the general.

"I do hope and trust nothing has gone wrong with her and young Firmin, Baynes?"

The general does not like those fixed eyes staring at him under those bushy eyebrows, between those bushy, blackened whiskers.

"Well, then, yes, Bunch, something has gone wrong; and given me and — and Mrs. Baynes — a deuced deal of pain too. The young fellow has acted like a blackguard, brawling and fighting at an ambassador's ball, bringing us all to ridicule. He's not a gentleman; that's the long and short of it, Bunch; and so let's change the subject."

"Why, consider the provocation he had!" cries the other, disregarding entirely his friend's prayer. "I heard them talking about the business at Galignani's this very day. A fellow swears at Firmin; runs at him; brags that he has pitched him over; and is knocked down for his pains. By George! I think Firmin was quite right. Were any man to do as much to me or you, what should we do, even at our age?"

"We are military men. I said I didn't wish to talk about the subject, Bunch," says the general in rather a lofty manner.

"You mean that Tom Bunch has no need to put his oar in?"

"Precisely so," says the other, curtly.

"Mum's the word! Let us talk about the dukes and duchesses at the ball. That's more in your line, now," says the colonel, with rather a sneer.

"What do you mean by duchesses and dukes? What do you know about them, or what the deuce do I care?" asks the general.

"Oh, they are tabooed too! Hang it! there's no satisfying you," growls the colonel.

"Look here, Bunch," the general broke out; "I must speak, since you won't leave me alone. I am unhappy. You can see that well enough. For two or three nights past I have had no rest. This engagement of my child and Mr. Firmin can't come to any good. You see what he is — an overbearing, ill-conditioned, quarrelsome fellow. What chance has Charley of being happy with such a fellow?"

"I hold my tongue, Baynes. You told me not to put my oar in," growls the colonel.

"Oh, if that's the way you take it, Bunch, of course there's no need for me to go on any more," cries General Baynes. "If an old friend won't give an old friend advice, by George, or help him in a strait, or say a kind word when he's unhappy, I have done. I have known you for forty years, and I am mistaken in you — that's all."

"There's no contenting you. You say, Hold your tongue, and I shut my mouth. I hold my tongue, and you say, Why don't you speak? Why don't I? Because you won't like what I say, Charles Baynes: and so, what's the good of more talking?"

"Confound it!" cries Baynes, with a thump of his glass on the table, "but what do you say?"

"I say, then, as you will have it," cries the other, clenching his fists in his pockets — "I say you are wanting a pretext for breaking off this match, Baynes. I don't say it is a good one, mind; but your word is passed, and your honour engaged to a young fellow to whom you are under deep obligation."

"What obligation? Who has talked to you about my private affairs?" cries the general, reddening. "Has Philip Firmin been bragging about his —?"

"You have yourself, Baynes. When you arrived here, you told me over and over again what the young fellow had done: and you certainly thought he acted like a gentleman then. If you choose to break your word to him now — "

"Break my word! Great powers, do you know what you are saying, Bunch?"

"Yes, and what you are doing, Baynes."

"Doing? and what?"

"A damned shabby action; that's what you are doing, if you want to know. Don't tell me. Why, do you suppose Fanny — do you suppose everybody doesn't see what you are at? You think you can get a better match for the girl, and you and Eliza are going to throw the young fellow over: and the fellow who held his hand, and might have ruined you if he liked. I say it is a cowardly action!"

"Colonel Bunch, do you dare to use such a word to me?" calls out the general, starting to his feet.

"Dare be hanged! I say it's a shabby action!" roars the other, rising too.

"Hush! unless you wish to disturb the ladies! Of course you know what your expression means, Colonel Bunch?" and the general drops his voice and sinks back to his chair.

"I know what my words mean, and I stick to 'em, Baynes," growls the other; "which is more than you can say of yours."

"I am dee'd if any man alive shall use this language to me," says the general in the softest whisper, "without accounting to me for it."

"Did you ever find me backward, Baynes, at that kind of thing?" growls the colonel, with a face like a lobster and eyes starting from his head.

"Very good, sir. To-morrow, at your earliest convenience. I shall be at Galignani's from eleven till one. With a friend if possible. — What is it, my love? A game at whist? Well, no, thank you; I think I won't play cards to-night."

It was Mrs. Baynes who entered the room when the two gentlemen were quarrelling; and the bloodthirsty hypocrites instantly smoothed their ruffled brows and smiled on her with perfect courtesy.

"Whist — no! I was thinking should we send out to meet him. He has never been in Paris."

"Never been in Paris?" said the general, puzzled.

"He will be here to-night, you know. Madame has a room ready for him."

"The very thing, the very thing!" cries General Baynes, with great glee. And Mrs. Baynes, all unsuspecting of the quarrel between the old friends, proceeds to inform Colonel Bunch that Major MacWhirter was expected that evening. And then that tough old Colonel Bunch knew the cause of Baynes's delight. A second was provided for the general — the very thing Baynes wanted.

We have seen how Mrs. Baynes, after taking counsel with her general, had privately sent for MacWhirter. Her plan was that Charlotte's uncle should take her for a while to Tours, and make her hear reason. Then Charley's foolish passion for Philip would pass away. Then, if he dared to follow her so far, her aunt and uncle, two dragons of virtue and circumspection, would watch and guard her. Then, if Mrs. Hely was still of the same mind, she and her son might easily take the post to Tours, where, Philip being absent, young Walsingham might plead his passion. The best part of the plan, perhaps, was the separation of our young couple. Charlotte would recover. Mrs. Baynes was sure of that. The little girl had made no outbreak until that sudden insurrection at dinner which we have witnessed; and her mother, who had domineered over the child all her life, thought she was still in her power. She did not know that she had passed the bounds of authority, and that with her behaviour to Philip her child's allegiance had revolted.

Bunch then, from Baynes's look and expression, perfectly understood what his adversary meant, and that the general's second was found. His own he had in his eye — a tough little old army surgeon of Peninsular and Indian times, who lived hard by, who would aid as second and doctor too, if need were — and so kill two birds with one stone, as they say. The colonel would go forth that very instant and seek for Dr. Martin, and be hanged to Baynes, and a plague on the whole transaction and the folly of two old friends burning powder in such a quarrel. But he knew what a bloodthirsty little fellow that henpecked, silent Baynes was when roused; and as for himself — a fellow use that kind of language to me? By George, Tom Bunch was not going to baulk him!

Whose was that tall figure prowling about madame's house in the Champs Elysées when Colonel Bunch issued forth in quest of his friend; who has been watched by the police and mistaken for a suspicious character; who had been looking up at madame's windows now that the evening shades had fallen? Oh, you goose of a Philip! (for of course, my dears, you guess the spy was P. F. Esq.) you look up at the premier, and there is the Beloved in madame's room on the ground floor; — in yonder room, where a lamp is burning and casting a faint light across the bars of the jalousie. If Philip knew she was there, he would be transformed into a clematis, and climb up the bars of the window, and twine round them all night. But you see he thinks she is on the first floor; and the glances of his passionate eyes are taking aim at the wrong windows. And now Colonel Bunch comes forth in his stout strutting way, in his little military cape — quick march — and Philip is startled like a guilty thing surprised, and dodges behind a tree in the avenue.

The colonel departed on his murderous errand. Philip still continues to ogle the window of his heart (the wrong window), defiant of the policeman, who tells him to circuler. He has not watched here many minutes more, ere a hackney-coach drives up with portmanteaux on the roof and a lady and gentleman within.

You see Mrs. MacWhirter thought she as well as her husband might have a peep at Paris. As Mac's coachhire was paid, Mrs. Mac could afford a little outlay of money. And if they were to bring Charlotte back — Charlotte in grief and agitation, poor child — a matron, an aunt, would be a much fitter companion for her than a major, however gentle. So the pair of MacWhirters journeyed from Tours — a long journey it was before railways were invented — and after four-and-twenty hours of squeeze in the diligence, presented themselves at nightfall at Madame Smolensk's.

The Baynes' boys dashed into the garden at the sound of wheels. "Mamma — mamma! it's uncle Mac!" these innocents cried, as they ran to the railings. "Uncle Mac! what could bring him? Oh! they are going to send me to him! they are going to send me to him!" thought Charlotte, starting on her bed. And on this, I daresay, a certain locket was kissed more vehemently than ever.

"I say, Ma!" cries the ingenious Moira, jumping back to the house; "it's uncle Mac, and aunt Mac, too!"

"What?" cries mamma, with anything but pleasure in her voice; and then turning to the dining-room, where her husband still sate, she called out, "General! here's MacWhirter and Emily!"

Mrs. Baynes gave her sister a very grim kiss.

"Dearest Eliza, I thought it was such a good opportunity of coming, and that I might be so useful, you know!" pleads Emily.

"Thank you. How do you do, Mac Whirter?" says the grim générale.

"Glad to see you, Baynes, my boy!"

"How d'ye do, Emily? Boys, bring your uncle's traps. Didn't know Emily was coming, Mac. Hope there's room for her!" sighs the general, coming forth from his parlour.

The major was struck by the sad looks and pallor of his brother-in-law. "By George! Baynes, you look as yellow as a

guinea. How's Tom Bunch?"

"Come into this room along with me. Have some brandly-and-water, Mac. — Auguste! O de vie, O sho!" calls the general; and Auguste, who out of the new comer's six packages has daintily taken one very small mackintosh cushion, says, "Comment? encore du grog, général and, shrugging his shoulders, disappears to procure the refreshment at his leisure.

The sisters disappear to their embraces; the brothers-in-law retreat to the *salle-à-manger*, where General Baynes has been sitting, gloomy and lonely, for half an hour past, thinking of his quarrel with his old comrade, Bunch. He and Bunch have been chums for more than forty years. They have been in action together, and honourably mentioned in the same report. They have had a great regard for each other; and each knows the other is an obstinate old mule, and, in a quarrel, will die rather than give way. They have had a dispute out of which there is only one issue. Words have passed which no man, however old, by George! can brook from any friend, however intimate, by Jove! No wonder Baynes is grave. His family is large; his means are small. To-morrow he may be under fire of an old friend's pistol. In such an extremity he knows how each will behave. No wonder, I say, the general is solemn.

"What's in the wind now, Baynes?" asks the major, after a little drink and a long silence. "How is poor little Char?"

"Infernally ill — I mean behaved infernally ill," says the general, biting his lips.

"Bad business! Bad business! Poor little child!" cries the major.

"Insubordinate little devil!" says the pale general, grinding his teeth. "We'll see which shall be master!"

"What! you have had words?"

"At this table, this very day. She sat here and defied her mother and me, by George! and flung out of the room like a tragedy queen. She must be tamed, Mac, or my name's not Baynes."

Mac Whirter knew his relative of old, and that this quiet, submissive man, when angry, worked up to a white heat as it were. "Sad affair; hope you'll both come round, Baynes," sighs the major, trying bootless common-places; and seeing this last remark had no effect, he bethought him of recurring to their mutual friend. "How's Tom Bunch?" the major asked, cheerily.

At this question Baynes grinned in such a ghastly way that MacWhirter eyed him with wonder. "Colonel Bunch is very well," the general said, in dismal voice; "at least, he was, half an hour ago. He was sitting there;" and he pointed to an empty spoon lying in an empty beaker, whence the spirit and water had departed.

"What has been the matter, Baynes?" asked the major. "Has anything happened between you and Tom?"

"I mean that, half an hour ago, Colonel Bunch used words to me which I'll bear from no man alive: and you have arrived just in the nick of time, Mac Whirter, to take my message to him. Hush! here's the drink."

"Voici, Messieurs!" Auguste at length has brought up a second supply of brandy-and-water. The veterans mingled their jorums; and whilst his brother-in-law spoke, the alarmed MacWhirter sipped occasionally, *intentusque ora tenebat*.



CHAPTER 11

I CHARGE YOU, DROP YOUR DAGGERS!

General Baynes began the story which you and I have heard at length. He told it in his own way. He grew very angry with himself whilst defending himself. He had to abuse Philip very fiercely, in order to excuse his own act of treason. He had to show that his act was not his act; that, after all, he never had promised; and that, if he had promised, Philip's atrocious conduct ought to absolve him from any previous promise. I do not wonder that the general was abusive, and out of temper. Such a crime as he was committing can't be performed cheerfully by a man who is habitually gentle, generous, and honest. I do not say that men cannot cheat, cannot lie, cannot inflict torture, cannot commit rascally actions, without in the least losing their equanimity; but these are men habitually false, knavish, and cruel. They are accustomed to break their promises, to cheat their neighbours in bargains, and what not. A roguish word or action more or less is of little matter to them: their remorse only awakens after detection, and they don't begin to repent till they come sentenced out of the dock. But here was an ordinarily just man withdrawing from his promise, turning his back on his benefactor, and justifying himself to himself by maligning the man whom he injured. It is not an uncommon event, my dearly beloved brethren and esteemed miserable sister sinners; but you like to say a preacher is "cynical" who admits this sad truth — and, perhaps, don't care to hear about the subject on more than one day in the week.

So, in order to make out some sort of case for himself, our poor good old General Baynes chose to think and declare that Philip was so violent, ill-conditioned, and abandoned a fellow, that no faith ought to be kept with him; and that Colonel Bunch had behaved with such brutal insolence that Baynes must call him to account. As for the fact that there was another, a richer, and a much more eligible suitor, who was likely to offer for his daughter, Baynes did not happen to touch on this point at all; preferring to speak of Philip's hopeless poverty, disreputable conduct, and gross and careless behaviour.

Now MacWhirter, having, I suppose, little to do at Tours, had read Mrs. Baynes's letters to her sister Emily, and remembered them. Indeed, it was but very few months since Eliza Baynes's letters had been full of praise of Philip, of his love for Charlotte, and of his noble generosity in foregoing the great claim which he had upon the general, his mother's careless trustee. Philip was the first suitor Charlotte had had: in her first glow of pleasure, Charlotte's mother had covered yards of paper with compliments, interjections, and those scratches or dashes under her words, by which some ladies are accustomed to point their satire or emphasize their delight. He was an admirable young man — wild, but generous, handsome, noble! He had forgiven his father thousands and thousands of pounds which the doctor owed him — all his mother's fortune; and he had acted most nobly by her trustees — that she must say, though poor dear weak Baynes was one of them, Baynes who was as simple as a child! Major Mac and his wife had agreed that Philip's forbearance was very generous and kind, but after all that there was no special cause for rapture at the notion of their niece marrying a struggling young fellow without a penny in the world; and they had been not a little amused with the change of tone in Eliza's later letters, when she began to go out in the great world, and to look coldly upon poor, penniless Firmin, her hero of a few months since. Then Emily remembered how Eliza had always been fond of great people; how her head was turned by going to a few parties at Government House; how absurdly she went on with that little creature Fitzrickets (because he was an Honourable, forsooth) at Dumdum. Eliza was a good wife to Baynes; a good mother to the children; and made both ends of a narrow income meet with surprising dexterity; but Emily was bound to say of her sister Eliza, that a more, And when the news came at length that Philip was to be thrown overboard, Emily clapped her hands together, and said to her husband, "Now, Mac, didn't I always tell you so? If she could get a fashionable husband for Charlotte, I knew my sister would put the doctor's son to the door!" That the poor child would suffer considerably, her aunt was assured. Indeed, before her own union with Mac, Emily had undergone heartbreakings and pangs of separation on her own account. The poor child would want comfort and companionship. She would go to fetch her niece. And though the major said, "My dear, you want to go to Paris, and buy a new bonnet," Mrs. MacWhirter spurned the insinuation, and came to Paris from a mere sense of duty.

So Baynes poured out his history of wrongs to his brother-in-law, who marvelled to hear a man, ordinarily chary of words and cool of demeanour, so angry and so voluble. If he had done a bad action, at least, after doing it, Baynes had the

grace to be very much out of humour. If I ever, for my part, do anything wrong in my family, or to them, I accompany that action with a furious rage and blustering passion. I won't have wife or children question it. No querulous Nathan of a family friend (or an incommodious conscience, may be) shall come and lecture me about my ill-doings. No — no. Out of the house with him! Away, you preaching bugbear, don't try to frighten me! Baynes, I suspect, to browbeat, bully, and outtalk the Nathan pleading in his heart — Baynes will outbawl that prating monitor, and thrust that inconvenient preacher out of sight, out of hearing, drive him with angry words from our gate. Ah! in vain we expel him; and bid John say, not at home! There he is when we wake, sitting at our bed-foot. We throw him overboard for daring to put an oar in our boat. Whose ghastly head is that looking up from the water and swimming alongside us, row we never so swiftly? Fire at him. Brain him with an oar, one of you, and pull on! Flash goes the pistol. Surely that oar has stove the old skull in? See! there comes the awful companion popping up out of water again, and crying, "Remember, remember, I am here, I am here!" Baynes had thought to bully away one monitor by the threat of a pistol, and here was another swimming alongside of his boat. And would you have it otherwise, my dear reader, for you, for me? That you and I shall commit sins, in this, and ensuing years, is certain; but I hope — I hope they won't be past praying for. Here is Baynes, having just done a bad action, in a dreadfully wicked, murderous, and dissatisfied state of mind. His chafing, bleeding temper is one raw; his whole soul one rage, and wrath, and fever. Charles Baynes, thou old sinner, I pray that heaven may turn thee to a better state of mind. I will kneel down by thy side, scatter ashes on my own bald pate, and we will quaver out *Peccavimus* together.

"In one word, the young man's conduct has been so outrageous and disreputable that I can't, Mac, as a father of a family, consent to my girl's marrying. Out of a regard for her happiness, it is my duty to break off the engagement," cries the general, finishing the story.

"Has he formally released you from that trust business?" asked the major.

"Good heavens, Mac!" cries the general, turning very red. "You know I am as innocent of all wrong towards him as you are!"

"Innocent — only you did not look to your trust — "

"I think ill of him, sir. I think he is a wild, reckless, overbearing young fellow," calls out the general, very quickly, "who would make my child miserable; but I don't think he is such a blackguard as to come down on a retired elderly man with a poor family — a numerous family; a man who has bled and fought for his sovereign in the Peninsula, and in India, as the Army List will show you, by George. I don't think Firmin will be such a scoundrel as to come down on me, I say; and I must say, MacWhirter, I think it most unhandsome of you to allude to it — most unhandsome, by George!"

"Why, you are going to break off your bargain with him; why should he keep his compact with you?" asks the gruff major.

"Because," shouted the general, "it would be a sin and a shame that an old man with seven children, and broken health, who has served in every place — yes, in the West and East Indies, by George! — in Canada — in the Peninsula, and at New Orleans; — because he has been deceived and humbugged by a miserable scoundrel of a doctor into signing a sham paper, by George! should be ruined, and his poor children and wife driven to beggary, by Jove! as you seem to recommend young Firmin to do, Jack MacWhirter; and I'll tell you what, Major MacWhirter, I take it dee'd unfriendly of you; and I'll trouble you not to put your oar into my boat, and meddle with my affairs, that's all, and I'll know who's at the bottom of it, by Jove! It's the grey mare, Mac — it's your better half, MacWhirter — it's that confounded, meddling, sneaking, backbiting, domineering — "

"What next?" roared the major. "Ha, ha, ha! Do you think I don't know, Baynes, who has put you on doing what I have no hesitation in calling a most sneaking and rascally action — yes, a rascally action, by George! I am not going to mince matters! Don't come your Major-General or your Mrs. Major-General over me! It's Eliza that has set you on. And if Tom Bunch has been telling you that you have been breaking from your word, and are acting shabbily, Tom is right; and you may get somebody else to go out with you, General Baynes, for, by George, I won't!"

"Have you come all the way from Tours, Mac, in order to insult me?" asks the general.

"I came to do you a friendly turn; to take charge of your poor girl, upon whom you are being very hard, Baynes. And this is the reward I get! Thank you. No more grog! What I have had is rather too strong for me already." And the major looks down with an expression of scorn at the emptied beaker, the idle spoon before him.

As the warriors were quarrelling over their cups, there came to them a noise as of brawling and of female voices without. "Mais, madame!" pleads Madame Smolensk, in her grave way. "Taisez-vous, madame, laissez moi tranquille, s'il vous plait!" exclaims the well-known voice of Mrs. General Baynes, which I own was never very pleasant to me, either in anger or good-humour. "And your Little, — who tries to sleep in my chamber!" again pleads the mistress of the boarding-house. "Vous n'avez pas droit d'appeler Mademoiselle Baynes petite!" calls out the general's lady. And Baynes, who was fighting and quarrelling himself just now, trembled when he heard her. His angry face assumed an alarmed expression. He looked for means of escape. He appealed for protection to Mac Whirter, whose nose he had been ready to pull anon. Samson was a mighty man, but he was a fool in the hands of a woman. Hercules was a brave man and a strong, but Omphale twisted him round her spindle. Even so Baynes, who had fought in India, Spain, America, trembled before the partner of his bed and name.

It was an unlucky afternoon. Whilst the husbands had been quarrelling in the dining-room over brandy-and-water, the wives, the sisters, had been fighting over their tea in the salon. I don't know what the other boarders were about. Philip never told me. Perhaps they had left the room to give the sisters a free opportunity for embraces and confidential communication. Perhaps there were no lady boarders left. Howbeit, Emily and Eliza had tea; and before that refreshing meal was concluded, those dear women were fighting as hard as their husbands in the adjacent chamber.

Eliza, in the first place, was very angry at Emily's coming without invitation. Emily, on her part, was angry with Eliza for being angry. "I am sure, Eliza," said the spirited and injured MacWhirter, "that is the third time you have alluded to it since we have been here. Had you and all your family come to Tours, Mac and I would have made them welcome — children and all; and I am sure yours make trouble enough in a house."

"A private house is not like a boarding-house, Emily. Here Madame makes us pay frightfully for extras," remarks Mrs. Baynes.

"I am sorry I came, Eliza. Let us say no more about it. I can't go away to-night," says the other.

"And most unkind it is that speech to make, Emily. Any more tea?"

"Most unpleasant to have to make that speech, Eliza. To travel a whole day and night — and I never able to sleep in a diligence — to hasten to my sister because I thought she was in trouble, because I thought a sister might comfort her; and to be received as you — re — as you — oh, oh, oh — boh! How stoopid I am!" A handkerchief dries the tears: a smelling-bottle restores a little composure. "When you came to us at Dumdum, with two — o — o children in the whooping-cough, I am sure Mac and I gave you a very different welcome."

The other was smitten with a remorse. She remembered her sister's kindness in former days. "I did not mean, sister, to give you pain," she said. "But I am very unhappy myself, Emily. My child's conduct is making me most unhappy."

"And very good reason you have to be unhappy, Eliza, if woman ever had!" says the other.

"Oh, indeed, yes!" gasps the general's lady.

"If any woman ought to feel remorse, Eliza Baynes, I am sure it's you. Sleepless nights! What was mine in the diligence, compared to the nights you must have? I said so to myself. 'I am wretched,' I said, 'but what must she be?'"

"Of course, as a feeling mother, I feel that poor Charlotte is unhappy, my dear."

"But what makes her so, my dear?" cries Mrs. MacWhirter, who presently showed that she was mistress of the whole controversy. "No wonder Charlotte is unhappy, dear love! Can a girl be engaged to a young man, a most interesting young man, a clever, accomplished, highly educated young man — "

"What?" cries Mrs. Baynes.

"Haven't I your letters? I have them all in my desk. They are in that hall now. Didn't you tell me so over and over again; and rave about him, till I thought you were in love with him yourself almost?" cries Mrs. Mac.

"A most indecent observation!" cries out Eliza Baynes, in her deep, awful voice. "No woman, no sister, shall say that to me!"

"Shall I go and get the letters? It used to be, 'Dear Philip has just left us. Dear Philip has been more than a son to me. He is our preserver!' Didn't you write all that to me over and over again? And because you have found a richer husband for Charlotte, you are going to turn your preserver out of doors!"

"Emily MacWhirter, am I to sit here and be accused of crimes, uninvited, mind — uninvited, mind, by my sister? Is a

general officer's lady to be treated in this way by a brevet-major's wife? Though you are my senior in age, Emily, I am yours in rank. Out of any room in England, but this, I go before you! And if you have come uninvited all the way from Tours to insult me in my own house — ”

“House, indeed! pretty house! Everybody else's house as well as yours!”

“Such as it is, I never asked you to come into it, Emily!”

“Oh, yes! You wish me to go out in the night. Mac! I say!”

“Emily!” cries the generaless.

“Mac, I say!” screams the majoress, flinging open the door of the salon, “my sister wishes me to go. Do you hear me?”

“Au nom de Dieu, madame, pensez à cette pauvre petite, qui souffre à côté,” cries the mistress of the house, pointing to her own adjoining chamber, in which, we have said, our poor little Charlotte was lying.

“Nappley pas Madamaselle Baynes petite, sivoplay!” booms out Mrs. Baynes's contralto.

“MacWhirter, I say, Major MacWhirter!” cries Emily, flinging open the door of the dining-room where the two gentlemen were knocking their own heads together. “MacWhirter! My sister chooses to insult me, and say that a brevet-major's wife — ”

“By George! are you fighting, too?” asks the general.

“Baynes, Emily MacWhirter has insulted me!” cries Mrs. Baynes.

“It seems to have been a settled thing beforehand,” yells the general. “Major MacWhirter has done the same thing by me! He has forgotten that he is a gentleman, and that I am.”

“He only insults you because he thinks you are his relative, and must bear everything from him,” says the general's wife.

“By George! I will Not bear everything from him!” shouts the general.

The two gentlemen and their two wives are squabbling in the hall. Madame and the servants are peering up from the kitchen-regions. I daresay the boys from the topmost banisters are saying to each other, “Row between Ma and aunt Mac!” I daresay scared little Charlotte, in her temporary apartment, is, for awhile, almost forgetful of her own grief; and wondering what quarrel is agitating her aunt and mother, her father and uncle? Place the remaining male and female boarders about in the corridors and on the landings, in various attitudes expressive of interest, of satiric commentary, wrath at being disturbed by unseemly domestic quarrel:— in what posture you will. As for Mrs. Colonel Bunch, she, poor thing, does not know that the general and her own colonel have entered on a mortal quarrel. She imagines the dispute is only between Mrs. Baynes and her sister as yet; and she has known this pair quarrelling for a score of years past. “Toujours comme ç, fighting vous savez, et puis make it up again. Oui,” she explains to a French friend on the landing.

In the very midst of this storm Colonel Bunch returns, his friend and second, Dr. Martin, on his arm. He does not know that two battles have been fought since his own combat. His, we will say, was Ligny. Then came Quatre-Bras, in which Baynes and Mac Whirter were engaged. Then came the general action of Waterloo. And here enters Colonel Bunch, quite unconscious of the great engagements which have taken place since his temporary retreat in search of reinforcements.

“How are you, Mac Whirter?” cries the colonel of the purple whiskers. “My friend, Dr. Martin!” And as he addresses himself to the general, his eyes almost start out of his head, as if they would shoot themselves into the breast of that officer.

“My dear, hush! Emily Mac Whirter, had we not better defer this most painful dispute? The whole house is listening to us!” whispers the general, in a rapid low voice. “Doctor — Colonel Bunch — Major Mac Whirter, had we not better go into the diningroom?”

The general and the doctor go first, Major Mac Whirter and Colonel Bunch pause at the door. Says Bunch to Mac Whirter: “Major, you act as the general's friend in this affair? It's most awkward, but, by George! Baynes has said things to me that I won't bear, were he my own flesh and blood, by George! And I know him a deuced deal too well to think he will ever apologize!”

“He has said things to ME, Bunch, that I won't bear from fifty brother-in-laws, by George!” growls MacWhirter.

“What? Don't you bring me any message from him?”

“I tell you, Tom Bunch, I want to send a message to him. Invite me to his house, and insult me and Emily when we

come! By George, it makes my blood boil! Insult us after travelling twenty-four hours in a confounded diligence, and say we're not invited! He and his little catamaran."

"Hush!" interposed Bunch.

"I say catamaran, sir! don't tell me! They came and stayed with us four months at Dumdum — the children ill with the pip, or some confounded thing — went to Europe, and left me to pay the doctor's bill; and now, by —"

Was the major going to invoke George, the Cappadocian champion, or Olympian Jove? At this moment a door, by which they stood, opens. You may remember there were three doors, all on that landing; if you doubt me, go and see the house (Avenue de Marli, Champs Elysées, Paris). A third door opens, and a young lady comes out, looking very pale and sad, and her hair hanging over her shoulders; — her hair, which hung in rich clusters generally, but I suppose tears have put it all out of curl.

"Is it you, uncle Mac? I thought I knew your voice, and I heard aunt Emily's," says the little person.

"Yes, it is I, Charley," says uncle Mac. And he looks into the round face, which looks so wild and is so full of grief unutterable that uncle Mac is quite melted, and takes the child to his arms, and says, "What is it, my dear?" And he quite forgets that he proposes to blow her father's brains out in the morning. "How hot your little hands are!"

"Uncle, uncle!" she says, in a swift febrile whisper, "you're come to take me away, I know. I heard you and papa, I heard mamma and aunt Emily speaking quite loud! But if I go — I'll — I'll never love any but him!"

"But whom, dear?"

"But Philip, uncle."

"By George! Char, no more you shall!" says the major. And herewith the poor child, who had been sitting up on her bed whilst this quarrelling of sisters, — whilst this brawling of majors, generals, colonels, — whilst this coming of hackney-coaches, — whilst this arrival and departure of visitors on horseback, — had been taking place, gave a fine hysterical scream, and fell into her uncle's arms laughing and crying wildly.

This outcry, of course, brought the gentlemen from their adjacent room, and the ladies from theirs.

"What are you making a fool of yourself about?" growls Mrs. Baynes, in her deepest bark.

"By George, Eliza, you are too bad!" says the general quite white.

"Eliza, you are a brute!" cries Mrs. Mac Whirter,

"So She is!" shrieks Mrs. Bunch from the landing-place overhead, where other lady boarders were assembled looking down on this awful family battle.

Eliza Baynes knew she had gone too far. Poor Charley was scarce conscious by this time, and wildly screaming, "Never, never!" . . . When, as I live, who should burst into the premises but a young man with fair hair, with flaming whiskers, with flaming eyes, who calls out, "What is it? I am here, Charlotte, Charlotte!"

Who is that young man? We had a glimpse of him, prowling about the Champs Elysées just now, and dodging behind a tree when Colonel Bunch went out in search of his second. Then the young man saw the Mac Whirter hackney-coach approach the house. Then he waited and waited, looking to that upper window behind which we know his beloved was not reposing. Then he beheld Bunch and Doctor Martin arrive. Then he passed through the wicket into the garden, and heard Mrs. Mac and Mrs. Baynes fighting. Then there came from the passage — where, you see, this battle was going on — that ringing, dreadful laugh and scream of poor Charlotte: and Philip Firmin burst like a bombshell into the midst of the hall where the battle was raging, and of the family circle who were fighting and screaming.

Here is a picture, I protest. We have — first, the boarders on the first landing, whither, too, the Baynes children have crept in their night-gowns. Secondly, we have Auguste, Françoise, the cook, and the assistant coming up from the basement. And, third, we have Colonel Bunch, Doctor Martin, Major MacWhirter, with Charlotte in his arms; madame, General B., Mrs. Mac, Mrs. General B., all in the passage, when our friend the bombshell bursts in amongst them.

"What is it? Charlotte, I am here!" cries Philip, with his great voice; at hearing which, little Char gives one final scream, and, at the next moment, she has fainted quite dead — but this time she is on Philip's shoulder.

"You brute, how dare you do this?" asks Mrs. Baynes, glaring at the young man.

"It is you who have done it, Eliza!" says aunt Emily.

"And so she has, Mrs. MacWhirter!" calls out Mrs. Colonel Bunch, from the landing above.

And Charles Baynes felt he had acted like a traitor, and hung down his head. He had encouraged his daughter to give her heart away, and she had obeyed him. When he saw Philip I think he was glad: so was the major, though Firmin, to be sure, pushed him quite roughly up against the wall.

"Is this vulgar scandal to go on in the passage before the whole house?" gasped Mrs. Baynes.

"Bunch brought me here to prescribe for this young lady," says little Doctor Martin, in a very courtly way. "Madame, will you get a little *sal volatile* from Anjubeau's in the Faubourg; and let her be kept very quiet!"

"Come, Monsieur Philippe. It is enough like that," cries madame, who can't repress a smile. "Come to your chamber, dear little!"

"Madame!" cries Mrs. Baynes, "*une mère —*"

Madame shrugs her shoulders. "*Une mère, une belle mère, ma foi!*" she says. "Come, mademoiselle!"

There were only very few people in the boarding-house: if they knew, if they saw, what happened, how can we help ourselves? But that they had all been sitting over a powder magazine, which might have blown up and destroyed one, two, three, five people, even Philip did not know, until afterwards, when, laughing, Major MacWhirter told him how that meek but most savage Baynes had first challenged Bunch, had then challenged his brother-in-law, and how all sorts of battle, murder, sudden death might have ensued had the quarrel not come to an end.

Were your humble servant anxious to harrow his reader's feelings, or display his own graphical powers, you understand that I never would have allowed those two gallant officers to quarrel and threaten each other's very noses, without having the insult wiped out in blood. The Bois de Boulogne is hard by the Avenue de Marli, with plenty of cool fighting ground. The octroi officers never stop gentlemen going out at the neighbouring barrier upon duelling business, or prevent the return of the slain victim in the hackney-coach when the dreadful combat is over. From my knowledge of Mrs. Baynes's character, I have not the slightest doubt that she would have encouraged her husband to fight; and, the general down, would have put pistols into the hands of her boys, and bidden them carry on the vendetta; but as I do not, for my part, love to see brethren at war, or Moses and Aaron tugging white handfurs out of each other's beards, I am glad there is going to be no fight between the veterans, and that either's stout old breast is secure from the fratricidal bullet.

Major MacWhirter forgot all about bullets and battles when poor little Charlotte kissed him, and was not in the least jealous when he saw the little maiden clinging on Philip's arm. He was melted at the sight of that grief and innocence, when Mrs. Baynes still continued to bark out her private rage, and said: "If the general won't protect me from insult, I think I had better go."

"By Jove, I think you had!" exclaimed MacWhirter, to which remark the eyes of the doctor and Colonel Bunch gleamed an approval.

"Allons, Monsieur Philippe. Enough like that — let me take her to bed again," madame resumed. "Come, dear miss?"

What a pity that the bedroom was but a yard from where they stood! Philip felt strong enough to carry his little Charlotte to the Tuileries. The thick brown locks, which had fallen over his shoulders, are lifted away. The little wounded heart that had lain against his own, parts from him with a reviving throb. Madame and her mother carry away little Charlotte. The door of the neighbouring chamber closes on her. The sad little vision has disappeared. The men, quarrelling anon in the passage, stand there silent.

"I heard her voice outside," said Philip, after a little pause (with love, with grief, with excitement, I suppose his head was in a whirl). "I heard her voice outside, and I couldn't help coming in."

"By George, I should think not, young fellow!" says Major MacWhirter, stoutly shaking the young man by the hand.

"Hush, hush!" whispers the doctor; "she must be kept quite quiet. She has had quite excitement enough for to-night. There must be no more scenes, my young fellow."

And Philip says, when in this his agony of grief and doubt he found a friendly hand put out to him, he himself was so exceedingly moved that he was compelled to fly out of the company of the old men, into the night, where the rain was pouring — the gentle rain.

While Philip, without Madame Smolensk's premises, is saying his tenderest prayers, offering up his tears, heart-throbs, and most passionate vows of love for little Charlotte's benefit, the warriors assembled within once more retreat to a colloquy in the *salle à manger*; and, in consequence of the rainy state of the night, the astonished Auguste has to bring a

third supply of hotwater for the four gentlemen attending the congress. The colonel, the major, the doctor, ranged themselves on one side the table, defended, as it were, by a line of armed tumblers, flanked by a strong brandy-bottle and a stout earth-work from an embrasure in which scalding water could be discharged. Behind these fortifications the veterans awaited their enemy, who, after marching up and down the room for a while, takes position finally in their front and prepares to attack. The general remounts his cheval de bataille, but cannot bring the animal to charge as fiercely as before. Charlotte's white apparition has come amongst them, and flung her fair arms between the men of war. In vain Baynes tries to get up a bluster, and to enforce his passion with by Georges, by Joves, and words naughtier still. That weak, meek, quiet, henpecked, but most bloodthirsty old general, found himself forming his own minority, and against him his old comrade Bunch, whom he had insulted and nose-pulled; his brother-in-law MacWhirter, whom he had nose-pulled and insulted; and the doctor, who had been called in as the friend of the former. As they faced him, shoulder to shoulder, each of those three acquired fresh courage from his neighbour. Each, taking his aim deliberately, poured his fire into Baynes. To yield to such odds, on the other hand, was not so distasteful to the veteran, as to have to give up his sword to any single adversary. Before he would own himself in the wrong to any individual, he would eat that individual's ears and nose: but to be surrounded by three enemies, and strike your flag before such odds, was no disgrace; and Baynes could take the circumbendibus way of apology to which some proud spirits will submit. Thus he could say to the doctor, "Well, doctor, perhaps I was hasty in accusing Bunch of employing bad language to me. A bystander can see these things sometimes when a principal is too angry; and as you go against me — well — there, then, I ask Bunch's pardon." That business over, the MacWhirter reconciliation was very speedily brought about. Fact was, was in a confounded ill-temper — very much disturbed by events of the day — didn't mean anything but this, that, and so forth. If this old chief had to eat humble pie, his brave adversaries were anxious that he should gobble up his portion as quickly as possible, and turned away their honest old heads as he swallowed it. One of the party told his wife of the quarrel which had arisen, but Baynes never did. "I declare, sir," Philip used to say, "had she known anything about the quarrel that night, Mrs. Baynes would have made her husband turn out of bed at midnight, and challenge his old friends over again!" But then there was no love between Philip and Mrs. Baynes, and in those whom he hates he is accustomed to see little good.

Thus, any gentle reader who expected to be treated to an account of the breakage of the sixth commandment will close this chapter disappointed. Those stout old rusty swords which were fetched off their hooks by the warriors, their owners, were returned undrawn to their flannel cases. Hands were shaken after a fashion — at least no blood was shed. But, though the words spoken between the old boys were civil enough, Bunch, Baynes, and the doctor could not alter their opinion that Philip had been hardly used, and that the benefactor of his family merited a better treatment from General Baynes.

Meanwhile, that benefactor strode home through the rain in a state of perfect rapture. The rain refreshed him, as did his own tears. The dearest little maiden had sunk for a moment on his heart, and, as she lay there, a thrill of hope vibrated through his whole frame. Her father's old friends had held out a hand to him, and bid him not despair. Blow wind, fall autumn rains! In the midnight, under the gusty trees, amidst which the lamps of the réverbères are tossing, the young fellow strides back to his lodgings. He is poor and unhappy, but he has Hope along with him. He looks at a certain breast-button of his old coat ere he takes it off to sleep. "Her cheek was lying there," he thinks, "just there." My poor little Charlotte! what could she have done to the breast-button of the old coat?



CHAPTER 12

IN WHICH MRS. MACWHIRTER HAS A NEW BONNET.

Now though the unhappy Philip slept quite soundly, so that his boots, those tramp-worn sentries, remained en faction at his door until quite a late hour next morning; and though little Charlotte, after a prayer or two, sank into the sweetest and most refreshing girlish slumber, Charlotte's father and mother had a bad night; and, for my part, I maintain that they did not deserve a good one. It was very well for Mrs. Baynes to declare that it was MacWhirter's snoring which kept them awake (Mr. and Mrs. Mac being lodged in the bed-room over their relatives) — I don't say a snoring neighbour is pleasant — but what a bedfellow is a bad conscience! Under Mrs. Baynes's night-cap the grim eyes lie open all night; on Baynes's pillow is a silent, wakeful head that hears the hours toll. A plague upon the young man! (thinks the female bonnet de nuit); how dare he come in and disturb everything? How pale Charlotte will look to-morrow when Mrs. Hely calls with her son! When she has been crying she looks hideous, and her eyelids and nose are quite red. She may fly out, and say something wicked and absurd, as she did to-day. I wish I had never seen that insolent young man, with his carrotty beard, and vulgar blucher boots! If my boys were grown up, he should not come hectoring about the house as he does; they would soon find a way of punishing his impudence! Baulked revenge and a hungry disappointment, I think, are keeping that old woman awake; and, if she hears the hours tolling, it is because wicked thoughts make her sleepless.

As for Baynes, I believe that old man is awake, because he is awake to the shabbiness of his own conduct. His conscience has got the better of him, which he has been trying to bully out of doors. Do what he will, that reflection forces itself upon him. Mac, Bunch, and the doctor all saw the thing at once, and went dead against him. He wanted to break his word to a young fellow, who, whatever his faults might be, had acted most nobly and generously by the Baynes family. He might have been ruined but for Philip's forbearance; and showed his gratitude by breaking his promise to the young fellow. He was a henpecked man — that was the fact. He allowed his wife to govern him: that little old plain, cantankerous woman asleep yonder. Asleep. Was she? No. He knew she wasn't. Both were lying quite still, wide awake, pursuing their dismal thoughts. Only Charles was owning that he was a sinner, whilst Eliza, his wife, in a rage at her last defeat, was meditating how she could continue and still win her battle.

Then Baynes reflects how persevering his wife is; how, all through life, she has come back and back and back to her point, until he has ended by an almost utter subjugation. He will resist for a day: she will fight for a year, for a life. If once she hates people, the sentiment always remains with her fresh and lively. Her jealousy never dies; nor her desire to rule. What a life she will lead poor Charlotte now she has declared against Philip! The poor child will be subject to a dreadful tyranny: the father knows it. As soon as he leaves the house on his daily walks, the girl's torture will begin. Baynes knows how his wife can torture a woman. As she groans out a hollow cough from her bed in the midnight, the guilty man lies quite mum under his own counterpane. If she fancies him awake, it will be his turn to receive the torture. Ah, Othello, mon ami! when you look round at married life, and know what you know, don't you wonder that the bolster is not used a great deal more freely on both sides? Horrible cynicism! Yes — I know. These propositions served raw are savage, and shock your sensibility; cooked with a little piquant sauce, they are welcome at quite polite tables.

"Poor child! Yes, by George! What a life her mother will lead her!" thinks the general, rolling uneasy on the midnight pillow. "No rest for her, day or night, until she marries the man of her mother's choosing. And she has a delicate chest — Martin says she has; and she wants coaxing and soothing, and pretty coaxing she will have from mamma!" Then, I daresay, the past rises up in that wakeful old man's uncomfortable memory. His little Charlotte is a child again, laughing on his knee, and playing with his accoutrements as he comes home from parade. He remembers the fever which she had, when she would take medicine from no other hand; and how, though silent with her mother, with him she would never tire of prattling, prattling. Guilt-stricken old man! are those tears trickling down thy old nose? It is midnight. We cannot see. When you brought her to the river, and parted with her to send her to Europe, how the little maid clung to you, and cried, "Papa, papa!" Staggering up the steps of the ghaut, how you wept yourself — yes, wept tears of passionate, tender grief at parting with the darling of your soul. And now, deliberately, and for the sake of money, you stab her to the heart, and break your plighted honour to your child. "And it is yonder cruel, shrivelled, bilious, plain old woman who makes me do all this, and trample on my darling, and torture her!" he thinks. In Zoffany's famous picture of Garrick and Mrs. Pritchard as

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, Macbeth stands in an attitude hideously contorted and constrained, while Lady Mac is firm and easy. Was this the actor's art, or the poet's device? Baynes is wretched, then. He is wrung with remorse, and shame, and pity. Well, I am glad of it. Old man, old man! how darest thou to cause that child's tender little bosom to bleed? How bilious he looks the next morning! I declare as yellow as his grim old wife. When Mrs. General B. hears the children their lessons, how she will scold them! It is my belief she will bark through the morning chapter, and scarce understand a word of its meaning. As for Charlotte, when she appears with red eyes, and ever so little colour in her round cheek, there is that in her look and demeanour which warns her mother to refrain from too familiar abuse or scolding. The girl is in rebellion. All day Char was in a feverish state, her eyes flashing war. There was a song which Philip loved in those days: the song of Ruth. Char sate down to the piano, and sang it with a strange energy. "Thy people shall be my people" — she sang with all her heart — "and thy God my God!" The slave had risen. The little heart was in arms and mutiny. The mother was scared by her defiance.

As for the guilty old father: pursued by the fiend remorse, he fled early from his house, and read all the papers at Galignani's without comprehending them. Madly regardless of expense, he then plunged into one of those luxurious restaurants in the Palais Royal, where you get soup, three dishes, a sweet, and a pint of delicious wine for two frongs, by George! But all the luxuries there presented to him could not drive away care, or create appetite. Then the poor old wretch went off, and saw a ballet at the Grand Opera. In vain. The pink nymphs had not the slightest fascination for him. He hardly was aware of their ogles, bounds, and capers. He saw a little maid with round, sad eyes; — his Iphigenia whom he was stabbing. He took more brandy-and-water at cafés on his way home. In vain, in vain, I tell you! The old wife was sitting up — for him, scared at the unusual absence of her lord. She dared not remonstrate with him when he returned. His face was pale. His eyes were fierce and bloodshot. When the general had a particular look, Eliza Baynes cowered in silence. Mac, the two sisters, and, I think, Colonel Bunch (but on this point my informant, Philip, cannot be sure) were having a dreary rubber when the general came in. Mrs. B. knew by the general's face that he had been having recourse to alcoholic stimulus. But she dared not speak. A tiger in a jungle was not more savage than Baynes sometimes. "Where's Char?" he asked in his dreadful, his Bluebeard voice. "Char was gone to bed," said mamma, sorting her trumps. "Hm! Augoost, Odevee, Osho!" Did Eliza Baynes interfere, though she knew he had had enough? As soon interfere with a tiger, and tell him he had eaten enough sepoy. After Lady Macbeth had induced Mac to go through that business with Duncan, depend upon it she was very deferential and respectful to her general. No groans, prayers, remorse could avail to bring his late majesty back to life again. As for you, old man, though your deed is done, it is not past recalling. Though you have withdrawn from your word on a sordid money pretext; made two hearts miserable; stabbed cruelly that one which you love best in the world; acted with wicked ingratitude towards a young man, who has been nobly forgiving towards you and yours; and are suffering with rage and remorse, as you own your crime to yourself; — your deed is not past recalling as yet. You may soothe that anguish, and dry those tears. It is but an act of resolution on your part, and a firm resumption of your marital authority. Mrs. Baynes, after her crime, is quite humble and gentle. She has half murdered her child, and stretched Philip on an infernal rack of torture; but she is quite civil to everybody at madame's house. Not one word does she say respecting Mrs. Colonel Bunch's outbreak of the night before. She talks to sister Emily about Paris, the fashions, and Emily's walks on the Boulevard and the Palais Royal with her major. She bestows ghastly smiles upon sundry lodgers at table. She thanks Augoost when he serves her at dinner, and says, "Ah, madame, que le boof est bong aujourd'hui, rien que j'aime comme le potofou." Oh, you old hypocrite! But you know I, for my part, always disliked the woman, and said her good humour was more detestable than her anger. You hypocrite! I say again; ay, and avow that there were other hypocrites at the table, as you shall presently hear.

When Baynes got an opportunity of speaking unobserved, as he thought, to madame, you may be sure the guilty wretch asked her how his little Charlotte was. Mrs. Baynes trumped her partner's best heart at that moment, but pretended to observe or overhear nothing. "She goes better — she sleeps," madame said. "Mr. the Doctor Martin has commanded her a calming potion." And what if I were to tell you that somebody had taken a little letter from Charlotte, and actually had given fifteen sous to a Savoyard youth to convey that letter to somebody else? What if I were to tell you that the party to whom that letter was addressed, straightway wrote an answer — directed to Madame de Smolensk, of course? I know it was very wrong; but I suspect Philip's prescription did quite as much good as Dr. Martin's, and don't intend to be very angry with madame for consulting the unlicensed practitioner. Don't preach to me, madam, about morality, and dangerous examples set to young people. Even at your present mature age, and with your dear daughters around you, if your ladyship

goes to hear the Barber of Seville, on which side are your sympathies — on Dr. Bartolo's, or Miss Rosina's?

Although, then, Mrs. Baynes was most respectful to her husband, and by many grim blandishments, humble appeals, and forced humiliations, strove to conciliate and soothe him, the general turned a dark, lowering face upon the partner of his existence: her dismal smiles were no longer pleasing to him: he returned curt "Oh's!" and "Ah's!" to her remarks. When Mrs. Hely and her son and her daughter drove up in their family coach to pay yet a second visit to the Baynes' family, the general flew in a passion and cried, "Bless my soul, Eliza, you can't think of receiving visitors, with our poor child sick in the next room? It's inhuman!" The scared woman ventured on no remonstrances. She was so frightened that she did not attempt to scold the younger children. She took a piece of work, and sat amongst them, furtively weeping. Their artless queries and unseasonable laughter stabbed and punished the matron. You see people do wrong, though they are long past fifty years of age. It is not only the scholars, but the ushers, and the head-master himself, who sometimes deserve a chastisement. I, for my part, hope to remember this sweet truth, though I live into the year 1900.

To those other ladies boarding at madame's establishment, to Mrs. Mac and Mrs. Colonel Bunch, though they had declared against him, and expressed their opinions in the frankest way on the night of the battle royal, the general was provokingly polite and amiable. They had said, but twenty-four hours since, that the general was a brute; and Lord Chesterfield could not have been more polite to a lovely young duchess than was Baynes to these matrons next day. You have heard how Mrs. Mac had a strong desire to possess a new Paris bonnet, so that she might appear with proper lustre among the ladies on the promenade at Tours? Major and Mrs. Mac and Mrs. Bunch talked of going to the Palais Royal (where MacWhirter said he had remarked some uncommonly neat things, by George! at the corner shop under the glass gallery). On this, Baynes started up, and said he would accompany his friends, adding, "You know, Emily, I promised you a hat ever so long ago!" And those four went away together, and not one offer did Baynes make to his wife to join the party; though her best bonnet, poor thing, was a dreadfully old performance, with moulting feathers, rumpled ribbons, tarnished flowers, and lace bought in St. Martin's Alley months and months before. Emily, to be sure, said to her sister, "Eliza, won't you be of the party? We can take the omnibus at the corner, which will land us at the very gate." But as Emily gave this unlucky invitation, the general's face wore an expression of ill-will so savage and terrific, that Eliza Baynes said, "No, thank you, Emily; Charlotte is still unwell, and I— I may be wanted at home." And the party went away without Mrs. Baynes; and they were absent I don't know how long; and Emily MacWhirter came back to the boarding-house in a bonnet — the sweetest thing you ever saw! — green piqué velvet, with a ruche full of rosebuds, and a bird of paradise perched on the top, pecking at a bunch of the most magnificent grapes, poppies, ears of corn, barley, all indicative of the bounteous autumn season. Mrs. General Baynes had to see her sister return home in this elegant bonnet; to welcome her; to acquiesce in Emily's remark that the general had done the genteel thing; to hear how the party had further been to Tortoni's, and had ices; and then to go upstairs to her own room, and look at her own battered, blowsy old chapeau, with its limp streamers, hanging from its peg. This humiliation, I say, Eliza Baynes had to bear in silence, without wincing, and, if possible, with a smile on her face.

In consequence of circumstances before indicated, Miss Charlotte was pronounced to be very much better when her papa returned from his Palais Royal trip. He found her seated on madame's sofa, pale, but with the wonted sweetness in her smile. He kissed and caressed her with many tender words. I daresay he told her there was nothing in the world he loved so much as his Charlotte. He would never willingly do anything to give her pain, never! She had been his good girl, and his blessing, all his life! Ah! that is a prettier little picture to imagine — that repentant man, and his child clinging to him — than the tableau overhead, viz. Mrs. Baynes looking at her old bonnet. Not one word was said about Philip in the talk between Baynes and his daughter, but those tender paternal looks and caresses carried hope into Charlotte's heart; and when her papa went away (she said afterwards to a female friend), "I got up and followed him, intending to show him Philip's letter. But at the door I saw mamma coming down the stairs; and she looked so dreadful, and frightened me so, that I went back." There are some mothers I have heard of, who won't allow their daughters to read the works of this humble homilist, lest they should imbibe "dangerous" notions, My good ladies, give them Goody Twoshoes if you like, or whatever work, combining instruction and amusement, you think most appropriate to their juvenile understandings; but I beseech you to be gentle with them. I never saw people on better terms with each other, more frank, affectionate, and cordial, than the parents and the grown-up young folks in the United States. And why? Because the children were spoiled, to be sure! I say to you, get the confidence of yours — before the day comes of revolt and independence, after which love returneth not.

Now, when Mrs. Baynes went in to her daughter, who had been sitting pretty comfortably kissing her father, on the sofa in madame's chamber, all those soft tremulous smiles, and twinkling dew-drops of compassion and forgiveness which anon had come to soothe the little maid, fled from cheek and eyes. They began to flash again with their febrile brightness, and her heart to throb with dangerous rapidity. "How are you now?" asks mamma, with her deep voice. "I am much the same," says the girl, beginning to tremble. "Leave the child; you agitate her, madam," cries the mistress of the house, coming in after Mrs. Baynes. That sad, humiliated, deserted mother goes out from her daughter's presence, hanging her head. She put on the poor old bonnet, and had a walk that evening on the Champs Elysées with her little ones, and showed them Guignol. She gave a penny to Guignol's man. It is my belief that she saw no more of the performance than her husband had seen of the ballet the night previous, when Taglioni, and Noblet, and Duvernay, danced before his hot eyes. But then, you see, the hot eyes had been washed with a refreshing water since, which enabled them to view the world much more cheerfully and brightly. Ah, gracious heaven, give us eyes to see our own wrong, however dim age may make them; and knees not too stiff to kneel, in spite of years, cramps, and rheumatism! That stricken old woman, then, treated her children to the trivial comedy of Guignol. She did not cry out when the two boys climbed up the trees of the Elysian Fields, though the guardians bade them descend. She bought pink sticks of barley-sugar for the young ones. Withdrawing the glistening sweetmeats from their lips, they pointed to Mrs. Hely's splendid barouche as it rolled citywards from the Bois de Boulogne. The grey shades were falling, and Auguste was in the act of ringing the first dinner bell at Madame Smolensk's establishment, when Mrs. General Baynes returned to her lodgings.

Meanwhile, aunt MacWhirter had been to pay a visit to little Miss Charlotte, in the new bonnet which the general, Charlotte's papa, had bought for her. This elegant article had furnished a subject of pleasing conversation between niece and aunt, who held each other in very kindly regard, and all the details of the bonnet, the blue flowers, scarlet flowers, grapes, sheaves of corn, lace, were examined and admired in detail. Charlotte remembered the dowdy old English thing which aunt Mac wore when she went out? Charlotte did remember the bonnet, and laughed when Mrs. Mac described how papa, in the hackney coach on their return home, insisted upon taking the old wretch of a bonnet, and flinging it out of the coach window into the road, where an old chiffonnier passing picked it up with his iron hook, put it on his own head, and walked away grinning. I declare, at the recital of this narrative, Charlotte laughed as pleasantly and happily as in former days; and, no doubt, there were more kisses between this poor little maid and her aunt.

Now, you will remark, that the general and his party, though they returned from the Palais Royal in a hackney coach, went thither on foot, two and two — viz. Major MacWhirter leading, and giving his arm to Mrs. Bunch (who, I promise you, knew the shops in the Palais Royal well), and the general following at some distance, with his sister-in-law for a partner.

In that walk a conversation very important to Charlotte's interests took place between her aunt and her father.

"Ah, Baynes! this is a sad business about dearest Char," Mrs. Mac broke out with a sigh.

"It is indeed, Emily," says the general, with a very sad groan on his part.

"It goes to my heart to see you, Baynes; it goes to Mac's heart. We talked about it ever so late last night. You were suffering dreadfully; and all the brandypawnee in the world won't cure you, Charles."

"No, faith," says the general, with a dismal screw of the mouth. "You see, Emily, to see that child suffer tears my heart out — by George, it does. She has been the best child, and the most gentle, and the merriest, and the most obedient, and I never had a word of fault to find with her; and — poo-ooh!" Here the general's eyes, which have been winking with extreme rapidity, give way; and at the signal pooh! there issue out from them two streams of that eye-water which we have said is sometimes so good for the sight.

"My dear kind Charles, you were always a good creature," says Emily, patting the arm on which hers rests. Meanwhile Major-General Baynes, C.B., puts his bamboo cane under his disengaged arm, extracts from his hind pocket a fine large yellow bandana pocket-handkerchief, and performs a prodigious loud obligato — just under the spray of the Rond-point fountain, opposite the Bridge of the Invalides, over which poor Philip has tramped many and many a day and night to see his little maid.

"Have a care with your cane, then, old imbecile!" cries an approaching foot-passenger, whom the general meets and charges with his iron ferule.

"Mille pardong, mosoo, je vous demande mille pardong," says the old man, quite meekly.

"You are a good soul, Charles," the lady continues; "and my little Char is a darling. You never would have done this of

your own accord. Mercy! And see what it was coming to: Mac only told me last night. You horrid, blood-thirsty creature! Two challenges — and dearest Mac as hot as pepper! Oh, Charles Baynes, I tremble when I think of the danger from which you have all been rescued! Suppose you brought home to Eliza — suppose dearest Mac brought home to me killed by this arm on which I am leaning. Oh, it is dreadful, dreadful! We are sinners all, that we are, Baynes!”

“I humbly ask pardon for having thought of a great crime. I ask pardon,” says the general, very pale and solemn.

“If you had killed dear Mac, would you ever have had rest again, Charles?”

“No; I think not. I should not deserve it,” answers the contrite Baynes.

“You have a good heart. It was not you who did this. I know who it was. She always had a dreadful temper. The way in which she used to torture our poor dear Louisa who is dead, I can hardly forgive now, Baynes. Poor suffering angel! Eliza was at her bed-side nagging and torturing her up to the very last day. Did you ever see her with her nurses and servants in India? The way in which she treated them was — ”

“Don’t say any more. I am aware of my wife’s faults of temper. Heaven knows it has made me suffer enough!” says the general, hanging his head down.

“Why, man — do you intend to give way to her altogether? I said to Mac last night, ‘Mac, does he intend to give way to her altogether? The Army List doesn’t contain the name of a braver man than Charles Baynes, and is my sister Eliza to rule him entirely, Mac!’ I said. No; if you stand up to Eliza, I know from experience she will give way. We have had quarrels, scores and hundreds, as you know, Baynes.”

“Faith, I do,” owns the general, with a sad smile on his countenance.

“And sometimes she has had the best and sometimes I have had the best, Baynes! But I never yielded, as you do, without a fight for my own. No, never, Baynes! And me and Mac are shocked, I tell you, fairly, when we see the way in which you give up to her!”

“Come, come. I think you have told me often enough that I am henpecked,” says the general.

“And you give up not yourself only, Charles, but your dear, dear child — poor little suffering love!”

“The young man’s a beggar!” cries the general, biting his lips.

“What were you, what was Mac and me when we married? We hadn’t much besides our pay, had we? we rubbed on through bad weather and good, managing as best we could, loving each other, God be praised! And here we are, owing nobody anything, and me going to have a new bonnet!” and she tossed up her head, and gave her companion a good-natured look through her twinkling eyes.

“Emily, you have a good heart! that’s the truth,” says the general.

“And you have a good heart, Charles, as sure as my name’s MacWhirter; and I want you to act upon it, and I propose — ”

“What?”

“Well, I propose that — ” But now they have reached the Tuileries garden gates, and pass through, and continue their conversation in the midst of such a hubbub that we cannot overhear them. They cross the garden, and so make their way into the Palais Royal, and the purchase of the bonnet takes place; and in the midst of the excitement occasioned by that event, of course, all discussion of domestic affairs becomes uninteresting.

But the gist of Baynes’s talk with his sister-in-law may be divined from the conversation which presently occurred between Charlotte and her aunt. Charlotte did not come in to the public dinner. She was too weak for that; and “un bon bouillon” and a wing of fowl were served to her in the private apartment, where she had been reclining all day. At dessert, however, Mrs. MacWhirter took a fine bunch of grapes and a plump rosy peach from the table, and carried them to the little maid, and their interview may be described with sufficient accuracy, though it passed without other witnesses.

From the outbreak on the night of quarrels, Charlotte knew that her aunt was her friend. The glances of Mrs. MacWhirter’s eyes, and the expression of her bonny, homely face, told her sympathy to the girl. There were no pallors now, no angry glances, no heartbeating. Miss Char could even make a little joke when her aunt appeared, and say, “What beautiful grapes! Why, aunt, you must have taken them out of the new bonnet!”

“You should have had the bird of paradise, too, dear, only I see you have not eaten your chicken! She is a kind woman, Madame Smolensk. I like her. She gives very nice dinners. I can’t think how she does it for the money, I am sure!”

"She has been very, very kind to me; and I love her with all my heart!" cries Charlotte.

"Poor darling! We have all our trials, and yours have begun, my love!"

"Yes, indeed, aunt!" whimpers the young person; upon which osculation possibly takes place.

"My dear! when your papa took me to buy the bonnet, we had a long talk, and it was about you."

"About me, aunt!" warbles Miss Charlotte.

"He would not take mamma; he would only go with me, alone. I knew he wanted to say something about you; and what do you think it was? My dear, you have been very much agitated here. You and your poor mamma are likely to disagree for some time. She will drag you to those balls and fine parties, and bring you those fine partners."

"Oh, I hate them!" cries Charlotte. Poor little Hely Walsingham, what had he done to be hated?

"Well. It is not for me to speak of a mother to her own daughter. But you know mamma has a way with her. She expects to be obeyed. She will give you no peace. She will come back to her point again and again. You know how she speaks of some one — a certain gentleman? If ever she sees him, she will be rude to him. Mamma can be rude at times — that I must say of my own sister. As long as you remain here — "

"Oh, aunt, aunt! Don't take me away, don't take me away!" cries Charlotte.

"My dearest, are you afraid of your old aunt, and your uncle Mac, who is so kind, and has always loved you? Major MacWhirter has a will of his own, too, though of course I make no allusions. We know how admirably somebody has behaved to your family. Somebody who has been most ungratefully treated, though of course I make no allusions. If you have given away your heart to your father's greatest benefactor, do you suppose I and uncle Mac will quarrel with you? When Eliza married Baynes (your father was a penniless subaltern then, my dear, — and my sister was certainly neither a fortune nor a beauty), didn't she go dead against the wishes of our father? Certainly she did! But she said she was of age — that she was, and a great deal more, too — and she would do as she liked, and she made Baynes marry her. Why should you be afraid of coming to us, love? You are nearer somebody here, but can you see him? Your mamma will never let you go out, but she will follow you like a shadow. You may write to him. Don't tell me, child. Haven't I been young myself; and when there was a difficulty between Mac and poor papa, didn't Mac write to me, though he hates letters, poor dear, and certainly is a stick at them? And, though we were forbidden, had we not twenty ways of telegraphing to each other? Law! your poor dear grandfather was in such a rage with me once, when he found one, that he took down his great buggy whip to me, a grown girl!"

Charlotte, who has plenty of humour, would have laughed at this confession some other time, but now she was too much agitated by that invitation to quit Paris which her aunt had just given her. Quit Paris? Lose the chance of seeing her dearest friend, her protector? If he was not with her, was he not near her? Yes, near her always! On that horrible night, when all was so desperate, did not her champion burst forward to her rescue? Oh, the dearest and bravest! Oh, the tender and true!

"You are not listening, you poor child!" said aunt Mac, surveying her niece with looks of kindness. "Now listen to me once more. Whisper!" And sitting down on the settee by Charlotte's side, aunt Emily first kissed the girl's round cheek, and then whispered into her ear.

Never, I declare, was medicine so efficacious, or rapid of effect, as that wondrous distilment which aunt Emily poured into her niece's ear! "Oh, you goose!" she began by saying, and the rest of the charm she whispered into that pearly little pink shell round which Miss Charlotte's soft, brown ringlets clustered. Such a sweet blush rose straightway to the cheek! Such sweet lips began to cry, "Oh, you dear, dear aunt," and then began to kiss aunt's kind face, that, I declare, if I knew the spell, I would like to pronounce it right off, with such a sweet young patient to practise on.

"When do we go? To-morrow, aunt, n'est-ce pas? Oh, I am quite strong! never felt so well in my life! I'll go and pack up this instant," cries the young person.

"Doucement! Papa knows of the plan. Indeed, it was he who proposed it."

"Dearest, best father!" ejaculates Miss Charlotte.

"But mamma does not; and if you show yourself very eager, Charlotte, she may object, you know. Heaven forbid that I should counsel dissimulation to a child; but under the circumstances, my love — At least I own what happened between Mac and me. Law! I didn't care for papa's buggy whip! I knew it would not hurt; and as for Baynes, I am sure he would not

hurt a fly. Never was man more sorry for what he has done. He told me so whilst we walked away from the bonnet-shop, whilst he was carrying my old yellow. We met somebody near the Bourse. How sad he looked, and how handsome, too! I bowed to him and kissed my hand to him, that is, the knob of my parasol. Papa couldn't shake hands with him, because of my bonnet, you know, in the brown-paper bag. He has a grand beard, indeed! He looked like a wounded lion. I said so to papa. And I said, 'It is you who wound him, Charles Baynes!' 'I know that,' papa said. 'I have been thinking of it. I can't sleep at night for thinking about it: and it makes me dee'd unhappy.' You know what papa sometimes says? Dear me! You should have heard them, when Eliza and I joined the army, years and years ago!"

For once, Charlotte Baynes was happy at her father's being unhappy. The little maiden's heart had been wounded to think that her father could do his Charlotte a wrong. Ah! take warning by him, ye greybeards; and however old and toothless, if you have done wrong, own that you have done so; and sit down and say grace, and mumble your humble pie!

The general, then, did not shake hands with Philip; but Major MacWhirter went up in the most marked way, and gave the wounded lion his own paw, and said, "Mr. Firmin. Glad to see you! If ever you come to Tours, mind, don't forget my wife and me. Fine day. Little patient much better! Bon courage, as they say!"

I wonder what sort of a bungle Philip made of his correspondence with the Pall Mall Gazette that night? Every man who lives by his pen, if by chance he looks back at his writings of former years, lives in the past again. Our griefs, our pleasures, our youth, our sorrows, our dear, dear friends, resuscitate. How we tingle with shame over some of those fine passages! How dreary are those disinterred jokes! It was Wednesday night, Philip was writing off at home, in his inn, one of his grand tirades, dated "Paris, Thursday" — so as to be in time, you understand, for the post of Saturday, when the little waiter comes and says, winking, "Again that lady, Monsieur Philippe!"

"What lady?" asks our own intelligent correspondent.

"That old lady who came the other day; you know."

"C'est moi, mon ami!" cries Madame Smolensk's well-known grave voice. "Here is a letter, d'abord. But that says nothing. It was written before the grande nouvelle — the great news — the good news!"

"What good news?" asks the gentleman.

"In two days miss goes to Tours with her aunt and uncle — this good Macvirterre. They have taken their places by the diligence of Lafitte and Caillard. They are thy friends. Papa encourages her going. Here is their card of visit. Go thou also; they will receive thee with open arms. What hast thou, my son?"

Philip looked dreadfully sad. An injured and unfortunate gentleman at New York had drawn upon him, and he had paid away everything he had but four francs, and he was living on credit until his next remittance arrived.

"Thou hast no money! I have thought of it. Behold of it! Let him wait — the proprietor!" And she takes out a bank-note, which she puts in the young man's hand.

"Tiens, il l'embrasse encor c'te vicille!" says the little knife-boy. "J'aimerai pas ça, moi, par examp!"



CHAPTER 13

IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF SEINE, LOIRE, AND STYX (INFÉRIEUR).

Our dear friend Mrs. Baynes was suffering under the influence of one of those panics which sometimes seized her, and during which she remained her husband's most obedient Eliza and vassal. When Baynes wore a certain expression of countenance, we have said that his wife knew resistance to be useless. That expression, I suppose, he assumed, when he announced Charlotte's departure to her mother, and ordered Mrs. General Baynes to make the necessary preparations for the girl. "She might stay some time with her aunt," Baynes stated. "A change of air would do the child a great deal of good. Let everything necessary in the shape of hats, bonnets, winter clothes, and so forth, be got ready." "Was Char, then, to stay away so long?" asked Mrs. B. "She has been so happy here that you want to keep her, and fancy she can't be happy without you!" I can fancy the general grimly replying to the partner of his existence. Hanging down her withered head, with a tear mayhap trickling down her cheek, I can fancy the old woman silently departing to do the bidding of her lord. She selects a trunk out of the store of Baynes's baggage. A young lady's trunk was a trunk in those days. Now it is a two or three storied edifice of wood, in which two or three full-grown bodies of young ladies (without crinoline) might be packed. I saw a little old countrywoman at the Folkestone station last year with her travelling baggage contained in a band-box tied up in an old cotton handkerchief hanging on her arm; and she surveyed Lady Knightsbridge's twenty-three black trunks, each well nigh as large as her ladyship's opera-box. Before these great edifices that old woman stood wondering dumbly. That old lady and I had lived in a time when crinoline was not; and yet, I think, women looked even prettier in that time than they do now. Well, a trunk and a band-box were fetched out of the baggage heap for little Charlotte, and I daresay her little brothers jumped and danced on the box with much energy to make the lid shut, and the general brought out his hammer and nails, and nailed a card on the box with "Mademoiselle Baynes" thereon printed. And mamma had to look on and witness those preparations. And Hely Walsingham had called; and he wouldn't call again, she knew; and that fair chance for the establishment of her child was lost by the obstinacy of her self-willed, reckless husband. That woman had to water her soup with her furtive tears, to sit of nights behind hearts and spades, and brood over her crushed hopes. If I contemplate that wretched old Niobe much longer, I shall begin to pity her. Away softness! Take out thy arrows, the poisoned, the barbed, the rankling, and prod me the old creature well, god of the silver bow! Eliza Baynes had to look on, then, and see the trunks packed; to see her own authority over her own daughter wrested away from her; to see the undutiful girl prepare with perfect delight and alacrity to go away, without feeling a pang at leaving a mother who had nursed her through adverse illnesses, who had scolded her for seventeen years.

The general accompanied the party to the diligence office. Little Char was very pale and melancholy indeed when she took her place in the coupé. "She should have a corner: she had been ill, and ought to have a corner," uncle Mac said, and cheerfully consented to be bodkin. Our three special friends are seated. The other passengers clamber into their places. Away goes the clattering team, as the general waves an adieu to his friends. "Monstrous fine horses those grey Normans; famous breed, indeed," he remarks to his wife on his return.

"Indeed," she echoes. "Pray, in what part of the carriage was Mr. Firmin," she presently asks.

"In no part of the carriage at all!" Baynes answers fiercely, turning beet-root red. And thus, though she had been silent, obedient, hanging her head, the woman showed that she was aware of her master's schemes, and why her girl had been taken away. She knew; but she was beaten. It remained for her but to be silent and bow her head. I daresay she did not sleep one wink that night. She followed the diligence in its journey. "Char is gone," she thought. "Yes; in due time he will take from me the obedience of my other children, and tear them out of my lap." He — that is, the general — was sleeping meanwhile. He had had in the last few days four awful battles — with his child, with his friends, with his wife — in which latter combat he had been conqueror. No wonder Baynes was tired, and needed rest. Any one of those engagements was enough to weary the veteran.

If we take the liberty of looking into double-bedded rooms, and peering into the thoughts which are passing under private nightcaps, may we not examine the coupé of a jingling diligence with an open window, in which a young lady sits wide awake by the side of her uncle and aunt! These perhaps are asleep; but she is not. Ah! she is thinking of another journey! that blissful one from Boulogne, when he was there yonder in the imperial, by the side of the conductor. When the

MacWhirter party had come to the diligence office, how her little heart had beat! How she had looked under the lamps at all the people lounging about the court! How she had listened when the clerk called out the names of the passengers; and, mercy, what a fright she had been in, lest he should be there after all, while she stood yet leaning on her father's arm! But there was no — well, names, I think, need scarcely be mentioned. There was no sign of the individual in question. Papa kissed her, and sadly said good-by. Good Madame Smolensk came with an adieu and an embrace for her dear Miss, and whispered, "Courage, mon enfant," and then said, "Hold, I have brought you some bonbons." There they were in a little packet. Little Charlotte put the packet into her little basket. Away goes the diligence, but the individual had made no sign.

Away goes the diligence; and every now and then Charlotte feels the little packet in her little basket. What does it contain — oh, what? If Charlotte could but read with her heart, she would see in that little packet — the sweetest bonbon of all perhaps it might be, or, ah me! the bitterest almond! Through the night goes the diligence, passing relay after relay. Uncle Mac sleeps. I think I have said he snored. Aunt Mac is quite silent, and Char sits plaintively with her lonely thoughts and her bonbons, as miles, hours, relays pass.

"These ladies, will they descend and take a cup of coffee, a cup of bouillon?" at last cries a waiter at the coupé door, as the carriage stops in Orleans. "By all means a cup of coffee," says Aunt Mac. "The little Orleans wine is good," cries Uncle Mac. "Descendons!" "This way, madame," says the waiter. "Charlotte, my love, some coffee?"

"I will — I will stay in the carriage. I don't want anything, thank you," says Miss Charlotte. And the instant her relations are gone, entering the gate of the Lion Noir, where, you know, are the Bureaux des Messageries, Lafitte, Caillard et Cie — I say, on the very instant when her relations have disappeared, what do you think Miss Charlotte does?

She opens that packet of bonbons with fingers that tremble — tremble so, I wonder how she could undo the knot of the string (or do you think she had untied that knot under her shawl in the dark? I can't say. We never shall know). Well; she opens the packet. She does not care one fig for the lollipops, almonds, and so forth. She pounces on a little scrap of paper, and is going to read it by the lights of the steaming stable lanterns, when — oh, what made her start so? —

In those old days there used to be two diligences which travelled nightly to Tours, setting out at the same hour, and stopping at almost the same relays. The diligence of Lafitte and Caillard supped at the Lion Noir at Orleans — the diligence of the Messageries Royales stopped at the Ecu de France, hard by.

Well, as the Messageries Royales are supping at the Ecu de France, a passenger strolls over from that coach, and strolls and strolls until he comes to the coach of Lafitte, Caillard, and Company, and to the coupé window where Miss Baynes is trying to decipher her bonbon.

He comes up — and as the night-lamps fall on his face and beard — his rosy face, his yellow beard — oh! — What means that scream of the young lady in the coupé of Lafitte, Caillard et Compagnie! I declare she has dropped the letter which she was about to read. It has dropped into a pool of mud under the diligence off fore-wheel. And he with the yellow beard, and a sweet happy laugh, and a tremble in his deep voice, says, "You need not read it. It was only to tell you what you know."

Then the coupé window says, "Oh, Philip! Oh, my —"

My what? You cannot hear the words, because the grey Norman horses come squealing and clattering up to their coach-pole with such accompanying cries and imprecations from the horsekeepers and postilions, that no wonder the little warble is lost. It was not intended for you and me to hear; but perhaps you can guess the purport of the words. Perhaps in quite old, old days, you may remember having heard such little whispers, in a time when the song-birds in your grove carolled that kind of song very pleasantly and freely. But this, my good madam, is written in February. The birds are gone: the branches are bare: the gardener has actually swept the leaves off the walks: and the whole affair is an affair of a past year, you understand. Well! carpe diem, fugit hora, There, for one minute, for two minutes, stands Philip over the diligence off fore-wheel, talking to Charlotte at the window, and their heads are quite close — quite close. What are those two pairs of lips warbling, whispering? "Hi! Gare! Ohé!" The horsekeepers, I say, quite prevent you from hearing; and here come the passengers out of the Lion Noir, aunt Mac still munching a great slice of bread-and-butter. Charlotte is quite comfortable, and does not want anything, dear aunt, thank you. I hope she nestles in her corner, and has a sweet slumber. On the journey the twin diligences pass and repass each other. Perhaps Charlotte looks out of her window sometimes and towards the other carriage. I don't know. It is a long time ago. What used you to do in old days, ere railroads were, and when diligences ran? They were slow enough: but they have got to their journey's end somehow. They were tight, hot, dusty,

dear, stuffy, and uncomfortable; but, for all that, travelling was good sport sometimes. And if the world would have the kindness to go back for five-and-twenty or thirty years, some of us who have travelled on the Tours and Orleans Railway very comfortably would like to take the diligence journey now.

Having myself seen the city of Tours only last year, of course I don't remember much about it. A man remembers boyhood, and the first sight of Calais, and so forth. But after much travel or converse with the world, to see a new town is to be introduced to Jones. He is like Brown: he is not unlike Smith: in a little while you hash him up with Thompson. I dare not be particular, then, regarding Mr. Firmin's life at Tours, lest I should make topographical errors, for which the critical schoolmaster would justly inflict chastisement. In the last novel I read about Tours, there were blunders from the effect of which you know the wretched author never recovered. It was by one Scott, and had young Quentin Durward for a hero, and Isabel de Croye for a heroine; and she sate in her hostel, and sang, "Ah, County Guy, the hour is nigh." A pretty ballad enough: but what ignorance, my dear sir! What descriptions of Tours, of Liege, are in that fallacious story! Yes, so fallacious and misleading, that I remember I was sorry, not because the description was unlike Tours, but because Tours was unlike the description.

So Quentin Firmin went and put up at the snug little hostel of the Faisan; and Isabel de Baynes took up her abode with her uncle the Sire de MacWhirter; and I believe Master Firmin had no more money in his pocket than the Master Durward whose story the Scottish novelist told some forty years since. And I cannot promise you that our young English adventurer shall marry a noble heiress of vast property, and engage the Boar of Ardennes in a hand-to-hand combat; that sort of Boar, madam, does not appear in our modern drawing-room histories. Of others, not wild, there be plenty. They gore you in clubs. They seize you by the doublet, and pin you against posts in public streets. They run at you in parks. I have seen them sit at bay after dinner, ripping, gashing, tossing a whole company. These our young adventurer had in good sooth to encounter, as is the case with most knights. Who escapes them? I remember an eminent person talking to me about bores for two hours once. O you stupid eminent person! You never knew that you yourself had tusks, little eyes in your hure; a bristly mane to cut into tooth-brushes; and a curly-tail! I have a notion that the multitude of bores is enormous in the world. If a man is a bore himself, when he is bored — and you can't deny this statement — then what am I, what are you, what your father, grandfather, son — all your amiable acquaintance, in a word? Of this I am sure, Major and Mrs. MacWhirter were not brilliant in conversation. What would you and I do, or say, if we listen to the tittle-tattle of Tours. How the clergyman was certainly too fond of cards and going to the café; how the dinners those Popjoys gave were too absurdly ostentatious; and Popjoy, we know, in the Bench last year; how Mrs. Flights, going on with that Major of French Carabiniers, was really too "How could I endure those people?" Philip would ask himself, when talking of that personage in after days, as he loved, and loves to do. "How could I endure them, I say? Mac was a good man; but I knew secretly in my heart, sir, that he was a bore. Well: I loved him. I liked his old stories. I liked his bad old dinners: there is a very comfortable Touraine wine, by the way — a very warming little wine, sir. Mrs. Mac you never saw, my good Mrs. Pendennis. Be sure of this, you never would have liked her. Well, I did. I liked her house, though it was damp, in a damp garden, frequented by dull people. I should like to go and see that old house now. I am perfectly happy with my wife, but I sometimes go away from her to enjoy the luxury of living over our old days again. With nothing in the world but an allowance which was precarious, and had been spent in advance; with no particular plans for the future, and a few five-franc pieces for the present, — by Jove, sir, how did I dare to be so happy? What idiots we were, my love, to be happy at all! We were mad to marry. Don't tell me! With a purse which didn't contain three months' consumption, would we dare to marry now? We should be put into the mad ward of the workhouse: that would be the only place for us. Talk about trusting in heaven. Stuff and nonsense, ma'am! I have as good a right to go and buy a house in Belgrave Square, and trust to heaven for the payment, as I had to marry when I did. We were paupers, Mrs. Char, and you know that very well!"

"Oh, yes. We were very wrong: very!" says Mrs. Charlotte, looking up to her chandelier (which, by the way, is of very handsome Venetian old glass). "We were very wrong, were not we, my dearest?" And herewith she will begin to kiss and fondle two or more babies that disport in her room — as if two or more babies had anything to do with Philip's argument, that a man has no right to marry who has no pretty well-assured means of keeping a wife.

Here, then, by the banks of the Loire, although Philip had but a very few francs in his pocket, and was obliged to keep a sharp look-out on his expenses at the Hotel of the Golden Pheasant, he passed a fortnight of such happiness as I, for my part, wish to all young folks who read his veracious history. Though he was so poor, and ate and drank so modestly in the house, the maids, waiters, the landlady of the Pheasant, were as civil to him — yes, as civil as they were to the gouty old

Marchioness of Carabas herself, who stayed here on her way to the south, occupied the grand apartments, quarrelled with her lodging, dinner, breakfast, bread- and-butter in general, insulted the landlady in bad French, and only paid her bill under compulsion. Philip's was a little bill, but he paid it cheerfully. He gave only a small gratuity to the servants, but he was kind and hearty, and they knew he was poor. He was kind and hearty, I suppose, because he was so happy. I have known the gentleman to be by no means civil; and have heard him storm, and hector, and browbeat landlord and waiters, as fiercely as the Marquis of Carabas himself. But now Philip the Bear was the most gentle of bears, because his little Charlotte was leading him.

Away with trouble and doubt, with squeamish pride and gloomy care! Philip had enough money for a fortnight, during which Tom Glazier, of the Monitor, promised to supply Philip's letters for the Pall Mall Gazette. All the designs of France, Spain, Russia, gave that idle "own correspondent" not the slightest anxiety. In the morning it was Miss Baynes; in the afternoon it was Miss Baynes. At six it was dinner and Charlotte; at nine it was Charlotte and tea. "Anyhow, love-making does not spoil his appetite," Major MacWhirter correctly remarked. Indeed, Philip had a glorious appetite; and health bloomed in Miss Charlotte's cheek, and beamed in her happy little heart. Dr. Firmin, in the height of his practice, never completed a cure more skilfully than that which was performed by Dr. Firmin, Junior.

"I ran the thing so close, sir," I remember Philip bawling out, in his usual energetic way, whilst describing this period of his life's greatest happiness to his biographer, "that I came back to Paris outside the diligence, and had not money enough to dine on the road. But I bought a sausage, sir, and a bit of bread — and a brutal sausage it was, sir — and I reached my lodgings with exactly two sous in my pocket." Roger Bontemps himself was not more content than our easy philosopher.

So Philip and Charlotte ratified and sealed a treaty of Tours, which they determined should never be broken by either party. Marry without papa's consent? Oh, never! Marry anybody but Philip? Oh, never — never! Not if she lived to be a hundred, when Philip would in consequence be in his hundred and ninth or tenth year, would this young Joan have any but her present Darby. Aunt Mac, though she may not have been the most accomplished or highly-bred of ladies, was a warm-hearted and affectionate aunt Mac. She caught in a mild form the fever from these young people. She had not much to leave, and Mac's relations would want all he could spare when he was gone. But Charlotte should have her garnets, and her teapot, and her India shawl — that she should. [Note: I am sorry to say that in later days, after Mrs. Major MacWhirter's decease, it was found that she had promised these treasures in writing to several members of her husband's family, and that much heart-burning arose in consequence. But our story has nothing to do with these painful disputes.] And with many blessings this enthusiastic old lady took leave of her future nephew-in-law when he returned to Paris and duty. Crack your whip and scream your hi! and be off quick, postilion and diligence! I am glad we have taken Mr. Firmin out of that dangerous, lazy, love-making place. Nothing is to me so sweet as sentimental writing. I could have written hundreds of pages describing Philip and Charlotte, Charlotte and Philip. But a stern sense of duty intervenes. My modest Muse puts a finger on her lip, and says, "Hush about that business!" Ah, my worthy friends, you little know what soft-hearted people those cynics are! If you could have come on Diogenes by surprise, I daresay you might have found him reading sentimental novels and whimpering in his tub. Philip shall leave his sweetheart and go back to his business, and we will not have one word about tears, promises, raptures, parting. Never mind about these sentimentalities, but please, rather, to depict to yourself our young fellow so poor that when the coach stops for dinner at Orleans he can only afford to purchase a penny loaf and a sausage for his own hungry cheek. When he reached the Hôtel Poussin, with his meagre carpet-bag, they served him a supper which he ate to the admiration of all beholders in the little coffee-room. He was in great spirits and gaiety. He did not care to make any secret of his poverty, and how he had been unable to afford to pay for dinner. Most of the guests at Hôtel Poussin knew what it was to be poor. Often and often they had dined on credit when they put back their napkins into their respective pigeon-holes. But my landlord knew his guests. They were poor men — honest men. They paid him in the end, and each could help his neighbour in a strait.

After Mr. Firmin's return to Paris he did not care for a while to go to the Elysian Fields. They were not Elysian for him, except in Miss Charlotte's company. He resumed his newspaper correspondence, which occupied but a day in each week, and he had the other six — nay, he scribbled on the seventh day likewise, and covered immense sheets of letter-paper with remarks upon all manner of subjects, addressed to a certain Mademoiselle, Mademoiselle Baynes, chez M. le Major Mac. On these sheets of paper Mr. Firmin could talk so long, so loudly, so fervently, so eloquently to Miss Baynes, that she was never tired of hearing, or he of holding forth. He began imparting his dreams and his earliest sensations to his beloved

before breakfast. At noon-day he gave her his opinion of the contents of the morning papers. His packet was ordinarily full and brimming over by post-time, so that his expressions of love and fidelity leaped from under the cover, or were squeezed into the queerest corners, where, no doubt, it was a delightful task for Miss Baynes to trace out and detect those little cupids which a faithful lover despatched to her. It would be, "I have found this little corner unoccupied. Do you know what I have to say in it? Oh, Charlotte, I," My sweet young lady, you can guess, or will one day guess, the rest; and will receive such dear, delightful, nonsensical double letters, and will answer them with that elegant propriety which I have no doubt Miss Baynes showed in her replies. Ah! if all who are writing and receiving such letters, or who have written and received such, or who remember writing and receiving such, would order a copy of this novel from the publishers, what reams, and piles, and pyramids of paper our ink would have to blacken! Since Charlotte and Philip had been engaged to each other, he had scarcely, except in those dreadful, ghastly days of quarrel, enjoyed the luxury of absence from his soul's blessing — the exquisite delight of writing to her. He could do few things in moderation, this man — and of this delightful privilege of writing to Charlotte he now enjoyed his heart's fill.

After brief enjoyment of the weeks of this rapture, when winter was come on Paris, and icicles hung on the bough, how did it happen that one day, two days, three days passed, and the postman brought no little letter in the well-known little handwriting for Monsieur, Monsieur Philip Firmin, à Paris? Three days, four days, and no letter. Oh, torture, could she be ill? Could her aunt and uncle have turned against her, and forbidden her to write, as her father and mother had done before? Oh, grief, and sorrow, and rage! As for jealousy, our leonine friend never knew such a passion. It never entered into his lordly heart to doubt of his little maiden's love. But still four, five days have passed, and not one word has come from Tours. The little Hôtel Poussin was in a commotion. I have said that when our friend felt any passion very strongly he was sure to speak of it. Did Don Quixote lose any opportunity of declaring to the world that Dulcinea del Toboso was peerless among women? Did not Antar bawl out in battle, "I am the lover of Ibla?" Our knight had taken all the people of the hotel into his confidence somehow. They all knew of his condition — all, the painter, the poet, the half-pay Polish officer, the landlord, the hostess, down to the little knife-boy who used to come in with, "The factor comes of to pass — no letter this morning."

No doubt Philip's political letters became, under this outward pressure, very desponding and gloomy. One day, as he sat gnawing his mustachios at his desk, the little Anatole enters his apartment and cries, "Tenez, M. Philippe. That lady again!" And the faithful, the watchful, the active Madame Smolensk once more made her appearance in his chamber.

Philip blushed and hung his head for shame. "Ungrateful brute that I am," he thought; "I have been back more than a week, and never thought a bit about that good, kind soul who came to my succour. I am an awful egotist. Love is always so."

As he rose up to greet his friend, she looked so grave, and pale, and sad, that he could not but note her demeanour. "Bon Dieu! had anything happened?"

"Ce pauvre général is ill, very ill Philip," Smolensk said, in her grave voice.

He was so gravely ill, madame said, that his daughter had been sent for.

"Had she come?" asked Philip, with a start.

"You think but of her — you care not for the poor old man. You are all the same, you men. All egotists — all. Go! I know you! I never knew one that was not," said madame.

Philip has his little faults: perhaps egotism is one of his defects. Perhaps it is yours, or even mine.

"You have been here a week since Thursday last, and you have never written or sent to a woman who loves you well. Go! It was not well, Monsieur Philippe."

As soon as he saw her, Philip felt that he had been neglectful and ungrateful. We have owned so much already. But how should madame know that he had returned on Thursday week? When they looked up after her reproof, his eager eyes seemed to ask this question.

"Could she not write to me and tell me that you were come back? Perhaps she knew that you would not do so yourself. A woman's heart teaches her these experiences early," continued the lady, sadly; then she added: "I tell you, you are good-for-nothings, all of you! And I repent me, see you, of having had the bêtise to pity you!"

"I shall have my quarter's pay on Saturday, I was coming to you then," said Philip.

"Was it that I was speaking of? What! you are all cowards, men, all! Oh, that I have been beast, beast, to think at last I

had found a man of heart!"

How much or how often this poor Ariadne had trusted and been forsaken, I have no means of knowing, or desire of inquiring. Perhaps it is as well for the polite reader, who is taken into my entire confidence, that we should not know Madame de Smolensk's history from the first page to the last. Granted that Ariadne was deceived by Theseus: but then she consoled herself, as we may all read in Smith's Dictionary; and then she must have deceived her father in order to run away with Theseus. I suspect — I suspect, I say — that these women who are so very much betrayed, are — but we are speculating on this French lady's antecedents, when Charlotte, her lover, and her family are the persons with whom we have mainly to do.

These two, I suppose, forgot self, about which each for a moment had been busy, and madame resumed:— "Yes, you have reason; Miss is here. It was time. Hold! Here is a note from her." And Philip's kind messenger once more put a paper into his hands. —

"My dearest father is very, very ill. Oh, Philip! I am so unhappy; and he is so good, and gentle, and kind, and loves me so!"

"It is true," madame resumed. "Before Charlotte came, he thought only of her. When his wife comes up to him, he turns from her. I have not loved her much, that lady, that is true. But to see her now, it is navrant. He will take no medicine from her. He pushed her away. Before Charlotte came, he sent for me, and spoke as well as his poor throat would let him, this poor general! His daughter's arrival seemed to comfort him. But he says, 'Not my wife! not my wife!' And the poor thing has to go away and cry in the chamber at the side. He says — in his French, you know — he has never been well since Charlotte went away. He has often been out. He has dined but rarely at our table, and there has always been a silence between him and Madame la Générale. Last week he had a great inflammation of the chest. Then he took to bed, and Monsieur the Doctor came — the little doctor whom you know. Then a quinsy has declared itself and he now is scarce able to speak. His condition is most grave. He lies suffering, dying, perhaps — yes, dying, do you hear? And you are thinking of your little school-girl! Men are all the same. Monsters! Go!"

Philip, who, I have said, is very fond of talking about Philip, surveys his own faults with great magnanimity and good humour, and acknowledges them without the least intention to correct them. "How selfish we are!" I can hear him say, looking at himself in the glass. "By George! sir, when I heard simultaneously the news of that poor old man's illness, and of Charlotte's return, I felt that I wanted to see her that instant. I must go to her, and speak to her. The old man and his suffering did not seem to affect me. It is humiliating to have to own that we are selfish beasts. But we are, sir — we are brutes, by George! and nothing else," — And he gives a finishing twist to the ends of his flaming mustachois as he surveys them in the glass.

Poor little Charlotte was in such affliction that of course she must have Philip to console her at once. No time was to be lost. Quick! a cab this moment: and, coachman, you shall have an extra for drink if you go quick to the Avenue de Marli! Madame puts herself into the carriage, and as they go along tells Philip more at length of the gloomy occurrences of the last few days. Four days since, the poor general was so bad with his quinsy that he thought he should not recover, and Charlotte was sent for. He was a little better on the day of her arrival; but yesterday the inflammation had increased; he could not swallow; he could not speak audibly; he was in very great suffering and danger. He turned away from his wife. The unhappy generaless had been to Madame Bunch in her tears and grief, complaining that after twenty years' fidelity and attachment her husband had withdrawn his regard from her. Baynes attributed even his illness to his wife; and at other times said it was a just punishment for his wicked conduct in breaking his word to Philip and Charlotte. If he did not see his dear child again, he must beg her forgiveness for having made her suffer so. He had acted wickedly and ungratefully, and his wife had forced him to do what he did. He prayed that heaven might pardon him. And he had behaved with wicked injustice towards Philip, who had acted most generously towards his family. And he had been a scoundrel — he knew he had — and Bunch, and MacWhirter, and the doctor all said so — and it was that woman's doing. And he pointed to the scared wife as he painfully hissed out these words of anger and contrition:— "When I saw that child ill, and almost made mad, because I broke my word, I felt I was a scoundrel, Martin; and I was; and that woman made me so; and I deserve to be shot; and I shan't recover; I tell you I shan't." Dr. Martin, who attended the general, thus described his patient's last talk and behaviour to Philip.

It was the doctor who sent madame in quest of the young man. He found poor Mrs. Baynes with hot, tearless eyes and livid face, a wretched sentinel outside the sick chamber. "You will find General Baynes very ill, sir," she said to Philip, with

a ghastly calmness, and a gaze he could scarcely face. "My daughter is in the room with him. It appears I have offended him, and he refuses to see me." And she squeezed a dry handkerchief which she held, and put on her spectacles again, and tried again to read the Bible in her lap.

Philip hardly knew the meaning of Mrs. Baynes' words as yet. He was agitated by the thought of the general's illness, perhaps by the notion that the beloved was so near. Her hand was in his a moment afterwards: and, even in that sad chamber, each could give the other a soft pressure, a fond, silent signal of mutual love and faith.

The poor man laid the hands of the young people together, and his own upon them. The suffering to which he had put his daughter seemed to be the crime which specially affected him. He thanked heaven he was able to see he was wrong. He whispered to his little maid a prayer for pardon in one or two words, which caused poor Charlotte to sink on her knees and cover his fevered hand with tears and kisses. Out of all her heart she forgave him. She had felt that the parent she loved and was accustomed to honour had been mercenary and cruel. It had wounded her pure heart to be obliged to think that her father could be other than generous, and just, and good. That he should humble himself before her, smote her with the keenest pang of tender commiseration. I do not care to pursue this last scene. Let us close the door as the children kneel by the sufferer's bedside, and to the old man's petition for forgiveness, and to the young girl's sobbing vows of love and fondness, say a reverent Amen.

By the following letter, which he wrote a few days before the fatal termination of his illness, the worthy general, it would appear, had already despaired of his recovery:— "My dear Mac, — I speak and breathe with such difficulty as I write this from my bed, that I doubt whether I shall ever leave it. I do not wish to vex poor Eliza, and in my state cannot enter into disputes which I know would ensue regarding settlement of property. When I left England there was a claim hanging over me (young Firmin's) at which I was needlessly frightened, as having to satisfy it would swallow up much more than everything I possessed in the world. Hence made arrangements for leaving everything in Eliza's name and the children after. Will with Smith and Thompson, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn. Think Char won't be happy for a long time with her mother. To break from F., who has been most generous to us, will break her heart. Will you and Emily keep her for a little? I gave F. my promise. As you told me, I have acted ill by him, which I own and deeply lament. If Char marries, she ought to have her share. May God bless her, her father prays, in case he should not see her again. And with best love to Emily, am yours, dear Mac, sincerely, — Charles Baynes."

On the receipt of this letter, Charlotte disobeyed her father's wish, and set forth from Tours instantly, under her worthy uncle's guardianship. The old soldier was in his comrade's room when the general put the hands of Charlotte and her lover together. He confessed his fault, though it is hard for those who expect love and reverence to have to own to wrong and to ask pardon. Old knees are stiff to bend. Brother reader, young or old, when our last hour comes, may ours have grace to do so!



VOLUME III.

CHAPTER 1

RETURNS TO OLD FRIENDS.

The three old comrades and Philip formed the little mourning procession which followed the general to his place of rest at Montmartre. When the service has been read, and the last volley has been fired over the buried soldier, the troops march to quarters with a quick step, and to a lively tune. Our veteran has been laid in the grave with brief ceremonies. We do not even prolong his obsequies with a sermon. His place knows him no longer. There are a few who remember him: a very, very few who grieve for him — so few that to think of them is a humiliation almost. The sun sets on the earth, and our dear brother has departed off its face. Stars twinkle; dew falls; children go to sleep in awe, and maybe tears; the sun rises on a new day, which he has never seen, and children wake hungry. They are interested about their new black clothes, perhaps. They are presently at their work, plays, quarrels. They are looking forward to the day when the holidays will be over, and the eyes which shone here yesterday so kindly are gone, gone, gone. A drive to the cemetery, followed by a coach with four acquaintances dressed in decorous black, who separate and go to their homes or clubs, and wear your crape for a few days after — can most of us expect much more? The thought is not ennobling or exhilarating, worthy sir. And, pray, why should we be proud of ourselves? Is it because we have been so good, or are so wise and great, that we expect to be beloved, lamented, remembered? Why, great Xerxes or blustering Bobadil must know in that last hour and resting-place how abject, how small, how low, how lonely they are, and what a little dust will cover them. Quick, drums and fifes, a lively tune! Whip the black team, coachman, and trot back to town again — to the world, and to business, and duty!

I am for saying no single unkindness of General Baynes which is not forced upon me by my storyteller's office. We know, from Marlborough's story, that the bravest man and greatest military genius is not always brave or successful in his battles with his wife, and that some of the greatest warriors have committed errors in accounts and the distribution of meum and tuum. We can't disguise from ourselves the fact that Baynes permitted himself to be misled, and had weaknesses not quite consistent with the highest virtue.

When he became aware that his carelessness in the matter of Mrs. Firmin's trust-money had placed him in her son's power, we have seen how the old general, in order to avoid being called to account, fled across the water with his family and all his little fortune, and how terrified he was on landing on a foreign shore to find himself face to face with this dreadful creditor. Philip's renunciation of all claims against Baynes, soothed and pleased the old man wonderfully. But Philip might change his mind, an adviser at Baynes' side repeatedly urged. To live abroad was cheaper and safer than to live at home. Accordingly Baynes, his wife, family, and money, all went into exile, and remained there.

What savings the old man had I don't accurately know. He and his wife were very dark upon this subject with Philip: and when the general died, his widow declared herself to be almost a pauper. It was impossible that Baynes should have left much money; but that Charlotte's share should have amounted to — that sum which may or may not presently be stated — was a little too absurd! You see Mr. and Mrs. Firmin are travelling abroad just now. When I wrote to Firmin to ask if I might mention the amount of his wife's fortune, he gave me no answer: nor do I like to enter upon these matters of calculation without his explicit permission. He is of a hot temper; he might, on his return, grow angry with the friend of his youth, and say, "Sir, how dare you to talk about my private affairs? and what has the public to do with Mrs. Firmin's private fortune?"

When, the last rites over, good-natured uncle Mac proposed to take Charlotte back to Tours, her mother made no objection. The widow had tried to do the girl such an injury, that perhaps the latter felt forgiveness was impossible. Little Char loved Philip with all her heart and strength; had been authorized and encouraged to do so, as we have seen. To give him up now, because a richer suitor presented himself, was an act of treason from which her faithful heart revolted, and she never could pardon the instigator. You see, in this simple story, I scarcely care even to have reticence or secrets. I don't want you to understand for a moment that Hely Walsingham was still crying his eyes out about Charlotte. Goodness bless

you! It was two or three weeks ago — four or five weeks ago, that he was in love with her! He had not seen the Duchesse d'Ivry then, about whom you may remember he had the quarrel with Podichon, at the club in the Rue de Grammont. (He and the duchesse wrote poems to each other, each in the other's native language.) The Charlotte had long passed out of the young fellow's mind. That butterfly had fluttered off from our English rosebud, and had settled on the other elderly flower! I don't know that Mrs. Baynes was aware of young Hely's fickleness at this present time of which we are writing; but his visits had ceased, and she was angry and disappointed; and not the less angry because her labour had been in vain. On her part, Charlotte could also be resolutely unforgiving. Take her Philip from her? Never, never! Her mother force her to give up the man whom she had been encouraged to love? Mamma should have defended Philip, not betrayed him! If I command my son to steal a spoon, shall he obey me? And if he do obey and steal, and be transported, will he love me afterwards? I think I can hardly ask for so much filial affection.

So there was strife between mother and daughter; and anger not the less bitter, on Mrs. Baynes' part, because her husband, whose cupidity or fear had, at first, induced him to take her side, had deserted her and gone over to her daughter. In the anger of that controversy Baynes died, leaving the victory and right with Charlotte. He shrank from his wife: would not speak to her in his last moments. The widow had these injuries against her daughter and Philip; and thus neither side forgave the other. She was not averse to the child's going away to her uncle: put a lean, hungry face against Charlotte's lip, and received a kiss which I fear had but little love in it. I don't envy those children who remain under the widow's lonely command; or poor Madame Smolensk, who has to endure the arrogance, the grief, the avarice of that grim woman. Nor did madame suffer under this tyranny long. Galignani's Messenger very soon announced that she had lodgings to let, and I remember being edified by reading one day in the Pall Mall Gazette that elegant apartments, select society, and an excellent table were to be found in one of the most airy and fashionable quarters of Paris. Inquire of Madame la Baronne de S— sk, Avenue de Marli, Champs Elysées.

We guessed without difficulty how this advertisement found its way to the Pall Mall Gazette; and very soon after its appearance Madame de Smolensk's friend, Mr. Philip, made his appearance at our tea-table in London. He was always welcome amongst us elders and children. He wore a crape on his hat. As soon as the young ones were gone, you may be sure he poured his story out; and enlarged upon the death, the burial, the quarrels, the loves, the partings we have narrated. How could he be put in a way to earn three or four hundred a year? That was the present question. Ere he came to see us, he had already been totting up ways and means. He had been with our friend Mrs. Brandon: was staying with her. The Little Sister thought three hundred would be sufficient. They could have her second floor — not for nothing; no, no, but at a moderate price, which would pay her. They could have her attics, if more rooms were needed. They could have her kitchen fire, and one maid, for the present, would do all their work. Poor little thing! She was very young. She would be past eighteen by the time she could marry; the Little Sister was for early marriages, against long courtships. "Heaven helps those as helps themselves," she said. And Mr. Philip thought this excellent advice; and Mr. Philip's friend, when asked for his opinion — "Candidly now, what's your opinion?" — said, "Is she in the next room? Of course you mean you are married already."

Philip roared one of his great laughs. No, he was not married already. Had he not said that Miss Baynes was gone away to Tours to her aunt and uncle? But that he wanted to be married; but that he could never settle down to work till he married; but that he could have no rest, peace, health, till he married that angel he was ready to confess. Ready? All the street might hear him calling out the name and expatiating on the angelic charms and goodness of his Charlotte. He spoke so loud and long on this subject that my wife grew a little tired; and my wife always likes to hear other women praised, that (she says) I know she does. But when a man goes on roaring for an hour about Dulcinea? You know such talk becomes fulsome at last; and, in fine, when he was gone, my wife said, "Well, he is very much in love; so were you — I mean long before my time, sir; but does love pay the housekeeping bills, pray?"

"No, my dear. And love is always controlled by other people's advice:— always," says Philip's friend, who I hope you will perceive was speaking ironically.

Philip's friends had listened not impatiently to Philip's talk about Philip. Almost all women will give a sympathizing hearing to men who are in love. Be they ever so old, they grow young again with that conversation, and renew their own early times. Men are not quite so generous: Tityrus tires of hearing Corydon discourse endlessly on the charms of his shepherdess. And yet egotism is good talk. Even dull biographies are pleasant to read: and if to read, why not to hear? Had Master Philip not been such an egotist, he would not have been so pleasant a companion. Can't you like a man at whom

you laugh a little? I had rather such an open-mouthed conversationist than your cautious jaws that never unlock without a careful application of the key. As for the entrance to Mr. Philip's mind, that door was always open when he was awake, or not hungry, or in a friend's company. Besides his love, and his prospects in life, his poverty, Philip had other favourite topics of conversation. His friend the Little Sister was a great theme with him; his father was another favourite subject of his talk. By the way, his father had written to the Little Sister. The doctor said he was sure to prosper in his newly adopted country. He and another physician had invented a new medicine, which was to effect wonders, and in a few years would assuredly make the fortune of both of them. He was never without one scheme or another for making that fortune which never came. Whenever he drew upon poor Philip for little sums, his letters were sure to be especially magniloquent and hopeful. "Whenever the doctor says he has invented the philosopher's stone," said poor Philip, "I am sure there will be a postscript to say that a little bill will be presented for so much, at so many days' date."

Had he drawn on Philip lately? Philip told us when, and how often. We gave him all the benefit of our virtuous indignation. As for my wife's eyes, they gleamed with anger. What a man: what a father! Oh, he was incorrigible! "Yes, I am afraid he is," says poor Phil, comically, with his hands roaming at ease in his pockets. They contained little else than those big hands. "My father is of a hopeful turn. His views regarding property are peculiar. It is a comfort to have such a distinguished parent, isn't it? I am always surprised to hear that he is not married again. I sigh for a mother-in-law," Philip continued.

"Oh, don't, Philip!" cried Mrs. Laura, in a pet. "Be generous: be forgiving: be noble: be Christian! Don't be cynical and imitating — you know whom!"

Whom could she possibly mean, I wonder? After flashes, there came showers in this lady's eyes. From long habit I can understand her thoughts, although she does not utter them. She was thinking of these poor, noble, simple, friendless young people; and asking heaven's protection for them. I am not in the habit of over-praising my friends, goodness knows. The foibles of this one I have described honestly enough. But if I write down here that he was courageous, cheerful in adversity, generous, simple, truth-loving, above a scheme — after having said that he was a noble young fellow — dixi; and I won't cancel the words.

Ardent lover as he was, our friend was glad to be back in the midst of the London smoke, and wealth, and bustle. The fog agreed with his lungs, he said. He breathed more freely in our great city than in that little English village in the centre of Paris which he had been inhabiting. In his hotel, and at his café (where he composed his eloquent "Own Correspondence"), he had occasion to speak a little French, but it never came very trippingly from his stout English tongue. "You don't suppose I would like to be taken for a Frenchman," he would say with much gravity. I wonder who ever thought of mistaking friend Philip for a Frenchman?

As for that faithful Little Sister, her house and heart were still at the young man's service. We have not visited Thornhaugh Street for some time. Mr. Philip, whom we have been bound to attend, has been too much occupied with his love-making to bestow much thought on his affectionate little friend. She has been trudging meanwhile on her humble course of life, cheerful, modest, laborious, doing her duty, with a helping little hand ready to relieve many a fallen wayfarer on her road. She had a room vacant in her house when Philip came. A room, indeed! Would she not have had a house vacant, if Philip wanted it? But in the interval since we saw her last, the Little Sister, too, has had to assume black robes. Her father, the old captain, has gone to his rest. His place is vacant in the little parlour: his bedroom is ready for Philip, as long as Philip will stay. She did not profess to feel much affliction for the loss of the captain. She talked of him constantly as though he were present; and made a supper for Philip, and seated him in her Pa's chair. How she bustled about on the night when Philip arrived! What a beaming welcome there was in her kind eyes! Her modest hair was touched with silver now; but her cheeks were like apples; her little figure was neat, and light, and active; and her voice, with its gentle laugh, and little sweet bad grammar, has always seemed one of the sweetest of voices to me.

Very soon after Philip's arrival in London, Mrs. Brandon paid a visit to the wife of Mr. Firmin's humble servant and biographer; and the two women had a fine sentimental consultation. All good women, you know, are sentimental. The idea of young lovers, of match-making, of amiable poverty, tenderly excites and interests them. My wife, at this time, began to pour off fine long letters to Miss Baynes, to which the latter modestly and dutifully replied, with many expressions, of fervour and gratitude for the interest which her friend in London was pleased to take in the little maid. I saw by these answers that Charlotte's union with Philip was taken as a received point by these two ladies. They discussed the ways and means. They did not talk about broughams, settlements, town and country houses, pin-moneys, trousseaux; and my wife,

in computing their sources of income, always pointed out that Miss Charlotte's fortune, though certainly small, would give a very useful addition to the young couple's income. "Fifty pounds a year not much! Let me tell you, sir, that fifty pounds a year is a very pretty little sum: if Philip can but make three hundred a year himself, Mrs. Brandon says they ought to be able to live quite nicely." You ask, my genteel friend, is it possible that people can live for four hundred a year? How do they manage, *ces pauvres gens*? They eat, they drink, they are clothed, they are warmed, they have roofs over their heads, and glass in their windows; and some of them are as good, happy, and well-bred as their neighbours who are ten times as rich. Then, besides this calculation of money, there is the fond woman's firm belief that the day will bring its daily bread for those who work for it and ask for it in the proper quarter; against which reasoning many a man knows it is in vain to argue. As to my own little objections and doubts, my wife met them by reference to Philip's former love affair with his cousin, Miss Twysden. "You had no objection in that case, sir," this logician would say. "You would have had him take a creature without a heart. You would cheerfully have seen him made miserable for life, because you thought there was money enough and a genteel connection. Money indeed! Very happy Mrs. Woolcomb is with her money! Very creditably to all sides has that marriage turned out!" I need scarcely remind my readers of the unfortunate result of that marriage. Woolcomb's behaviour to his wife was the agreeable talk of London society and of the London clubs very soon after the pair were joined together in holy matrimony. Do we not all remember how Woolcomb was accused of striking his wife, of starving his wife, and how she took refuge at home and came to her father's house with a black eye? The two Twysdens were so ashamed of this transaction, that father and son left off coming to Bays's, where I never heard their absence regretted but by one man, who said that Talbot owed him money for losses at whist for which he could get no settlement.

Should Mr. Firmin go and see his aunt in her misfortune? Bygones might be bygones, some of Philip's advisers thought. Now, Mrs. Twysden was unhappy, her heart might relent to Philip, whom she certainly had loved as a boy. Philip had the magnanimity to call upon her; and found her carriage waiting at the door. But a servant, after keeping the gentleman waiting in the dreary, well-remembered hall, brought him word that his mistress was out, smiled in his face with an engaging insolence, and proceeded to put cloaks, courtguides, and other female gear into the carriage in the presence of this poor deserted nephew. This visit, it must be owned, was one of Mrs. Laura's romantic efforts at reconciling enemies: as if, my good creature, the Twysdens ever let a man into their house who was poor or out of fashion! They lived in a constant dread lest Philip should call to borrow money of them. As if they ever lent money to a man who was in need! If they ask the respected reader to their house, depend on it they think he is well to do. On the other hand, the Twysdens made a very handsome entertainment for the new lord of Whipham and Ringwood who now reigned after his kinsman's death. They affably went and passed Christmas with him in the country; and they cringed and bowed before Sir John Ringwood as they had bowed and cringed before the earl in his time. The old earl had been a Tory in his latter days, when Talbot Twysden's views were also very conservative. The present lord of Ringwood was a Whig. It is surprising how liberal the Twysdens grew in the course of a fortnight's after-dinner conversation and pheasant-shooting talk at Ringwood. "Hang it! you know," young Twysden said, in his office afterwards, "a fellow must go with the politics of his family, you know!" and he bragged about the dinners, wines, splendours, cooks, and preserves of Ringwood as freely as in the time of his noble grand-uncle. Any one who has kept a house-dog in London, which licks your boots and your platter, and fawns for the bones in your dish, knows how the animal barks and flies at the poor who come to the door. The Twysdens, father and son, were of this canine species: and there are vast packs of such dogs here and elsewhere.

If Philip opened his heart to us, and talked unreservedly regarding his hopes and his plans, you may be sure he had his little friend, Mrs. Brandon, also in his confidence, and that no person in the world was more eager to serve him. Whilst we were talking about what was to be done, this little lady was also at work in her favourite's behalf. She had a firm ally in Mrs. Mugford, the proprietor's lady of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Mrs. Mugford had long been interested in Philip, his misfortunes and his love affairs. These two good women had made a sentimental hero of him. Ah! that they could devise some feasible scheme to help him! And such a chance actually did very soon present itself to these delighted women.

In almost all the papers of the new year appeared a brilliant advertisement, announcing the speedy appearance in Dublin of a new paper. It was to be called *The Shamrock*, and its first number was to be issued on the ensuing St. Patrick's day. I need not quote at length the advertisement which heralded the advent of this new periodical. The most famous pens of the national party in Ireland were, of course, engaged to contribute to its columns. Those pens would be hammered into steel of a different shape when the opportunity should offer. Beloved prelates, authors of world-wide fame, bards, the bold strings of whose lyres had rung through the isle already, and made millions of noble hearts to beat, and, by consequence,

double the number of eyes to fill; philosophers, renowned for science; and illustrious advocates, whose manly voices had ever spoken the language of hope and freedom to an would be found rallying round the journal, and proud to wear the symbol of The Shamrock. Finally, Michael Cassidy, Esq., was chosen to be the editor of this new journal.

This was the M. Cassidy, Esq., who appeared, I think, at Mr. Firmin's call-supper; and who had long been the sub-editor of the Pall Mall Gazette. If Michael went to Dame Street, why should not Philip be sub-editor at Pall Mall? Mrs. Brandon argued. Of course there would be a score of candidates for Michael's office. The editor would like the patronage. Barnet, Mugford's partner in the Gazette, would wish to appoint his man. Cassidy, before retiring, would assuredly intimate his approaching resignation to scores of gentlemen of his nation, who would not object to take the Saxon's pay until they finally shook his yoke off, and would eat his bread until the happy moment arrived when they could knock out his brains in fair battle. As soon as Mrs. Brandon heard of the vacant place, that moment she determined that Philip should have it. It was surprising what a quantity of information our little friend possessed about artists, and pressmen, and their lives, families, ways and mean. Many gentlemen of both professions came to Mr. Ridley's chambers, and called on the Little Sister on their way to and fro. How Tom Smith had left the Herald, and gone to the Post: what price Jack Jones had for his picture, and who sat for the principal figures. — I promise you Madam Brandon had all these interesting details by heart; and I think I have described this little person very inadequately if I have not made you understand that she was as intrepid a little jobber as ever lived, and never scrupled to go any length to serve a friend. To be Archbishop of Canterbury, to be professor of Hebrew, to be teacher of a dancing-school, to be organist for a church: for any conceivable place or function this little person would have asserted Philip's capability. "Don't tell me! He can dance or preach (as the case may be), or write beautiful! And as for being unfit to be a sub-editor, I want to know, has he not as good a head and as good an education as that Cassidy, indeed? And is not Cambridge College the best college in the world? It is, I say. And he went there ever so long. And he might have taken the very best prize, only money was no object to him then, dear fellow, and he did not like to keep the poor out of what he didn't want!"

Mrs. Mugford had always considered the young man as very haughty, but quite the gentleman, and speedily was infected by her gossip's enthusiasm about him. My wife hired a fly, packed several of the children into it, called upon Mrs. Mugford, and chose to be delighted with that lady's garden, with that lady's nursery — with everything that bore the name of Mugford. It was a curiosity to remark in what a flurry of excitement these women plunged, and how they schemed, and coaxed, and caballed, in order to get this place for their protégé. My wife thought — she merely happened to surmise: nothing more, of course — that Mrs. Mugford's fond desire was to shine in the world. "Could we not ask some people — with — with what you call handles to their names, — I think I before heard you use some such term, sir, — to meet the Mugfords? Some of Philip's old friends, who I am sure would be very happy to serve him." Some such artifice was, I own, practised. We coaxed, cajoled, fondled the Mugfords for Philip's sake, and heaven forgive Mrs. Laura her hypocrisy. We had an entertainment then, I own. We asked our finest company, and Mr. and Mrs. Mugford to meet them: and we prayed that unlucky Philip to be on his best behaviour to all persons who were invited to the feast.

Before my wife this lion of a Firmin was as a lamb. Rough, captious, and overbearing in general society, with those whom he loved and esteemed Philip was of all men the most modest and humble. He would never tire of playing with our children, joining in their games, laughing and roaring at their little sports. I have never had such a laughter at my jokes as Philip Firmin. I think my wife liked him for that noble guffaw with which he used to salute those pieces of wit. He arrived a little late sometimes with his laughing chorus, but ten people at table were not so loud as this faithful friend. On the contrary, when those people for whom he has no liking venture on a pun or other pleasantry, I am bound to own that Philip's acknowledgment of their waggery must be anything but pleasant or flattering to them. Now, on occasion of this important dinner, I enjoined him to be very kind, and very civil, and very much pleased with everybody, and to stamp upon nobody's corns, as indeed, why should he, in life? Who was he, to be censor morum? And it has been said that no man could admit his own faults with a more engaging candour than our friend.

We invited, then, Mugford, the proprietor of the Pall Mall Gazette, and his wife; and Bickerton, the editor of that periodical; Lord Ascot, Philip's old college friend; and one or two more gentlemen. Our invitations to the ladies were not so fortunate. Some were engaged, others away in the country keeping Christmas. In fine, we considered ourselves rather lucky in securing old Lady Hixie, who lives hard by in Westminster, and who will pass for a lady of fashion when no person of greater note is present. My wife told her that the object of the dinner was to make our friend Firmin acquainted with the editor and proprietor of the Pall Mall Gazette, with whom it was important that he should be on the most amicable footing.

Oh! very well. Lady Hixie promised to be quite gracious to the newspaper gentleman and his wife; and kept her promise most graciously during the evening. Our good friend Mrs. Mugford was the first of our guests to arrive. She drove "in her trap" from her villa in the suburbs; and after putting up his carriage at a neighbouring livery-stable, her groom volunteered to help our servants in waiting at dinner. His zeal and activity were remarkable. China smashed, and dish-covers clanged in the passage. Mrs. Mugford said that "Sam was at his old tricks;" and I hope the hostess showed she was mistress of herself amidst that fall of china. Mrs. Mugford came before the appointed hour, she said, in order to see our children. "With our late London dinner hours," she remarked, "children was never seen now." At Hampstead, hers always appeared at the dessert, and enlivened the table with their innocent outcries for oranges, and struggles for sweetmeats. In the nursery, where one little maid, in her crisp, long night-gown, was saying her prayers; where another little person, in the most airy costume, was standing before the great barred fire; where a third Lilliputian was sitting up in its night-cap and surplice, surveying the scene below from its crib; — the ladies found our dear Little Sister installed. She had come to see her little pets (she had known two or three of them from the very earliest times). She was a great favourite amongst them all; and, I believe, conspired with the cook down below in preparing certain delicacies for the table. A fine conversation then ensued about our children, about the Mugford children, about babies in general. And then the artful women (the house mistress and the Little Sister) brought Philip on the tapis, and discoursed à qui mieux, about his virtues, his misfortunes, his engagement, and that dear little creature to whom he was betrothed. This conversation went on until carriage-wheels were heard in the square, and the knocker (there were actually knockers in that old-fashioned place and time) began to peal. "Oh, bother! There's the company a-comin'," Mrs. Mugford said; and arranging her cap and flounces, with neat-handed Mrs. Brandon's aid, came down-stairs, after taking a tender leave of the little people, to whom she sent a present next day of a pile of fine Christmas books, which had come to the Pall Mall Gazette for review. The kind woman had been coaxed, wheedled, and won over to our side, to Philip's side. He had her vote for the sub-editorship, whatever might ensue.

Most of our guests had already arrived, when at length Mrs. Mugford was announced. I am bound to say that she presented a remarkable appearance, and that the splendour of her attire was such as is seldom beheld.

Bickerton and Philip were presented to one another, and had a talk about French politics before dinner, during which conversation Philip behaved with perfect discretion and politeness. Bickerton had happened to hear Philip's letters well spoken of — in a good quarter, mind; and his cordiality increased when Lord Ascot entered, called Philip by his surname, and entered into a perfectly free conversation with him. Old Lady Hixie went into perfectly good society, Bickerton condescended to acknowledge. "As for Mrs. Mugford," says he, with a glance of wondering compassion at that lady, "of course, I need not tell you that she is seen nowhere — nowhere." This said, Mr. Bickerton stepped forward, and calmly patronized my wife, gave me a good-natured nod for my own part, reminded Lord Ascot that he had had the pleasure of meeting him at Egham; and then fixed on Tom Page, of the Bread-and-Butter Office (who, I own, is one of our most genteel guests), with whom he entered into a discussion of some political matter of that day — I forget what: but the main point was that he named two or three leading public men with whom he had discussed the question, whatever it might be. He named very great names, and led us to understand that with the proprietors of those very great names he was on the most intimate and confidential footing. With his owners — with the proprietor of the Pall Mall Gazette, he was on the most distant terms, and indeed I am afraid that his behaviour to myself and my wife was scarcely respectful. I fancied I saw Philip's brow gathering wrinkles as his eye followed this man strutting from one person to another, and patronizing each. The dinner was a little late, from some reason best known in the lower regions. "I take it," says Bickerton, winking at Philip, in a pause of the conversation, "that our good friend and host is not much used to giving dinners. The mistress of the house is evidently in a state of perturbation." Philip gave such a horrible grimace that the other at first thought he was in pain.

"You, who have lived a good deal with old Ringwood, know what a good dinner is," Bickerton continued, giving Firmin a knowing look.

"Any dinner is good which is accompanied with such a welcome as I get here," said Philip.

"Oh! very good people, very good people, of course!" cries Bickerton.

I need not say he thinks he has perfectly succeeded in adopting the air of a man of the world. He went off to Lady Hixie and talked with her about the last great party at which he had met her; and then he turned to the host, and remarked that my friend, the doctor's son, was a fierce-looking fellow. In five minutes he had the good fortune to make himself hated by Mr. Firmin. He walks through the world patronizing his betters. "Our good friend is not much used to giving dinners," —

isn't he? I say, what do you mean by continuing to endure this man? Tom Page, of the Bread-and-Butter Office, is a well-known diner-out; Lord Ascot is a peer; Bickerton, in a pretty loud voice, talked to one or other of these during dinner and across the table. He sat next to Mrs. Mugford, but he turned his back on that bewildered woman, and never condescended to address a word to her personally. "Of course, I understand you, my dear fellow," he said to me when on the retreat of the ladies we approached within whispering distance. "You have these people at dinner for reasons of state. You have a book coming out, and want to have it noticed in the paper. I make a point of keeping these people at a distance — the only way of dealing with them, I give you my word."

Not one offensive word had Philip said to the chief writer of the Pall Mall Gazette; and I began to congratulate myself that our dinner would pass without any mishap, when some one unluckily happening to praise the wine, a fresh supply was ordered. "Very good claret. Who is your wine-merchant? Upon my word I get better claret here than I do in Paris — don't you think so, Mr. Fermor? Where do you generally dine in Paris?"

"I generally dine for thirty sous, and three francs on grand days, Mr. Beckerton," growls Philip.

"My name is Bickerton." ("What a vulgar thing for a fellow to talk about his thirty-sous dinners!" murmured my neighbour to me). "Well, there is no accounting for tastes. When I go to Paris I dine at the Trois Frères. Give me the Burgundy at Trois Frères."

"That is because you great leader writers are paid better than poor correspondents. I shall be delighted to be able to dine better." And with this Mr. Firmin smiles at Mr. Mugford, his master and owner.

"Nothing so vulgar as talking shop," says Bickerton, rather loud.

"I am not ashamed of the shop I keep. Are you of yours, Mr. Bickerton?" growls Philip.

"F. had him there," says Mr. Mugford.

Mr. Bickerton got up from table, turning quite pale. "Do you mean to be offensive, sir?" he asked.

"Offensive, sir? No, sir. Some men are offensive without meaning it. You have been several times tonight!" says Lord Philip.

"I don't see that I am called upon to bear this kind of thing at any man's table!" cried Mr. Bickerton. "Lord Ascot, I wish you good-night!"

"I say, old boy, what's the row about?" asked his lordship. And we were all astonished as my guest rose and left the table in great wrath.

"Serve him right, Firmin, I say!" said Mr. Mugford, again drinking off a glass.

"Why, don't you know?" says Tom Page. "His father keeps a haberdasher's shop at Cambridge, and sent him to Oxford, where he took a good degree."

And this had come of a dinner of conciliation — a dinner which was to advance Philip's interest in life!

"Hit him again, I say," cried Mugford, whom wine had rendered eloquent. "He's a supercilious beast, that Bickerton is, and I hate him, and so does Mrs. M."



CHAPTER 2

NARRATES THAT FAMOUS JOKE ABOUT MISS GRIGSBY.

For once Philip found that he had offended without giving general offence. In the confidence of female intercourse, Mrs. Mugford had already, in her own artless but powerful language, confirmed her husband's statement regarding Mr. Bickerton, and declared that B. was a beast, and she was only sorry that Mr. F. had not hit him a little harder. So different are the opinions which different individuals entertain of the same event! I happen to know that Bickerton, on his side, went away, averring that we were quarrelsome, underbred people; and that a man of any refinement had best avoid that kind of society. He does really and seriously believe himself our superior, and will lecture almost any gentleman on the art of being one. This assurance is not at all uncommon with your parvenu. Proud of his newly-acquired knowledge of the art of exhausting the contents of an egg, the well-known little boy of the apologue rushed to impart his knowledge to his grandmother, who had been for many years familiar with the process which the child had just discovered. Which of us has not met with some such instructors? I know men who would be ready to step forward and teach Taglioni how to dance, Tom Sayers how to box, or the Chevalier Bayard how to be a gentleman. We most of us know such men, and undergo, from time to time, the ineffable benefit of their patronage.

Mugford went away from our little entertainment vowing, by George, that Philip shouldn't want for a friend at the proper season; and this proper season very speedily arrived. I laughed one day, on going to the Pall Mall Gazette office, to find Philip installed in the sub-editor's room, with a provision of scissors, wafers, and paste-pots, snipping paragraphs from this paper and that, altering, condensing, giving titles, and so forth; and, in a word, in regular harness. The three-headed calves, the great prize gooseberries, the old maiden ladies of wonderful ages, who at length died in country places — it was wonderful (considering his little experience) how Firmin hunted out these. He entered into all the spirit of his business. He prided himself on the clever titles which he found for his paragraphs. When his paper was completed at the week's end, he surveyed it fondly — not the leading articles, or those profound and yet brilliant literary essays which appeared in the Gazette — but the births, deaths, marriages, markets, trials, and what not. As a shop-boy, having decorated his master's window, goes into the street, and pleased surveys his work; so the fair face of the Pall Mall Gazette rejoiced Mr. Firmin, and Mr. Bince, the printer of the paper. They looked with an honest pride upon the result of their joint labours. Nor did Firmin relish pleasantries on the subject. Did his friends allude to it, and ask if he had shot any especially fine canard that week? Mr. Philip's brow would corrugate and his cheeks redden. He did not like jokes to be made at his expense. Was not his a singular antipathy?

In his capacity of sub-editor, the good fellow had the privilege of taking and giving away countless theatre orders, and panorama and diorama tickets: the Pall Mall Gazette was not above accepting such little bribes in those days, and Mrs. Mugford's familiarity with the names of opera singers, and splendid appearance in an opera-box, was quite remarkable. Friend Philip would bear away a heap of these cards of admission, delighted to carry off our young folks to one exhibition or another. But once at the diorama, where our young people sat in the darkness, very much frightened as usual, a voice from out the midnight gloom cried out: "Who has come in with orders from the Pall Mall Gazette?" A lady, two scared children, and Mr. Sub-editor Philip, all trembled at this dreadful summons. I think I should not dare to print the story even now, did I not know that Mr. Firmin was travelling abroad. It was a blessing the place was dark, so that none could see the poor sub-editor's blushes. Rather than cause any mortification to this lady, I am sure Philip would have submitted to rack and torture. But, indeed, her annoyance was very slight, except in seeing her friend annoyed. The humour of the scene surpassed the annoyance in the lady's mind, and caused her to laugh at the mishap; but I own our little boy (who is of an aristocratic turn, and rather too sensitive to ridicule from his schoolfellows) was not at all anxious to talk upon the subject, or to let the world know that he went to a place of public amusement "with an order."

As for Philip's landlady, the Little sister, she, you know, had been familiar with the press and press-men, and orders for the play for years past. She looked quite young and pretty, with her kind smiling face and neat tight black dress, as she came to the theatre — it was to an Easter piece — on Philip's arm, one evening. Our children saw her from their cab, as they, too, were driving to the same performance. It was "Look, mamma! There's Philip and the Little Sister!" And then came such smiles, and nods, and delighted recognitions from the cab to the two friends on foot! Of course I have forgotten

what was the piece which we all saw on that Easter evening. But those children will never forget; no, though they live to be a hundred years old, and though their attention was distracted from the piece by constant observation of Philip and his companion in the public boxes opposite.

Mr. Firmin's work and pay were both light, and he accepted both very cheerfully. He saved money out of his little stipend. It was surprising how economically he could live with his little landlady's aid and counsel. He would come to us, recounting his feats of parsimony with a childish delight. He loved to contemplate his sovereigns, as week by week the little pile accumulated. He kept a sharp eye upon sales, and purchased now and again articles of furniture. In this way he brought home a piano to his lodgings, on which he could no more play than he could on the tight-rope; but he was given to understand that it was a very fine instrument; and my wife played on it one day when we went to visit him, and he sat listening, with his great hands on his knees, in ecstasies. He was thinking how one day, please heaven, he should see other hands touching the keys — and player and instrument disappeared in a mist before his happy eyes. His purchases were not always lucky. For example, he was sadly taken in at an auction about a little pearl ornament. Some artful Hebrews at the sale conspired and ran him up, as the phrase is, to a price more than equal to the value of the trinket. "But you know who it was for, ma'am," one of Philip's apologists said. "If she would like to wear his ten fingers he would cut 'em off and send 'em to her. But he keeps 'em to write her letters and verses — and most beautiful they are, too."

"And the dear fellow, who was bred up in splendour and luxury, Mrs. Mugford, as you, ma'am, know too well — he won't drink no wine now. A little whiskey and a glass of beer is all he takes. And his clothes — he used to be so grand — you see how he is now, ma'am. Always the gentleman, and, indeed, a finer or grander looking gentleman never entered a room; but he is saving — you know for what, ma'am."

And, indeed, Mrs. Mugford did know; and so did Mrs. Pendennis and Mrs. Brandon. And these three women worked themselves into a perfect fever, interesting themselves for Mr. Firmin. And Mugford, in his rough, funny way, used to say, "Mr. P., a certain Mr. Heff has come and put our noses out of joint. He has, as sure as my name is Hem. And I am getting quite jealous of our sub-editor, and that is the long and short of it. But it's good to see him haw-haw Bickerton if ever they meet in the office, that it is! Bickerton won't bully him any more, I promise you!"

The conclaves and conspiracies of these women were endless in Philip's behalf. One day I let the Little Sister out of my house, with a handkerchief to her eyes, and in a great state of flurry and excitement, which perhaps communicates itself to the gentleman who passes her at his own door. The gentleman's wife is on her part not a little moved and excited. "What do you think Mrs. Brandon says? Philip is learning shorthand. He says he does not think he is clever enough to be a writer of any mark; — but he can be a reporter, and with this and his place at Mr. Mugford's, he thinks he can earn enough to — Oh, he is a fine fellow!" I suppose feminine emotion stopped the completion of this speech. But when Mr. Philip slouched into dinner that day, his hostess did homage before him: she loved him: she treated him with a tender respect and sympathy which her like are ever wont to bestow upon brave and honest men in misfortune.

Why should not Mr. Philip Firmin, barrister-at-law, bethink him that he belonged to a profession which has helped very many men to competence, and not a few to wealth and honours? A barrister might surely hope for as good earnings as could be made by a newspaper reporter. We all knew instances of men who, having commenced their careers as writers for the press, had carried on the legal profession simultaneously, and attained the greatest honours of the bar and the bench. "Can I sit in a Pump-court garret waiting for attorneys?" asked poor Phil; "I shall break my heart before they come. My brains are not worth much: I should addle them altogether in poring over law books. I am not at all a clever fellow, you see; and I haven't the ambition and obstinate will to succeed which carry on many a man with no greater capacity than my own. I may have as good brains as Bickerton, for example; but I am not so bumptious as he is. By claiming the first place wherever he goes, he gets it very often. My dear friends, don't you see how modest I am? There never was a man less likely to get on than myself — you must own that; and I tell you that Charlotte and I must look forward to a life of poverty, of cheese-parings, and second-floor lodgings at Pentonville or Islington. That's about my mark. I would let her off, only I know she would not take me at my word — the dear little thing. She has set her heart upon a hulking pauper, that's the truth. And I tell you what I am going to do. I am going seriously to learn the profession of poverty, and make myself master of it. What's the price of cowheel and tripe? You don't know. I do; and the right place to buy 'em. I am as good a judge of sprats as any man in London. My tap in life is to be small beer henceforth, and I am growing quite to like it, and think it is brisk and pleasant, and wholesome." There was not a little truth in Philip's account of himself, and his capacities and incapacities. Doubtless, he was not born to make a great name for himself in the world. But do we like those only who are

famous? As well say we will only give our regard to men who have ten thousand a year, or are more than six feet high.

While, of his three female friends and advisers, my wife admired Philip's humility, Mrs. Brandon and Mrs. Mugford were rather disappointed at his want of spirit, and to think that he aimed so low. I shall not say which side Firmin's biographer took in this matter. Was it my business to applaud or rebuke him for being humble-minded, or was I called upon to advise at all? My amiable reader, acknowledge that you and I in life pretty much go our own way. We eat the dishes we like, because we like them; not because our neighbour relishes them. We rise early, or sit up late; we work, idle, smoke, or what not, because we choose so to do, not because the doctor orders. Philip, then, was like you and me, who will have our own way when we can. Will we not? If you won't, you do not deserve it. Instead of hungering after a stalled ox, he was accustoming himself to be content with a dinner of herbs. Instead of braving the tempest, he chose to take in sail, creep along shore, and wait for calmer weaher.

So, on Tuesday of every week let us say, it was this modest sub-editor's duty to begin snipping and pasting paragraphs for the ensuing Saturday's issue. He cut down the parliamentary speeches, giving due favouritism to the orators of the Pall Mall Gazette party, and meagre outlines of their opponents' discourses. If the leading public men on the side of the Pall Mall Gazette gave entertainments, you may be sure they were duly chronicled in the fashionable intelligence; if one of their party wrote a book it was pretty sure to get praise from the critic. I am speaking of simple old days, you understand. Of course there is no puffing, or jobbing, or false praise, or unfair censure now. Every critic knows what he is writing about, and writes with no aim but to tell truth.

Thus Philip, the dandy of two years back, was content to wear the shabbiest old coat; Philip, the Philippus of one-and-twenty, who rode showy horses, and rejoiced to display his horse and person in the Park, now humbly took his place in an omnibus, and only on occasions indulged in a cab. From the roof of the larger vehicle he would salute his friends with perfect affability, and stare down on his aunt as she passed in her barouche. He never could be quite made to acknowledge that she purposely would not see him: or he would attribute her blindness to the quarrel which they had had, not to his poverty and present position. As for his cousin Ringwood, "That fellow would commit any baseness," Philip acknowledged; "and it is I who have cut him," our friend averred.

A real danger was lest our friend should in his poverty become more haughty and insolent than he had been in his days of better fortune, and that he should make companions of men who were not his equals. Whether was it better for him to be slighted in a fashionable club, or to swagger at the head of the company in a tavern parlour? This was the danger we might fear for Firmin. It was impossible not to confess that he was choosing to take a lower place in the world than that to which he had been born.

"Do you mean that Philip is lowered, because he is poor?" asked an angry lady, to whom this remark was made by her husband — man and wife being both very good friends to Mr. Firmin.

"My dear," replies the worlding of a husband, "suppose Philip were to take a fancy to buy a donkey and sell cabbages? He would be doing no harm; but there is no doubt he would lower himself in the world's estimation."

"Lower himself!" says the lady, with a toss of her head. "No man lowers himself by pursuing an honest calling. No man!"

"Very good. There is Grundsell, the greengrocer, out of Tuthill Street, who waits at our dinners. Instead of asking him to wait, we should beg him to sit down at table; or perhaps we should wait, and stand with a napkin behind Grundsell."

"Nonsense!"

"Grundsell's calling is strictly honest, unless he abuses his opportunities, and smuggles away —"

"— smuggles away stuff and nonsense!"

"Very good; Grundsell is not a fitting companion, then, for us, or the nine little Grundells for our children. Then why should Philip give up the friends of his youth, and forsake a club for a tavern parlour? You can't say our little friend, Mrs. Brandon, good as she is, is a fitting companion for him?"

"If he had a good little wife, he would have a companion of his own degree; and he would be twice as happy; and he would be out of all danger and temptation — and the best thing he can do is to marry directly!" cries the lady. "And, my dear, I think I shall write to Charlotte and ask her to come and stay with us."

There was no withstanding this argument. As long as Charlotte was with us we were sure that Philip would be out of harm's way, and seek for no other company. There was a snug little bedroom close by the quarters inhabited by our own

children. My wife pleased herself by adorning this chamber, and uncle Mac happening to come to London on business about this time, the young lady came over to us under his convoy, and I should like to describe the meeting between her and Mr. Philip in our parlour. No doubt it was very edifying. But my wife and I were not present, vous concevez. We only heard one shout of surprise and delight from Philip as he went into the room where the young lady was waiting. We had but said, "Go into the parlour, Philip. You will find your old friend, Major Mac, there. He has come to London on business, and has news of — " There was no need to speak, for here Philip straightway bounced into the room.

And then came the shout. And then out came Major Mac, with such a droll twinkle in his eyes! What artifices and hypocrisies had we not to practise previously, so as to keep our secret from our children, who assuredly would have discovered it! I must tell you that the paterfamilias had guarded against the innocent prattle and inquiries of the children regarding the preparation of the little bedroom, by informing them that it was intended for Miss Grigsby, the governess, with whose advent they had long been threatened. And one of our girls, when the unconscious Philip arrived, said, "Philip, if you go into the parlour, you will find Miss Grigsby, the governess, there." And then Philip entered into that parlour, and then arose that shout, and then out came uncle Mac, and then And we called Charlotte Miss Grigsby all dinner-time; and we called her Miss Grigsby next day; and the more we called her Miss Grigsby the more we all laughed. And the baby, who could not speak plain yet, called her Miss Gibby, and laughed loudest of all; and it was such fun. But I think Philip and Charlotte had the best of the fun, my dears, though they may not have laughed quite so loud as we did.

As for Mrs. Brandon, who, you may be sure, speedily came to pay us a visit, Charlotte blushed, and looked quite beautiful when she went up and kissed the Little Sister. "He have told you about me, then!" she said, in her soft little voice, smoothing the young lady's brown hair. "Should I have known him at all but for you, and did you not save his life for me when he was ill?" asked Miss Baynes. "And mayn't I love everybody who loves him?" she asked. And we left these women alone for a quarter of an hour, during which they became the most intimate friends in the world. And all our household, great and small, including the nurse (a woman of a most jealous, domineering, and uncomfortable fidelity), thought well of our gentle young guest, and welcomed Miss Grigsby.

Charlotte, you see, is not so exceedingly handsome as to cause other women to perjure themselves by protesting that she is no great things after all. At the period with which we are concerned, she certainly had a lovely complexion, which her black dress set off, perhaps. And when Philip used to come into the room, she had always a fine garland of roses ready to offer him, and growing upon her cheeks, the moment he appeared. Her manners are so entirely unaffected and simple that they can't be otherwise than good: for is she not grateful, truthful, unconscious of self, easily pleased, and interested in others? Is she very witty? I never said so — though that she appreciated some men's wit (whose names need not be mentioned) I cannot doubt. "I say," cries Philip, on that memorable first night of her arrival, and when she and other ladies had gone to bed, "by George! isn't she glorious, I say! What can I have done to win such a pure little heart as that? Non sum dignus. It is too much happiness — too much, by George!" And his voice breaks behind his pipe, and he squeezes two fists into eyes that are brimful of joy and thanks. Where Fortune bestows such a bounty as this, I think we need not pity a man for what she withdraws. As Philip walks away at midnight (walks away? is turned out of doors; or surely he would have gone on talking till dawn), with the rain beating in his face, and fifty or a hundred pounds for all his fortune in his pocket, I think there goes one of the happiest of men — the happiest and richest. For is he not possessor of a treasure which he could not buy, or would not sell, for all the wealth of the world?

My wife may say what she will, but she assuredly is answerable for the invitation to Miss Baynes, and for all that ensued in consequence. At a hint that she would be a welcome guest in our house, in London, where all her heart and treasure lay, Charlotte Baynes gave up straightway her dear aunt, at Tours, who had been kind to her; her dear uncle, her dear mamma, and all her dear brothers — following that natural law which ordains that a woman, under certain circumstances, shall resign home, parents, brothers, sisters, for the sake of that one individual who is henceforth to be dearer to her than all. Mrs. Baynes, the widow, growled a complaint at her daughter's ingratitude, but did not refuse her consent. She may have known that little Hely, Charlotte's volatile admirer, had fluttered off to another flower by this time, and that a pursuit of that butterfly was in vain: or she may have heard that he was going to pass the spring — the butterfly season — in London, and hoped that he perchance might again light on her girl. Howbeit, she was glad enough that her daughter should accept an invitation to our house, and owned that as yet the poor child's share of this life's pleasures had been but small. Charlotte's modest little trunks were again packed, then, and the poor child was sent off, I won't say with how small a provision of pocket-money, by her mother. But the thrifty woman had but little, and of it was determined to

give as little as she could. "Heaven will provide for my child," she would piously say; and hence interfered very little with those agents whom heaven sent to befriend her children.

"Her mother told Charlotte that she would send her some money next Tuesday," the major told us; "but, between ourselves, I doubt whether she will. Between ourselves, my sister-in-law is always going to give money next Tuesday: but somehow Wednesday comes, and the money has not arrived. I could not let the little maid be without a few guineas, and have provided her out of a half-pay purse; but mark me, that pay-day Tuesday will never come." Shall I deny or confirm the worthy major's statement? Thus far I will say, that Tuesday most certainly came; and a letter from her mamma to Charlotte, which said that one of her brothers and a younger sister were going to stay with aunt Mac; and that as Char was so happy with her most hospitable and kind friends, a fond widowed mother, who had given up all pleasures for herself, would not interfere to prevent a darling child's happiness.

It has been said that three women, whose names have been given up, were conspiring in the behalf of this young person and the young man her sweetheart. Three days after Charlotte's arrival at our house, my wife persists in thinking that a drive into the country would do the child good, orders a brougham, dresses Charlotte in her best, and trots away to see Mrs. Mugford at Hampstead. Mrs. Brandon is at Mrs. Mugford's, of course quite by chance: and I feel sure that Charlotte's friend compliments Mrs. Mugford upon her garden, upon her nursery, upon her luncheon, upon everything that is hers. "Why, dear me," says Mrs. Mugford (as the ladies discourse upon a certain subject), "what does it matter? Me and Mugford married on two pound a week; and on two pound a week my dear eldest children were born. It was a hard struggle sometimes, but we were all the happier for it; and I'm sure if a man won't risk a little he don't deserve much. I know I would risk, if I were a man, to marry such a pretty young dear. And I should take a young man to be but a mean-spirited fellow who waited and went shilly-shallying when he had but to say the word and be happy. I thought Mr. F. was a brave, courageous gentleman, I did, Mrs. Brandon. Do you want me for to have a bad opinion of him? My dear, a little of that cream. It's very good. We'ad a dinner yesterday, and a cook down from town, on purpose." This speech, with appropriate imitations of voice and gesture, was repeated to the present biographer by the present biographer's wife, and he now began to see in what webs and meshes of conspiracy these artful women had enveloped the subject of the present biography.

Like Mrs. Brandon, and the other matron, Charlotte's friend, Mrs. Mugford, became interested in the gentle young creature, and kissed her kindly, and made her a present on going away. It was a brooch in the shape of a thistle, if I remember aright, set with amethysts and a lovely Scottish stone called, I believe, a carumgorum. "She ain't no style about her: and I confess, from a general's daughter, brought up on the Continent, I should have expected better. But we'll show her a little of the world and the opera, Brandon, and she'll do very well, of that I make no doubt." And Mrs. Mugford took Miss Baynes to the opera, and pointed out the other people of fashion there assembled. And delighted Charlotte was. I make no doubt there was a young gentleman of our acquaintance at the back of the box who was very happy too. And this year, Philip's kinsman's wife, Lady Ringwood, had a box, in which Philip saw her and her daughters, and little Ringwood Twysden paying assiduous court to her ladyship. They met in the crush-room by chance again, and Lady Ringwood looked hard at Philip and the blushing young lady on his arm. And it happened that Mrs. Mugford's carriage — the little one-horse trap which opens and shuts so conveniently — and Lady Ringwood's tall, emblazoned chariot of state, stopped the way together. And from the tall emblazoned chariot the ladies looked not unkindly at the trap which contained the beloved of Philip's heart: and the carriages departed each on its way: and Ringwood Twysden, seeing his cousin advancing towards him, turned very pale, and dodged at a double quick down an arcade. But he need not have been afraid of Philip. Mr. Firmin's heart was all softness and benevolence at that time. He was thinking of those sweet, sweet eyes that had just glanced to him a tender good-night; of that little hand which a moment since had hung with fond pressure on his arm. Do you suppose in such a frame of mind he had leisure to think of a nauseous little reptile crawling behind him? He was so happy that night, that Philip was King Philip again. And he went to the Haunt, and sang his song of Garry-owenna-gloria, and greeted the boys assembled, and spent at least three shillings over his supper and drinks. But the next day being Sunday, Mr. Firmin was at West-minster Abbey, listening to the sweet church chants, by the side of the very same young person whom he had escorted to the opera on the night before. They sate together so close that one must have heard exactly as well as the other. I daresay it is edifying to listen to anthems à deux. And how complimentary to the clergyman to have to wish that the sermon was longer! Through the vast cathedral aisles the organ notes peal gloriously. Ruby and topaz and amethysts blaze from the great church windows. Under the tall arcades the young people went together. Hand in hand

they passed, and thought no ill.

Do gentle readers begin to tire of this spectacle of billing and cooing? I have tried to describe Mr. Philip's love affairs with as few words and in as modest phrases as may be — omitting the raptures, the passionate vows, the reams of correspondence, and the usual commonplaces of his situation. And yet, my dear madam, though you and I may be past the age of billing and cooing, though your ringlets, which I remember a lovely auburn, are now — well — are now a rich purple and green black, and my brow may be as bald as a cannon-ball; — I say, though we are old, we are not too old to forget. We may not care about the pantomime much now, but we like to take the young folks, and see them rejoicing. From the window where I write, I can look down into the garden of a certain square. In that garden I can at this moment see a young gentleman and lady of my acquaintance pacing up and down. They are talking some such talk as Milton imagines our first parents engaged in; and yonder garden is a paradise to my young friends. Did they choose to look outside the railings of the square, or at any other objects than each other's noses, they might see — the tax-gatherer we will say — with his book, knocking at one door; the doctor's brougham at a second; a hatchment over the windows of a third mansion; the baker's boy discoursing with the housemaid over the railings of a fourth. But what to them are these phenomena of life? Arm in arm my young folks go pacing up and down their Eden, and discoursing about that happy time which I suppose is now drawing near, about that charming little snugger for which the furniture is ordered, and to which, miss, your old friend and very humble servant will take the liberty of forwarding his best regards and a neat silver teapot. I daresay, with these young people, as with Mr. Philip and Miss Charlotte, all occurrences of life seem to have reference to that event which forms the subject of their perpetual longing and contemplation. There is the doctor's brougham driving away, and Imogene says to Alonzo, "What anguish I shall have if you are ill!" Then there is the carpenter putting up the hatchment. "Ah, my love, if you were to die, I think they might put up a hatchment for both of us," says Alonzo, with a killing sigh. Both sympathize with Mary and the baker's boy whispering over the railings. Go to, gentle baker's boy, we also know what it is to love!

The whole soul and strength of Charlotte and Philip being bent upon marriage, I take leave to put in a document which Philip received at this time; and can imagine that it occasioned no little sensation:—

Astor House, New York.

"And so you are returned to the great city — to the fumum, the strepitum, and I sincerely hope the opes of our Rome!" Your own letters are but brief; but I have an occasional correspondent (there are few, alas! who remember the exile!) who keeps me au courant of my Philip's history, and tells me that you are industrious, that you are cheerful, that you prosper. Cheerfulness is the companion of Industry, Prosperity their offspring. That that prosperity may attain the fullest growth, is an absent father's fondest prayer! Perhaps ere long I shall be able to announce to you that I too am prospering. I am engaged in pursuing a scientific discovery here (it is medical, and connected with my own profession), of which the results ought to lead to Fortune, unless the jade has for ever deserted George Brand Firmin! So you have embarked in the drudgery of the press, and have become a member of the fourth estate. It has been despised, and press-man and poverty were for a long time supposed to be synonymous. But the power, the wealth of the press are daily developing, and they will increase yet further. I confess I should have liked to hear that my Philip was pursuing his profession of the bar, at which honour, splendid competence, nay, aristocratic rank, are the prizes of the bold, the industrious, and the deserving. Why should you not — should I not — still hope that you may gain legal eminence and position? A father who has had much to suffer, who is descending the vale of years alone and in a distant land, would be soothed in his exile if he thought his son would one day be able to repair the shattered fortunes of his race. But it is not yet, I fondly think, too late. You may yet qualify for the bar, and one of its prizes may fall to you. I confess it was not without a pang of grief I heard from our kind little friend Mrs. B., you were studying shorthand in order to become a newspaper reporter. And has Fortune, then, been so relentless to me, that my son is to be compelled to follow such a calling? I shall try and be resigned. I had hoped higher things for you — for me.

"My dear boy, with regard to your romantic attachment for Miss Baynes, which our good little Brandon narrates to me, in her peculiar orthography, but with much touching simplicity," — I make it a rule not to say a word of comment, of warning, or remonstrance. As sure as you are your father's son, you will take your own line in any matter of attachment to a woman, and all the fathers in the world won't stop you. In Philip of four-and-twenty I recognize his father thirty years ago. My father scolded, entreated, quarrelled with me, never forgave me. I will learn to be more generous towards my son. I may grieve, but I bear you no malice. If ever I achieve wealth again, you shall not be deprived of it. I suffered so myself

from a harsh father, that I will never be one to my son!

“As you have put on the livery of the Muses, and regularly entered yourself of the Fraternity of the Press, what say you to a little addition to your income by letters addressed to my friend, the editor of the new journal, called here the Gazette of the Upper Ten Thousand. It is the fashionable journal published here; and your qualifications are precisely those which would make your services valuable as a contributor. Doctor Geraldine, the editor, is not, I believe, a relative of the Leinster family, but a self-made man, who arrived in this country some years since, poor, and an exile from his native country. He advocates Repeal politics in Ireland; but with these of course you need have nothing to do. And he is much too liberal to expect these from his contributors. I have been of service professionally to Mrs. Geraldine and himself. My friend of the Emerald introduced me to the doctor. Terrible enemies in print, in private they are perfectly good friends, and the little passages of arms between the two journalists serve rather to amuse than to irritate. ‘The grocer’s boy from Ormond Quay’ (Geraldine once, it appears, engaged in that useful but humble calling), and the ‘miscreant from Cork’ (the editor of the Emerald comes from that city) assail each other in public, but drink whiskey-and-water galore in private. If you write for Geraldine, of course you will say nothing disrespectful about grocers’ boys. His dollars are good silver, of that you may be sure. Dr. G. knows a part of your history: he knows that you are now fairly engaged in literary pursuits; that you are a man of education, a gentleman, a man of the world, a man of courage. I have answered for your possessing all these qualities. (The doctor, in his droll, humorous way, said that if you were a chip of the old block you would be just what he called ‘the grit.’) Political treatises are not so much wanted as personal news regarding the notabilities of London, and these, I assured him, you were the very man to be able to furnish. You, who know everybody; who have lived with the great world — the world of lawyers, the world of artists, the world of the university — have already had an experience which few gentlemen of the press can boast of, and may turn that experience to profit. Suppose you were to trust a little to your imagination in composing these letters? there can be no harm in being poetical. Suppose an intelligent correspondent writes that he has met the D-ke of W-ll-ngt-n, had a private interview with the Pr-m-r, and so forth, who is to say him nay? And this is the kind of talk our gobemouches of New York delight in. My worthy friend, Doctor Geraldine, for example (between ourselves his name is Finnigan, but his private history is strictly *entre nous*,) when he first came to New York astonished the people by the copiousness of his anecdotes regarding the English aristocracy, of whom he knows as much as he does of the Court of Peking. He was smart, ready, sarcastic, amusing; he found readers: from one success he advanced to another, and the Gazette of the Upper Ten Thousand is likely to make this worthy man’s fortune. You really may be serviceable to him, and may justly earn the liberal remuneration which he offers for a weekly letter. Anecdotes of men and women of fashion — the more gay and lively the more welcome — the *quicquid agunt homines*, in a word, — should be the *farrago libelli*. Who are the reigning beauties of London? (and Beauty, you know, has a rank and fashion of its own.) Has any one lately won or lost on the turf or at play? What are the clubs talking about? Are there any duels? What is the last scandal? Does the good old duke keep his health? Is that affair over between the Duchess of This and Captain That?

“Such is the information which our badauds here like to have, and for which my friend the doctor will pay at the rate of — dollars per letter. Your name need not appear at all. The remuneration is certain.” *C’est à prendre ou à laisser*, as our lively neighbours say. Write in the first place in confidence to me; and in whom can you confide more safely than in your father?

“You will, of course, pay your respects to your relative the new lord of Ringwood. For a young man whose family is so powerful as yours, there can surely be no derogation in entertaining some feudal respect, and who knows whether and how soon Sir John Ringwood may be able to help his cousin? By the way, Sir John is a Whig, and your paper is a Conservative. But you are, above all, *homme du monde*. In such a subordinate place as you occupy with the Pall Mall Gazette, a man’s private politics do not surely count at all. If Sir John Ringwood, your kinsman, sees any way of helping you, so much the better, and of course your politics will be those of your family. I have no knowledge of him. He was a very quiet man at college, where, I regret to say, your father’s friends were not of the quiet sort at all. I trust I have repented. I have sown my wild oats. And ah! how pleased I shall be to hear that my Philip has bent his proud head a little, and is ready to submit more than he used of old to the customs of the world. Call upon Sir John, then. As a Whig gentleman of large estate, I need not tell you that he will expect respect from you. He is your kinsman; the representative of your grandfather’s gallant and noble race. He bears the name your mother bore. To her my Philip was always gentle, and for her sake you will comply with the wishes of your affectionate father,

“G. B. F.”

"I have not said a word of compliment to made-moiselle. I wish her so well that I own I wish she were about to marry a richer suitor than my dear son. Will fortune ever permit me to embrace my daughter-in-law, and take your children on my knee? You will speak kindly to them of their grandfather, will you not? Poor General Baynes, I have heard, used violent and unseemly language regarding me, which I most heartily pardon. I am grateful when I think that I never did General B. an injury: grateful and proud to accept benefits from my own son. These I treasure up in my heart; and still hope I shall be able to repay with something more substantial than my fondest prayers. Give my best wishes, then, to Miss Charlotte, and try and teach her to think kindly of her Philip's father."

Miss Charlotte Baynes, who kept the name of Miss Grigsby, the governess, amongst all the roguish children of a facetious father, was with us one month, and her mamma expressed great cheerfulness at her absence, and at the thought that she had found such good friends. After two months, her uncle Major MacWhirter, returned from visiting his relations in the North, and offered to take his niece back to France again. He made this proposition with the jolliest air in the world, and as if his niece would jump for joy to go back to her mother. But to the major's astonishment, Miss Baynes turned quite pale, ran to her hostess, flung herself into that lady's arms and then there began an osculatory performance which perfectly astonished the good major. Charlotte's friend, holding Miss Baynes tight in her embrace, looked fiercely at the major over the girl's shoulder, and defied him to take her away from that sanctuary.

"Oh, you dear, good dear friend!" Charlotte gurgled out, and sobbed I know not what more expressions of fondness and gratitude.

But the truth is, that two sisters, or mother and daughter, could not love each other more heartily than these two personages. Mother and daughter forsooth! You should have seen Charlotte's piteous look when sometimes the conviction would come on her that she ought at length to go home to mamma; such a look as I can fancy Iphigenia casting on Agamemnon, when, in obedience to a painful sense of duty, he was about to — to use the sacrificial knife. No, we all loved her. The children would howl at the idea of parting with their Miss Grigsby. Charlotte, in return, helped them to very pretty lessons in music and French — served hot, as it were, from her own recent studies at Tours — and a good daily governess operated on the rest of their education to everybody's satisfaction.

And so months rolled on and our young favourite still remained with us. Mamma fed the little maid's purse with occasional remittances; and begged her hostess to supply her with all necessary articles from the milliner. Afterwards, it is true, Mrs. General Baynes — But why enter upon these painful family disputes in a chapter which has been devoted to sentiment?

As soon as Mr. Firmin received the letter above faithfully copied (with the exception of the pecuniary offer, which I do not consider myself at liberty to divulge), he hurried down from Thornhaugh Street to Westminster. He dashed by Buttons, the page, he took no notice of my wondering wife at the drawing-room door; he rushed to the second floor, bursting open the school-room door, where Charlotte was teaching our dear third daughter to play *In my Cottage near a Wood*.

"Charlotte! Charlotte!" he cried out.

"La, Philip! don't you see Miss Grigsby is giving us lessons?" said the children.

But he would not listen to those wags, and still beckoned Charlotte to him. That young woman rose up and followed him out of the door, as, indeed, she would have followed him out of the window; and there, on the stairs, they read Dr. Firmin's letter, with their heads quite close together, you understand.

"Two hundred a year more," said Philip, his heart throbbing so that he could hardly speak; "and your fifty — and two hundred the Gazette — and —"

"Oh, Philip!" was all Charlotte could say, and then — There was a pretty group for the children to see, and for an artist to draw!



CHAPTER 3

WAYS AND MEANS.

Of course any man of the world, who is possessed of decent prudence, will perceive that the idea of marrying on four hundred and fifty pounds a year so secured as was Master Philip's income, was preposterous and absurd. In the first place, you can't live on four hundred and fifty pounds a year, that is a certainty. People do live on less, I believe. But a life without a brougham, without a decent house, without claret for dinner, and a footman to wait, can hardly be called existence. Philip's income might fail any day. He might not please the American paper. He might quarrel with the Pall Mall Gazette. And then what would remain to him? Only poor little Charlotte's fifty pounds a year! So Philip's most intimate male friend — a man of the world, and with a good deal of experience — argued. Of course I was not surprised that Philip did not choose to take my advice: though I did not expect he would become so violently angry, call names almost, and use most rude expressions, when, at his express desire, this advice was tendered to him. If he did not want it, why did he ask for it? The advice might be unwelcome to him, but why did he choose to tell me at my own table, over my own claret, that it was the advice of a sneak and a worldling? My good fellow, that claret, though it is a second growth, and I can afford no better, costs seventy-two shillings a dozen. How much is six times three hundred and sixty-five? A bottle a day is the least you can calculate (the fellow would come to my house and drink two bottles to himself, with the utmost nonchalance). A bottle per diem of that light charet — of that second-growth stuff — costs one hundred and four guineas a year, do you understand? or, to speak plainly with you, one hundred and nine pounds four shillings!

"Well," says Philip, "après? We'll do without. Meantime I will take what I can get!" and he tosses off about a pint as he speaks (these mousseline glasses are not only enormous, but they break by dozens.) He tosses off a pint of my Larose, and gives a great roar of laughter, as if he had said a good thing.

Philip Firmin is coarse and offensive at times, and Bickerton in holding this opinion is not altogether wrong.

"I'll drink claret when I come to you, old boy," he says, grinning; "and at home I will have whiskey-and-water."

"But suppose Charlotte is ordered claret?"

"Well, she can have it," says this liberal lover; "a bottle will last her a week."

"Don't you see," I shriek out, "that even a bottle a week costs something like — sixty by fifty-two — eighteen pounds a year?" (I own it is really only fifteen twelve; but, in the hurry of argument, a man may stretch a figure or so.) "Eighteen pounds for Charlotte's claret; as much, at least, you great boozy toper, for your whisky and beer. Why, you actually want a tenth part of your income for the liquor you consume! And then clothes; and then lodging; and then coals; and then doctor's bills; and then pocket-money; and then sea-side for the little dears. Just have the kindness to add these things up, and you will find that you have about two-and-ninepence left to pay the grocer and the butcher."

"What you call prudence," says Philip, thumping the table, and, of course, breaking a glass, "I call cowardice — I call blasphemy! Do you mean, as a Christian man, to tell me that two young people, and a family if it should please heaven to send them one, cannot subsist upon five hundred pounds a year? Look round, sir, at the myriads of God's creatures who live, love, are happy and poor, and be ashamed of the wicked doubt which you utter!" And he starts up, and strides up and down the dining-room, curling his flaming moustache, and rings the bell fiercely, and says, "Johnson, I've broke a glass. Get me another."

In the drawing-room, my wife asks what we two were fighting about? And, as Charlotte is up-stairs, telling the children stories as they are put to bed, or writing to her dear mamma, or what not, our friend bursts out with more rude and violent expressions than he had used in the dining-room over my glasses which he was smashing, tells my own wife that I am an atheist, or at best a miserable sceptic and Sadducee: that I doubt of the goodness of heaven, and am not thankful for my daily bread. And, with one of her kindling looks directed towards the young man, of course my wife sides with him. Miss Char presently came down from the young folks, and went to the piano, and played us Beethoven's Dream of Saint Jerome, which always soothes me, and charms me, so that I fancy it is a poem of Tennyson in music. And our children, as they sink off to sleep over-head, like to hear soft music, which soothes them into slumber, Miss Baynes says. And Miss Charlotte looks very pretty at her piano: and Philip lies gazing at her, with his great feet and hands tumbled over

one of our arm-chairs. And the music, with its solemn cheer, makes us all very happy and kind-hearted, and ennobles us somehow as we listen. And my wife wears her benedictory look whenever she turns towards these young people. She has worked herself up to the opinion that yonder couple ought to marry. She can give chapter and verse for her belief. To doubt about the matter at all is wicked according to her notions. And there are certain points upon which, I humbly own, that I don't dare to argue with her.

When the women of the house have settled a matter, is there much use in man's resistance? If my harem orders that I shall wear a yellow coat and pink trousers, I know that, before three months are over, I shall be walking about in rose-tendre and canary-coloured garments. It is the perseverance which conquers, the daily return to the object desired. Take my advice, my dear sir, when you see your womankind resolute about a matter, give up at once, and have a quiet life. Perhaps to one of these evening entertainments, where Miss Baynes played the piano, as she did very pleasantly, and Mr. Philip's great clumsy fist turned the leaves, little Mrs. Brandon would come tripping in, and as she surveyed the young couple, her remark would be, "Did you ever see a better suited couple?" When I came home from chambers, and passed the dining-room door, my eldest daughter with a knowing face would bar the way and say, "You mustn't go in there, papa! Miss Grigsby is there, and Master Philip is not to be disturbed at his lessons!" Mrs. Mugford had begun to arrange marriages between her young people and ours from the very first day she saw us; and Mrs. M.'s ch. filly Toddles, rising two years, and our three-year old colt Billyboy, were rehearsing in the nursery the endless little comedy which the grown-up young persons were performing in the drawing-room.

With the greatest frankness Mrs. Mugford gave her opinion that Philip, with four or five hundred a year, would be no better than a sneak if he delayed to marry. How much had she and Mugford when they married, she would like to know? "Emily Street, Pentonville, was where we had apartments," she remarked; "we were pinched sometimes; but we owed nothing: and our housekeeping books I can show you." I believe Mrs. M. actually brought these dingy relics of her honeymoon for my wife's inspection. I tell you, my house was peopled with these friends of matrimony. Flies were for ever in requisition, and our boys were very sulky at having to sit for an hour at Shoolbred's, while certain ladies lingered there over blankets, tablecloths, and what not. Once I found my wife and Charlotte flitting about Wardour Street, the former lady much interested in a great Dutch cabinet, with a glass cupboard and corpulent drawers. And that cabinet was, ere long, carted off to Mrs. Brandon's, Thornhaugh Street; and in that glass cupboard there was presently to be seen a neat set of china for tea and breakfast. The end was approaching. That event, with which the third volume of the old novels used to close, was at hand. I am afraid our young people can't drive off from St. George's in a chaise and four, and that no noble relative will lend them his castle for the honeymoon. Well: some people cannot drive to happiness, even with four horses; and other folks can reach the goal on foot. My venerable Muse stoops down, unlooses her cothurnus with some difficulty, and prepares to fling that old shoe after the pair.

Tell, venerable Muse! what were the marriage gifts which friendship provided for Philip and Charlotte? Philip's cousin, Ringwood Twysden, came simpering up to me at Bays's Club one afternoon, and said: "I hear my precious cousin is going to marry. I think I shall send him a broom to sweep a crossin'." I was nearly going to say, "This was a piece of generosity to be expected from your father's son;" but the fact is, that I did not think of this withering repartee until I was crossing St. James's Park on my way home, when Twysden of course was out of ear-shot. A great number of my best witticisms have been a little late in making their appearance in the world. If we could but hear the unspoken jokes, how we should all laugh; if we could but speak them, how witty we should be! When you have left the room, you have no notion what clever things I was going to say when you balked me by going away. Well, then, the fact is, the Twysden's family gave Philip nothing on his marriage, being the exact sum of regard which they professed to have for him.

Mrs. Major MacWhirter gave the bride an Indian brooch, representing the Taj Mahal at Agra, which General Baynes had given to his sister-in-law in old days. At a later period, it is true, Mrs. Mac asked Charlotte for the brooch back again; but this was when many family quarrels had raged between the relatives — quarrels which to describe at length would be to tax too much the writer and the readers of this history.

Mrs. Mugford presented an elegant plated coffee-pot, six drawing-room almanacs (spoils of the Pall Mall Gazette), and fourteen richly cut jelly-glasses, most useful for negus, if the young couple gave evening parties, which dinners they would not be able to afford.

Mrs. Barndon made an offering of two tablecloths and twelve dinner napkins, most beautifully worked, and I don't know how much house linen.

The Lady of the Present Writer — Twelve teaspoons in bullion, and a pair of sugar-tongs. Mrs. Baynes, Philip's mother-in-law, sent him also a pair of sugar-tongs, of a light manufacture, easily broken. He keeps a tong to the present day, and speaks very satirically regarding that relic.

Philip's Inn of Court — A bill for commons and Inn taxes, with the Treasurer's compliments.

And these, I think, formed the items of poor little Charlotte's meagre trousseau. Before Cinderella went to the ball she was almost as rich as our little maid. Charlotte's mother sent a grim consent to the child's marriage, but declined herself to attend it. She was ailing and poor. Her year's widowhood was just over. She had her other children to look after. My impression is that Mrs. Baynes thought that she could be out of Philip's power so long as she remained abroad, and that the general's savings would be secure from him. So she delegated her authority to Philip's friends in London, and sent her daughter a moderate wish for her happiness, which may or may not have profited the young people.

"Well, my dear? You are rich compared to what I was, when I married," little Mrs. Brandon said to her young friend. "You will have a good husband. That is more than I had. You will have good friends; and I was almost alone for a time, until it pleased God to befriend me." It was not without a feeling of awe that we saw these young people commence that voyage of life on which henceforth they were to journey together; and I am sure that of the small company who accompanied them to the silent little chapel where they were joined in marriage there was not one who did not follow them with tender good wishes and heartfelt prayers. They had a little purse provided for a month's holiday. They had health, hope, good spirits, good friends. I have never learned that life's trials were over after marriage; only lucky is he who has a loving companion to share them. As for the lady with whom Charlotte had stayed before her marriage, she was in a state of the most lachrymose sentimentality. She sat on the bed in the chamber which the little maid had vacated. Her tears flowed copiously. She knew not why, she could not tell how the girl had wound herself round her maternal heart. And I think if heaven had decreed this young creature should be poor, it had sent her many blessings and treasures in compensation.

Every respectable man and woman in London will, of course, pity these young people, and reprobate the mad risk which they were running, and yet, by the influence and example of a sentimental wife probably, so madly sentimental have I become, that I own sometimes I almost fancy these misguided wretches are to be envied.

A melancholy little chapel it is where they were married, and stands hard by our house. We did not decorate the church with flowers, or adorn the beadles with white ribbons. We had, I must confess, a dreary little breakfast, not in the least enlivened by Mugford's jokes, who would make a speech *de circonstance*, which was not, I am thankful to say, reported in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. "We shan't charge you for advertising the marriage there, my dear," Mrs. Mugford said. "And I've already took it myself to Mr. Burjoyce." Mrs. Mugford had insisted upon pinning a large white favour upon John, who drove from Hampstead: but that was the only ornament present at the nuptial ceremony, much to the disappointment of the good lady. There was a very pretty cake, with two doves in sugar, on the top, which the Little Sister made and sent, and no other hymeneal emblem. Our little girls as bridesmaids appeared, to be sure, in new bonnets and dresses, but everybody else looked so quiet and demure, that when we went into the church, three or four street urchins knocking about the gate, said, "Look at 'em. They're going to be 'ung." And so the words are spoken, and the indissoluble knot is tied. Amen. For better, for worse, for good days or evil, love each other, cling to each other, dear friends, Fulfil your course, and accomplish your life's toil. In sorrow, soothe each other; in illness, watch and tend. Cheer, fond wife, the husband's struggle; lighten his gloomy hours with your tender smiles, and gladden his home with your love. Husband, father, whatsoever your lot, be your heart pure, your life honest. For the sake of those who bear your name, let no bad action sully it. As you look at those innocent faces which ever tenderly greet you, be yours, too, innocent, and your conscience without reproach. As the young people kneel before the altar-railing, some such thoughts as these pass through a friend's mind who witnesses the ceremony of their marriage. Is not all we hear in that place meant to apply to ourselves, and to be carried away for everyday cogitation?

After the ceremony we sign the book, and walk back demurely to breakfast. And Mrs. Mugford does not conceal her disappointment at the small preparations made for the reception of the marriage party. "I call it shabby, Brandon; and I speak my mind. No favours. Only your cake. No speeches to speak of. No lobster-salad: and wine on the side-board. I thought your Queen Square friends knew how to do the thing better! When one of my gurls is married, I promise you we shan't let her go out of the back-door; and at least we shall have the best four greys that Newman's can furnish. It's my belief your young friend is getting too fond of money, Brandon, and so I have told Mugford." But these, you see, were only questions of taste. Good Mrs. Mugford's led her to a green satin dress and a pink turban, when other ladies were in gray or

quiet colours. The intimacy between our two families dwindled immediately after Philip's marriage; Mrs. M., I am sorry to say setting us down as shabby-genteel people, and she couldn't bear screwing — never could!

Well: the speeches were spoken. The bride was kissed, and departed with her bridegroom: they had not even a valet and lady's -maid to bear them company. The route of the happy pair was to be Canterbury, Folkestone, Boulogne, Amiens, Paris, and Italy perhaps, if their little stock of pocket-money would serve them so far. But the very instant when half was spent, it was agreed that these young people should turn their faces homeward again; and meanwhile the printer and Mugford himself agreed that they would do Mr. Sub-editor's duty. How much had they in the little purse for their pleasure-journey? That is no business of ours, surely; but with youth, health, happiness, love, amongst their possessions, I don't think our young friends had need to be discontented. Away then they drive in their cab to the railway station. Farewell, and heaven bless you, Charlotte and Philip! I have said how I found my wife crying in her favourite's vacant bed-room. The marriage table did coldly furnish forth a funeral kind of dinner. The cold chicken choked us all, and the jelly was but a sickly compound to my taste, though it was the Little Sister's most artful manufacture. I own for one I was quite miserable. I found no comfort at clubs, nor could the last new novel fix my attention. I saw Philip's eyes, and heard the warble of Charlotte's sweet voice. I walked off from Bays's, and through Old Parr Street, where Philip had lived, and his parents entertained me as a boy; and then tramped to Thornhaugh Street, rather ashamed of myself. The maid said mistress was in Mr. Philip's rooms, the two pair, — and what was that I heard on the piano as I entered the apartment? Mrs. Brandon sat there hemming some chintz window curtains, or bed curtains, or what not: by her side sate my own eldest girl stitching away very resolutely; and at the piano — the Piano which Philip had bought — there sat my own wife picking out that Dream of St. Jerome of Beethoven, which Charlotte used to play so delicately. We had tea out of Philip's tea-things, and a nice hot cake, which consoled some of us. But I have known few evenings more melancholy than that. It felt like the first night at school after the holidays, when we all used to try and appear cheerful, you know. But ah! how dismal the gaiety was; and how dreary that lying awake in the night, and thinking of the happy days just over!

The way in which we looked forward for letters from our bride and bridegroom was quite a curiosity. At length a letter arrived from these personages: and as it contains no secret, I take the liberty to print it in extenso.

“Amiens, Friday. Paris, Saturday.”

“Dearest Friends, — (For the dearest friends you are to us, and will continue to be as long as we live) — We perform our promise of writing to you to say that we are well, and safe, and happy! Philip says I mustn't use dashes, but I can't help it. He says, he supposes I am dashing off a letter. You know his joking way. Oh, what a blessing it is to see him so happy! And if he is happy I am. I tremble to think how happy. He sits opposite me, smoking his cigar, looking so noble! I like it, and I went to our room and brought him this one. He says, ‘Char, if I were to say, bring me your head, you would order a waiter to cut it off.’ Pray, did I not promise three days ago to love, honour, and obey him, and am I going to break my promise already? I hope not. I pray not. All my life I hope I shall be trying to keep that promise of mine. We liked Canterbury almost as much as dear Westminster. We had an open carriage and took a glorious drive to Folkestone, and in the crossing Philip was ill, and I wasn't. And he looked very droll; and he was in a dreadful bad humour; and that was my first appearance as nurse. I think I should like him to be a little ill sometimes, so that I may sit up and take care of him. We went through the cords at the custom-house at Boulogne; and I remembered how, two years ago, I passed through those very cords with my poor papa, and he stood outside and saw us! We went to the Hôtel des Bains. We walked about the town. We went to the Tintelleries, where we used to live, and to your house in the Haute Ville, where I remember everything as if it was yesterday. Don't you remember, as we were walking one day, you said, ‘Charlotte, there is the steamer coming, there is the smoke of his funnel;’ and I said, ‘What steamer?’ and you said, ‘The Philip, to be sure.’ And he came up, smoking his pipe! We passed over and over the old grounds where we used to walk. We went to the pier, and gave money to the poor little hunchback who plays the guitar, and he said, ‘Merci, madame.’ How droll it sounded! And that good kind Marie at the Hôtel des Bains remembered us, and called us ‘mes enfans.’ And if you were not the most good-natured woman in the world, I think I should be ashamed to write such nonsense.”

“Think of Mrs. Brandon having knitted me a purse, which she gave me as we went away from dear, dear Queen Square; and when I opened it, there were five sovereigns in it! When we found what the purse contained, Philip used one of his great jurons (as he always does when he is most tender-hearted), and he said that woman was an angel, and that we would keep those five sovereigns, and never change them. Ah! I am thankful my husband has such friends! I will love all who love him — you most of all. For were not you the means of bringing this noble heart to me? I fancy I have known

bigger people, since I have known you, and some of your friends. Their talk is simpler, their thoughts are greater than — those with whom I used to live. P. says, heaven has given Mrs. Brandon such a great heart, that she must have a good intellect. If loving my Philip be wisdom, I know some one who will be very wise!”

“If I was not in a very great hurry to see mamma, Philip said we might stop a day at Amiens. And we went to the Cathedral, and to whom, do you think, it is dedicated? to my saint: to Saint Firmin! and oh! I prayed to heaven to give me strength to devote my life to my saint’s service, to love him always, as a pure, true wife: in sickness to guard him, in sorrow to soothe him. I will try and learn and study, not to make my intellect equal to his — very few women can hope for that — but that I may better comprehend him, and give him a companion more worthy of him. I wonder whether there are many men in the world as clever as our husbands? though Philip is so modest, he says he is not clever at all. Yet I know he is, and grander somehow than other men. I said nothing, but I used to listen at Queen Square; and some who came who thought best of themselves, seemed to me pert, and worldly, and small; and some were like princes somehow. My Philip is one of the princes. Ah, dear friend! may I not give thanks where thanks are due, that I am chosen to be the wife of a true gentleman? Kind and brave, and loyal Philip! Honest and generous — above deceit or selfish scheme. Oh! I hope it is not wrong to be so happy!”

“We wrote to mamma and dear Madame Smolensk to say we were coming. Mamma finds Madame de Valentinois’ boarding-house even dearer than dear Madame Smolensk’s. I don’t mean a pun! She says she has found out that Madame de Valentinois’ real name is Cornichon; that she was a person of the worst character, and that cheating at écarté was practised at her house. She took up her own two francs and another two-franc piece from the card-table, saying that Colonel Boulotte was cheating, and by rights the money was hers. She is going to leave Madame de Valentinois at the end of her month, or as soon as our children, who have the measles, can move. She desired that on no account I would come to see her at Madame V.’s; and she brought Philip 12l. 10s. in five-franc pieces, which she laid down on the table before him, and said it was my first quarter’s payment. It is not due yet, I know. ‘But do you think I will be beholden,’ says she, ‘to a man like you!’ And P. shrugged his shoulders, and put the rouleau of silver pieces into a drawer. He did not say a word, but, of course, I saw he was ill-pleased. ‘What shall we do with your fortune, Char?’ he said, when mamma went away. And a part we spent at the opera and at Véry’s restaurant, where we took our dear kind Madame Smolensk. Ah, how good that woman was to me! Ah, how I suffered in that house when mamma wanted to part me from Philip! We walked by and saw the windows of the room where that horrible, horrible tragedy was performed, and Philip shook his fist at the green jealousies. ‘Good heavens!’ he said: ‘how, my darling, how I was made to suffer there! I bear no malice. I will do no injury. But I never can forgive: never!’ I can forgive mamma, who made my husband so unhappy; but can I love her again? Indeed and indeed I have tried. Often and often in my dreams that horrid tragedy is acted over again; and they are taking him from me, and I feel as if I should die. When I was with you I used often to be afraid to go to sleep for fear of that dreadful dream; and I kept one of his letters under my pillow so that I might hold it in the night. And now! No one can part us! — oh, no one! — until the end comes!

“He took me about to all his old bachelor haunts; to the Hôtel Poussin, where he used to live, which is very dingy but comfortable. And he introduced me to the landlady, in a Madras handkerchief, and to the landlord (in earrings and with no coat on), and to the little boy who frottes the floors. And he said, ‘Tiens’ and ‘merci, madame!’ as we gave him a five-franc piece out of my fortune. And then we went to the café opposite the Bourse, where Philip used to write his letters; and then we went to the Palais Royal, where Madame de Smolensk was in waiting for us. And then we went to the play. And then we went to Tortoni’s to take ices. And then we walked a part of the way home with Madame Smolensk under a hundred million blazing stars; and then we walked down the Champs Elysées’ avenues, by which Philip used to come to me, and beside the plashing fountains shining under the silver moon. And, oh, Laura! I wonder under the silver moon was anybody so happy as your loving and grateful

“C. F.”

“P.S.” [In the handwriting of Philip Firmin, Esq.] — “My dear Friends. — I’m so jolly that it seems like a dream. I have been watching Charlotte scribble, scribble for an hour past; and wondered and thought, Is it actually true? and gone and convinced myself of the truth by looking at the paper and the dashes which she will put under the words. My dear friends, what have I done in life that I am to be made a present of a little angel? Once there was so much wrong in me, and my heart was so black and revengeful, that I knew not what might happen to me. She came and rescued me. The love of this creature purifies me — and — and I think that is all. I think I only want to say that I am the happiest man in Europe. That

Saint Firmin at Amiens! Didn't it seem like a good omen? By St. George! I never heard of St. F. until I lighted on him in the cathedral. When shall we write next? Where shall we tell you to direct? We don't know where we are going. We don't want letters. But we are not the less grateful to dear, kind friends; and our names are

P. AND C. F."



CHAPTER 4

DESCRIBES A SITUATION INTERESTING BUT NOT UNEXPECTED.

Only very wilful and silly children cry after the moon. Sensible people who have shed their sweet tooth can't be expected to be very much interested about honey. We may hope Mr. and Mrs. Philip Firmin enjoyed a pleasant wedding tour and that sort of thing: but as for chronicling its delights or adventures, Miss Sowerby and I vote that the task is altogether needless and immoral. Young people are already much too sentimental, and inclined to idle, maudlin reading. Life is earnest, Miss Sowerby remarks (with a strong inclination to spell "earnest" with a large E). Life is labour. Life is duty. Life is rent. Life is taxes. Life brings its ills, bills, doctor's pills. Life is not a mere calendar of honey and moonshine. Very good. But without love, Miss Sowerby, life is just death, and I know, my dear, you would no more care to go on with it, than with a new chapter of — of our dear friend Boreham's new story.

Between ourselves, Philip's humour is not much more lightsome than that of the ingenious contemporary above named; but if it served to amuse Philip himself, why balk him of a little sport? Well, then: he wrote us a great ream of lumbering pleasantries, dated, Paris, Thursday. Geneva, Saturday. Summit of Mont Blanc, Monday. Timbuctoo, Wednesday. Peking, Friday — with facetious descriptions of those spots and cities. He said that in the last-named place, Charlotte's shoes being worn out, those which she purchased were rather tight for her, and the high heels annoyed her. He stated that the beef at Timbuctoo was not cooked enough for Charlotte's taste, and that the Emperor's attentions were becoming rather marked, and so forth; whereas poor little Char's simple postscripts mentioned no travelling at all; but averred that they were staying at Saint Germain, and as happy as the day was long. As happy as the day was long? As it was short, alas! Their little purse was very slenderly furnished; and in a very, very brief holiday, poor Philip's few napoleons had almost all rolled away. Luckily, it was pay-day when the young people came back to London. They were almost reduced to the Little Sister's wedding present: and surely they would rather work than purchase a few hours' more ease with that poor widow's mite.

Who talked and was afraid of poverty? Philip, with his two newspapers, averred that he had enough; more than enough; could save; could put by. It was at this time that Ridley, the Academician, painted that sweet picture, No. 1,976 — of course you remember it — 'Portrait of a Lady.' He became romantically attached to the second-floor lodger; would have no noisy parties in his rooms, or smoking, lest it should annoy her. Would Mrs. Firmin desire to give entertainments or her own? His studio and sitting-room were at her orders. He fetched and carried. He brought presents, and theatre-boxes. He was her slave of slaves. And she gave him back in return for all this romantic adoration a condescending shake of a soft little hand, and a kind look from a pair of soft eyes, with which the painter was fain to be content. Low of stature, and of misshapen form, J. J. thought himself naturally outcast from marriage and love, and looked in with longing eyes at the paradise which he was forbidden to enter. And Mr. Philip sat within this Palace of Delight; and lolled at his ease, and took his pleasure, and Charlotte ministered to him. And once in a way, my lord sent out a crumb of kindness, or a little cup of comfort, to the outcast at the gate, who blessed his benefactress, and my lord his benefactor, and was thankful. Charlotte had not twopence: but she had a little court. It was the fashion for Philip's friends to come and bow before her. Very fine gentlemen who had known him at college, and forgot him, or sooth to say, thought him rough and overbearing, now suddenly remembered him, and his young wife had quite fashionable assemblies at her five o'clock tea-table. All men liked her, and Miss Sowerby of course says Mrs. Firmin was a goodnatured, quite harmless little woman, rather pretty, and — you know, my dear — such as men like. Look you, if I like cold veal, dear Sowerby, it is that my tastes are simple. A fine tough old dry camel, no doubt, is a much nobler and more sagacious animal — and perhaps you think a double hump is quite a delicacy.

Yes: Mrs. Philip was a success. She had scarce any female friends as yet, being too poor to go into the world: but she had Mrs. Pendennis, and dear little Mrs. Brandon, and Mrs. Mugford, whose celebrated trap repeatedly brought delicacies for the bride from Hampstead, whose chaise was once or twice a week at Philip's door, and who was very much exercised and impressed by the fine company whom she met in Mrs. Firmin's apartments. "Lord Thingambury's card! what next, Brandon, upon my word? Lady Slowby at home? well, I never, Mrs. B.!" In such artless phrases Mrs. Mugford would express her admiration and astonishment during the early time, and when Charlotte still retained the good lady's favour.

That a state of things far less agreeable ensued, I must own. But though there is ever so small a cloud in the sky even now, let us not heed it for a while, and bask and be content and happy in the sunshine. "Oh, Laura, I tremble when I think how happy I am!" was our little bird's perpetual warble. "How did I live when I was at home with mamma?" she would say. "Do you know that Philip never even scolds me? If he were to say a rough word, I think I should die; whereas mamma was barking, barking from morning till night, and I didn't care a pin." This is what comes of injudicious scolding, as of any other drug. The wholesome medicine loses its effect. The injured patient calmly takes a dose that would frighten or kill a stranger. Poor Mrs. Baynes's crossed letters came still, and I am not prepared to pledge my word that Charlotte read them all. Mrs. B. offered to come and superintend and take care of dear Philip when an interesting event should take place. But Mrs. Brandon was already engaged for this important occasion, and Charlotte became so alarmed lest her mother should invade her, that Philip wrote curtly, and positively forbade Mrs. Baynes. You remember the picture, 'A Cradle,' by J. J.? the two little rosy feet brought I don't know how many hundred guineas a piece to Mr. Ridley. The mother herself did not study babydom more fondly and devotedly than Ridley did in the ways, looks, features, anatomies, attitudes, baby-clothes, of this first-born infant of Charlotte and Philip Firmin. My wife is very angry because I have forgotten whether the first of the young Firmin brood was a boy or a girl, and says I shall forget the names of my own children next. Well? At this distance of time, I think it was a boy — for their boy is very tall, you know — a great deal taller — Not a boy? Then, between ourselves, I have no doubt it was a — "A goose," says the lady, which is not even reasonable.

This is certain, we all thought the young mother looked very pretty, with her pink cheeks and beaming eyes, as she bent over the little infant. J. J. says he thinks there is something heavenly in the looks of young mothers at that time. Nay, he goes so far as to declare that a tigress at the Zoological Gardens looks beautiful and gentle as she bends her black nozzle over her cubs. And if a tigress, why not Mrs. Philip? O ye powers of sentiment, in what a state J. J. was about this young woman! There is a brightness in a young mother's eye: there are pearl and rose tints on her cheek, which are sure to fascinate a painter. This artist used to hang about Mrs. Brandon's rooms, till it was droll to see him. I believe he took off his shoes in his own studio, so as not to disturb by his creaking the lady overhead. He purchased the most preposterous mug, and other presents, for the infant. Philip went out to his club or his newspaper as he was ordered to do. But Mr. J. J. could not be got away from Thornhaugh Street, so that little Mrs. Brandon laughed at him — absolutely laughed at him.

During all this while Philip and his wife continued in the very greatest favour with Mr. and Mrs. Mugford, and were invited by that worthy couple to go with their infant to Mugford's villa at Hampstead, where a change of air might do good to dear baby and dear mamma. Philip went to this village retreat. Streets and terraces now cover over the house and grounds which worthy Mugford inhabited, and which people say he used to call his "Russian Irby." He had amassed in a small space a heap of country pleasures. He had a little garden; a little paddock; a little greenhouse; a little cucumber-frame; a little stable for his little trap; a little Guernsey cow; a little dairy; a little pigsty; and with this little treasure the good man was not a little content. He loved and praised everything that was his. No man admired his own port more than Mugford, or paid more compliments to his own butter and home-baked bread. He enjoyed his own happiness. He appreciated his own worth. He loved to talk of the days when he was a poor boy on London streets, and now — "Now try that glass of port, my boy, and say whether the Lord Mayor has got any better," he would say, winking at his glass and his company. To be virtuous, to be lucky, and constantly to think and own that you are so — is not this true happiness? To sing hymns in praise of himself is a charming amusement — at least to the performer; and anybody who dined at Mugford's table was pretty sure to hear some of this music after dinner. I am sorry to say Philip did not care for this trumpet-blowing. He was frightfully bored at Haverstock Hill; and when bored, Mr. Philip is not altogether an agreeable companion. He will yawn in a man's face. He will contradict you freely. He will say the mutton is tough, or the wine not fit to drink; that such and such an orator is over-rated, and such and such a politician is a fool. Mugford and his guest had battles after dinner, had actually high words. "What-hever is it, Mugford? and what were you quarrelling about in the dining-room?" asks Mrs. Mugford. "Quarrelling? It's only the sub-editor snoring," said the gentleman with a flushed face. "My wine ain't good enough for him, and now my gentleman must put his boots upon a chair and go to sleep under my nose. He is a cool hand, and no mistake, Mrs. M." At this juncture poor little Char would gently glide down from a visit to her baby: and would play something on the piano, and soothe the rising anger; and then Philip would come in from a little walk in the shrubberies, where he had been blowing a little cloud. Ah! there was a little cloud rising indeed:— quite a little one — nay, not so little. When you consider that Philip's bread depended on the goodwill of these people, you will allow that his friends might be anxious regarding the future. A word from Mugford, and Philip and Charlotte and the child were adrift on the world. And

these points Mr. Firmin would freely admit, while he stood discoursing of his own affairs (as he loved to do), his hands in his pockets, and his back warming at our fire.

"My dear fellow," says the candid bridegroom, "these things are constantly in my head. I used to talk about 'em to Char, but I don't now. They disturb her, the poor thing; and she clutches hold of the baby; and — and it tears my heart out to think that any grief should come to her. I try and do my best, my good people — but when I'm bored I can't help showing I'm bored, don't you see? I can't be a hypocrite. No, not for two hundred a year, or for twenty thousand. You can't make a silk purse out of that sow's -ear of a Mugford. A very good man. I don't say no. A good father, a good husband, a generous host, and a most tremendous bore, and cad. Be agreeable to him? How can I be agreeable when I am being killed? He has a story about Leigh Hunt being put into prison where Mugford, bringing him proofs, saw Lord Byron. I cannot keep awake during that story any longer; or, if awake, I grind my teeth, and swear inwardly, so that I know I'm dreadful to hear and see. Well, Mugford has yellow satin sofas in the 'droaring-room' — "

"Oh, Philip!" says a lady; and two or three circumjacent children set up an insane giggle, which is speedily and sternly silenced.

"I tell you she calls it 'droaring-room.' You know she does, as well as I do. She is a good woman: a kind woman: a hot-tempered woman. I hear her scolding the servants in the kitchen with immense vehemence, and at prodigious length. But how can Char frankly be the friend of a woman who calls a drawing-room a droaring-room? With our dear little friend in Thornhaugh Street, it is different. She makes no pretence even at equality. Here is a patron and patroness, don't you see? When Mugford walks me round his paddock and gardens, and says, 'Look year, Firmin;' or scratches one of his pigs on the back, and says, 'We'll 'ave a cut of this fellow on Saturday'" — (explosive attempts at insubordination and derision on the part of the children again are severely checked by the parental authorities) — "'we'll 'ave a cut of this fellow on Saturday,' I felt inclined to throw him or myself into the trough over the palings. Do you know that that man put that hand into his pocket, and offered me some filberts?"

Here I own the lady to whom Philip was addressing himself turned pale and shuddered.

"I can no more be that man's friend que celui du domestique qui vient d'apporter le what-d'you-call'em? le coal-scuttle" — (John entered the room with that useful article during Philip's oration — and we allowed the elder children to laugh this time, for the fact is, none of us knew the French for coal-scuttle, and I will wager there is no such word in Chambaud). "This holding back is not arrogance," Philip went on. "This reticence is not want of humility. To serve that man honestly is one thing; to make friends with him, to laugh at his dull jokes, is to make friends with the mammon of unrighteousness, is subserviency and hypocrisy on my part. I ought to say to him," "Mr. Mugford, I will give you my work for your wage; I will compile your paper, I will produce an agreeable miscellany containing proper proportions of news, politics, and scandal, put titles to your paragraphs, see the Pall Mall Gazette shipshape through the press, and go home to my wife and dinner. You are my employer, but you are not my friend, and — bless my soul! there is five o'clock striking!" (The time-piece in our drawing-room gave that announcement as he was speaking). "We have what Mugford calls a white-choker dinner to-day, in honour of the pig!" And with this Philip plunges out of the house, and I hope reached Hampstead in time for the entertainment.

Philip's friends in Westminster felt no little doubt about his prospects, and the Little Sister shared their alarm. "They are not fit to be with those folks," Mrs. Brandon said, "though as for Mrs. Philip, dear thing, I am sure nobody can ever quarrel with her. With me it's different. I never had no education you know — no more than the Mugfords, but I don't like to see my Philip sittin' down as if he was the guest and equal of that fellar." Nor indeed did it ever enter that fellar's ' head that Mr. Robert Mugford could be Mr. Philip Firmin's equal. With our knowledge of the two men, then, we all dismally looked forward to a rupture between Firmin and his patron.

As for the New York journal, we were more easy in respect to Philip's success in that quarter. Several of his friends made a vow to help him. We clubbed clubstories; we begged from our polite friends anecdotes (that would bear sea-transport) of the fashionable world. We happened to overhear the most remarkable conversations between the most influential public characters who had no secrets from us. We had astonishing intelligence at most European courts; exclusive reports of the Emperor of Russia's last joke — his last? his next, very likely. We knew the most secret designs of the Austrian Privy Council: the views which the Pope had in his eye; who was the latest favourite of the Grand Turk, and so on. The Upper Ten Thousand at New York were supplied with a quantity of information which I trust profited them. It was "Palmerston remarked yesterday at dinner," or, "The good old Duke said last night at Apsley House to the French

Ambassador," and the rest. The letters were signed "Philaethes;" and, as nobody was wounded by the shafts of our long bow, I trust Mr. Philip and his friends may be pardoned for twanging it. By information procured from learned female personages, we even managed to give accounts, more or less correct, of the latest ladies' fashions. We were members of all the clubs; we were present at the routs and assemblies of the political leaders of both sides. We had little doubt that Philaethes would be successful at New York, and looked forward to an increased payment for his labours. At the end of the first year of Philip Firmin's married life, we made a calculation by which it was clear that he had actually saved money. His expenses, to be sure, were increased. There was a baby in the nursery: but there was a little bag of sovereigns in the cupboard, and the thrifty young fellow hoped to add still more to his store.

We were relieved at finding that Firmin and his wife were not invited to repeat their visit to their employer's house at Hampstead. An occasional invitation to dinner was still sent to the young people; but Mugford, a haughty man in his way, with a proper spirit of his own, had the good sense to see that much intimacy could not arise between him and his sub-editor, and magnanimously declined to be angry at the young fellow's easy superciliousness. I think that indefatigable Little Sister was the peacemaker between the houses of Mugford and Firmin junior, and that she kept both Philip and his master on their good behaviour. At all events, and when a quarrel did arise between them, I grieve to have to own it was poor Philip who was in the wrong.

You know in the old, old days the young king and queen never gave any christening entertainment without neglecting to invite some old fairy, who was furious at the omission. I am sorry to say Charlotte's mother was so angry at not being appointed godmother to the new baby, that she omitted to make her little quarterly payment of 12l. 10s.; and has altogether discontinued that payment from that remote period up to the present time; so that Philip says his wife has brought him a fortune of 45l., paid in four instalments. There was the first quarter paid when the old lady "would not be beholden to a man like him." Then there came a second quarter — and then — but I daresay I shall be able to tell when and how Philip's mamma-in-law paid the rest of her poor little daughter's fortune.

Well, Regent's Park is a fine healthy place for infantine diversion, and I don't think Philip at all demeaned himself in walking there with his wife, her little maid, and his baby on his arm. "He is as rude as a bear, and his manners are dreadful; but he has a good heart, that I will say for him," Mugford said to me. In his drive from London to Hampstead, Mugford once or twice met the little family group, of which his subeditor formed the principal figure; and for the sake of Philip's young wife and child Mr. M. pardoned the young man's vulgarity, and treated him with long-suffering.

Poor as he was, this was his happiest time, my friend is disposed to think. A young child, a young wife, whose whole life was a tender caress of love for child and husband, a young husband watching both: — I recal the group, as we used often to see it in those days, and see a something sacred in the homely figures. On the wife's bright face what a radiant happiness there is, and what a rapturous smile! Over the sleeping infant and the happy mother the father looks with pride and thanks in his eyes. Happiness and gratitude fill his simple heart, and prayer involuntary to the Giver of good, that he may have strength to do his duty as father, husband; that he may be enabled to keep want and care from those dear innocent beings; that he may defend them, befriend them, leave them a good name. I am bound to say that Philip became thrifty and saving for the sake of Char and the child: that he came home early of nights: that he thought his child a wonder; that he never tired of speaking about that infant in our house, about its fatness, its strength, its weight, its wonderful early talents and humour. He felt himself a man now for the first time, he said. Life had been play and folly until now. And now especially he regretted that he had been idle, and had neglected his opportunities as a lad. Had he studied for the bar, he might have made that profession now profitable, and a source of honour and competence to his family. Our friend estimated his own powers very humbly: I am sure he was not the less amiable on account of that humility. O fortunate he, of whom Love is the teacher, the guide and master, the reformer and chastener! Where was our friend's former arrogance, self-confidence, and boisterous profusion? He was at the feet of his wife and child. He was quite humbled about himself; or gratified himself in fondling and caressing these. They taught him, he said: and, as he thought of them, his heart turned in awful thanks to the gracious heaven which had given them to him. As the tiny infant hand closes round his fingers, I can see the father bending over mother and child, and interpret those maybe unspoken blessings which he asks and bestows Happy wife, happy husband! However poor his little home may be, it holds treasures and wealth inestimable: whatever storms may threaten without, the home fireside is brightened by the welcome of the dearest eyes.

CHAPTER 5

IN WHICH I OWN THAT PHILIP TELLS AN UNTRUTH.

Charlotte (and the usual little procession of nurse, baby, once made their appearance at our house in Queen Square, where they were ever welcome by the lady of the mansion. The young woman was in a great state of elation, and when we came to hear the cause of her delight, her friends too opened the eyes of wonder. She actually announced that Dr. Firmin had sent over a bill of forty pounds (I may be incorrect as to the sum) from New York. It had arrived that morning, and she had seen the bill, and Philip had told her that his father had sent it; and was it not a comfort to think that poor Doctor Firmin was endeavouring to repair some of the evil which he had done; and that he was repenting, and, perhaps, was going to become quite honest and good? This was indeed an astounding piece of intelligence: and the two women felt joy at the thought of that sinner repenting, and some one else was accused of cynicism, scepticism, and so forth, for doubting the correctness of the information. "You believe in no one, sir. You are always incredulous about good," was the accusation brought against the reader's very humble servant. Well, about the contrition of this sinner, I confess I still continued to have doubts; and thought a present of forty pounds to a son, to whom he owed thousands, was no great proof of the doctor's amendment.

And oh! how vexed some people were, when the real story came out at last! Not for the money's sake — not because they were wrong in argument, and I turned out to be right. Oh, no! But because it was proved that this unhappy doctor had no present intention of repenting at all. This brand would not come out of the burning, whatever we might hope; and the doctor's supporters were obliged to admit as much when they came to know the real story. "Oh, Philip," cries Mrs. Laura, when next she saw Mr. Firmin. "How pleased I was to hear of that letter!"

"That letter?" asks the gentleman.

"That letter from your father at New York," says the lady.

"Oh," says the gentleman addressed, with a red face.

"What then? Is it not — is it not all true?" we ask.

"Poor Charlotte does not understand about business," says Philip; "I did not read the letter to her. Here it is." And he hands over the document to me, and I have the liberty to publish it.

"New York —

"And so, my dear Philip, I may congratulate myself on having achieved ancestral honour, and may add grandfather to my titles? How quickly this one has come! I feel myself a young man still, in spite of the blows of misfortune — at least, I know I was a young man but yesterday, when I may say with our dear old poet, *Non sine gloriâ militavi*. Suppose I too were to tire of solitary widowhood and re-enter the married state? There are one or two ladies here who would still condescend to look not unfavourably on the retired English gentleman. Without vanity I may say it, a man of birth and position in England acquires a polish and refinement of manner which dollars cannot purchase, and many a Wall Street millionaire might envy!"

"Your wife has been pronounced to be an angel by a little correspondent of mine, who gives me much fuller intelligence of my family than my son condescends to furnish. Mrs. Philip I hear is gentle; Mrs. Brandon says she is beautiful, — she is all good-humoured. I hope you have taught her to think not very badly of her husband's father? I was the dupe of villains who lured me into their schemes; who robbed me of a life's earnings; who induced me by their false representations to have such confidence in them, that I embarked all my own property, and yours, my poor boy, alas! in their undertakings. Your Charlotte will take the liberal, the wise, the just view of the case, and pity rather than blame my misfortune. Such is the view, I am happy to say, generally adopted in this city; where there are men of the world who know the vicissitudes of a mercantile career, and can make allowances for misfortune! What made Rome at first great and prosperous? Were its first colonists all wealthy patricians? Nothing can be more satisfactory than the disregard shown here to mere pecuniary difficulty. At the same time, to be a gentleman is to possess no trifling privilege in this society, where the advantages of birth, respected name, and early education always tell in the possessor's favour. Many persons whom I visit here have certainly not these advantages; and in the highest society of the city I could point out individuals who have had

pecuniary misfortunes like myself, who have gallantly renewed the combat after their fall, and are now fully restored to competence, to wealth, and the respect of the world! I was in a house in Fifth Avenue last night. Is Washington White shunned by his fellow-men because he has been a bankrupt three times? Anything more elegant or profuse than his entertainment I have not witnessed on this continent. His lady had diamonds which a duchess might envy. The most costly wines, the most magnificent supper, and myriads of canvas-backed ducks covered his board. Dear Charlotte, my friend Captain Colpoys brings you over three brace of these from your father-in-law, who hopes they will furnish your little dinner-table! We eat currant jelly with them here, but I like an old English lemon and cayenne sauce better.

“By the way, dear Philip, I trust you will not be inconvenienced by a little financial operation, which necessity (alas!) has compelled me to perform. Knowing that your quarter with the Upper Ten Thousand Gazette was now due, I have made so bold as to request Colonel — to pay it over to me. Promises to pay must be met here as with us — an obdurate holder of an unlucky acceptance of mine (I am happy to say there are very few such) would admit of no delay, and I have been compelled to appropriate my poor Philip’s earnings. I have only put you off for ninety days: with your credit and wealthy friends you can easily negotiate the bill enclosed, and I promise you that when presented it shall be honoured by my Philip’s ever affectionate father,

G. B. F.”

“By the way, your Philalethes’ letters are not quite spicy enough, my worthy friend the colonel says. They are elegant and gay, but the public here desires to have more personal news; a little scandal about Queen Elizabeth, you understand? Can’t you attack somebody! Look at the letters and articles published by my respected friend of the New York Emerald! The readers here like a high-spiced article: and I recommend P. F. to put a little more pepper in his dishes. What a comfort to me it is to think that I have procured this place for you, and have been enabled to help my son and his young family!

G. B. F.”

Enclosed in this letter was a slip of paper which poor Philip supposed to be a cheque when he first beheld it, but which turned out to be his papa’s promissory note, payable at New York four months after date. And this document was to represent the money which the elder Firmin had received in his son’s name! Philip’s eyes met his friend’s when they talked about this matter. Firmin looked almost as much ashamed as if he himself had done the wrong.

“Does the loss of this money annoy you?” asked Philip’s friend.

“The manner of the loss does,” said poor Philip. “I don’t care about the money. But he should not have taken this. He should not have taken this. Think of poor Charlotte and the child being in want possibly! Oh, friend, it’s hard to bear, isn’t it? I’m an honest fellow, ain’t I? I think I am. I pray heaven I am. In any extremity of poverty could I have done this? Well. It was my father who introduced me to these people. I suppose he thinks he has a right to my earnings: and if he is in want, you know, so he has.”

“Had you not better write to the New York publisher and beg them henceforth to remit to you directly?” asks Philip’s friend.

“That would be to tell them that he has disposed of the money,” groans Philip. “I can’t tell them that my father is a — ”

“No; but you can thank them for having handed over such a sum on your account to the doctor: and warn them that you will draw on them from this country henceforth. They won’t in this case pay the next quarter to the doctor.”

“Suppose he is in want, ought I not to supply him?” Firmin said. “As long as there are four crusts in the house, the doctor ought to have one. Ought I to be angry with him for helping himself, old boy?” and he drinks a glass of wine, poor fellow, with a rueful smile. By the way, it is my duty to mention here, that the elder Firmin was in the habit of giving very elegant little dinner-parties at New York, where little dinner-parties are much more costly than in Europe — “in order,” he said, “to establish and keep up his connection as a physician.” As a bon-vivant, I am informed, the doctor began to be celebrated in his new dwelling-place, where his anecdotes of the British aristocracy were received with pleasure in certain circles.

But it would be as well henceforth that Philip should deal directly with his American correspondents, and not employ the services of so very expensive a broker. To this suggestion he could not but agree. Meanwhile, — and let this be a warning to men never to deceive their wives in any the slightest circumstances; to tell them everything they wish to know, to keep nothing hidden from those dear and excellent beings — you must know, ladies, that when Philip’s famous ship of dollars arrived from America, Firmin had promised his wife that baby should have a dear delightful white cloak trimmed

with the most lovely tape, on which poor Charlotte had often cast a longing eye as she passed by the milliner and curiosity shops in Hanway Yard, which, I own, she loved to frequent. Well: when Philip told her that his father had sent home forty pounds, or what not, thereby deceiving his fond wife, the little lady went away straight to her darling shop in the Yard — (Hanway Yard has become a street now, but ah! it is always delightful) — Charlotte, I say, went off, ran off to Hanway Yard, pavid with fear lest the darling cloak should be gone, found it — oh, joy! — still in Miss Isaacson's window; put it on baby straightway then and there; kissed the dear infant, and was delighted with the effect of the garment, which all the young ladies at Miss Isaacson's pronounced to be perfect; and took the cloak away on baby's shoulders, promising to send the money, five pounds, if you please, next day. And in this cloak baby and Charlotte went to meet papa when he came home; and I don't know which of them, mamma or baby, was the most pleased and absurd and happy baby of the two. On his way home from his newspaper, Mr. Philip had orders to pursue a certain line of streets, and when his accustomed hour for returning from his business drew nigh, Mrs. Char went down Thornhaugh Street, down Charlotte Street, down Rathbone Place, with Betsy the nursekin and baby in the new cloak. Behold, he comes at last — papa — striding down the street. He sees the figures: he sees the child, which laughs, and holds out its little pink hands, and crows a recognition. And "Look — look, papa," cries the happy mother. (Away! I cannot keep up the mystery about the baby any longer, and though I had forgotten for a moment the child's sex, remembered it the instant after, and that it was a girl to be sure, and that its name was Laura Caroline). "Look, look, papa!" cries the happy mother. "She has got another little tooth since the morning, such a beautiful little tooth — and look here, sir, don't you observe anything?"

"Any what?" asks Philip.

"La! sir," says Betsy, giving Laura Caroline a great toss, so that her white cloak floats in the air.

"Isn't it a dear cloak?" cries mamma: "and doesn't baby look like an angel in it? I bought it at Miss Isaacson's to-day, as you got your money from New York; and oh, my dear, it only cost five guineas."

"Well, it's a week's work," sighs poor Philip; "and I think I need not grudge that to give Charlotte pleasure." And he feels his empty pockets rather ruefully.

"God bless you, Philip," says my wife, with her eyes full. "They came here this morning, Charlotte and the nurse and the baby in the new — the new — ." Here the lady seized hold of Philip's hand, and fairly broke out into tears. Had she embraced Mr. Firmin before her husband's own eyes, I should not have been surprised. Indeed she confessed that she was on the point of giving way to this most sentimental outbreak.

And now, my brethren, see how one crime is the parent of many, and one act of duplicity leads to a whole career of deceit. In the first place, you see, Philip had deceived his wife — with the pious desire, it is true, of screening his father's little peculiarities — but, ruat coelum, we must tell no lies. No: and from this day forth I order John never to say Not at home to the greatest bore, dun, dawdle of my acquaintance. If Philip's father had not deceived him, Philip would not have deceived his wife; if he had not deceived his wife, she would not have given five guineas for that cloak for the baby. If she had not given five guineas for the cloak, my wife would never have entered into a secret correspondence with Mr. Firmin, which might but for my own sweetness of temper have bred jealousy, mistrust, and the most awful quarrels — nay, duels — between the heads of the two families. Fancy Philip's body lying stark upon Hampstead Heath with a bullet through it, despatched by the hand of his friend! Fancy a cab driving up to my own house, and from it — under the eyes of the children at the parlour-windows — their father's bleeding corpse ejected! — Enough of this dreadful pleasantry! Two days after the affair of the cloak, I found a letter in Philip's handwriting addressed to my wife, and thinking that the note had reference to a matter of dinner then pending between our families, I broke open the envelope and read as follows:—

"Thornhaugh Street, Thursday.

"My dear, kind Godmamma, — As soon as ever I can write and speak, I will thank you for being so kind to me. My mamma says she is very jealous, and as she bought my cloak she can't think of allowing you to pay for it. But she desires me never to forget your kindness to us, and though I don't know anything about it now, she promises to tell me when I am old enough. Meanwhile I am your grateful and affectionate little goddaughter,

L. C. F."

Philip was persuaded by his friends at home to send out the request to his New York employers to pay his salary henceforth to himself; and I remember a dignified letter came from his parent, in which the matter was spoken of in sorrow rather than in anger; in which the doctor pointed out that this precautionary measure seemed to imply a doubt on

Philip's side of his father's honour; and surely, surely, he was unhappy enough and unfortunate enough already without meriting this mistrust from his son. The duty of a son to honour his father and mother was feelingly pointed out, and the doctor meekly trusted that Philip's children would give him more confidence than he seemed to be inclined to award to his unfortunate father. Never mind. He should bear no malice. If Fortune ever smiled on him again, and something told him she would, he would show Philip that he could forgive; although he might not perhaps be able to forget that in his exile, his solitude, his declining years, his misfortune, his own child had mistrusted him. This, he said, was the most cruel blow of all for his susceptible heart to bear.

This letter of paternal remonstrance was enclosed in one from the doctor to his old friend the Little Sister, in which he vaunted a discovery which he and some other scientific gentlemen were engaged in perfecting — of a medicine which was to be extraordinarily efficacious in cases in which Mrs. Brandon herself was often specially and professionally engaged, and he felt sure that the sale of this medicine would go far to retrieve his shattered fortune. He pointed out the complaints in which this medicine was most efficacious. He would send some of it, and details regarding its use, to Mrs. Brandon, who might try its efficacy upon her patients. He was advancing slowly, but steadily, in his medical profession, he said; though, of course, he had to suffer from the jealousy of his professional brethren. Never mind. Better times, he was sure, were in store for all; when his son should see that a wretched matter of forty pounds more should not deter him from paying all just claims upon him. Amen! We all heartily wished for the day when Philip's father should be able to settle his little accounts. Meanwhile the proprietors of the Gazette of the Upper Ten Thousand were instructed to write directly to their London correspondent.

Although Mr. Firmin prided himself, as we have seen, upon his taste and dexterity as sub-editor of the Pall Mall Gazette, I must own that he was a very insubordinate officer, with whom his superiors often had cause to be angry. Certain people were praised in the Gazette — certain others were attacked. Very dull books were admired, and very lively works attacked. Some men were praised for everything they did; some others were satirized, no matter what their works were. "I find," poor Philip used to say, with a groan, "that in matters of criticism especially, there are so often private reasons for the praise and the blame administered, that I am glad, for my part, my only duty is to see the paper through the press. For instance, there is Harrocks, the tragedian of Drury Lane: every piece in which he appears is a masterpiece, and his performance the greatest triumph ever witnessed. Very good. Harrocks and my excellent employer are good friends, and dine with each other; and it is natural that Mugford should like to have his friend praised, and to help him in every way. But Balderson, of Covent Garden, is also a very fine actor. Why can't our critic see his merit as well as Harrocks'? Poor Balderson is never allowed any merit at all. He is passed over with a sneer, or a curt word of cold commendation, while columns of flattery are not enough for his rival."

"Why, Mr. F., what a flat you must be, askin' your pardon," remarked Mugford, in reply to his sub-editor's simple remonstrance. "How can we praise Balderson, when Harrocks is our friend? Me and Harrocks are thick. Our wives are close friends. If I was to let Balderson be praised, I should drive Harrocks mad. I can't praise Balderson, don't you see, out of justice to Harrocks!"

Then there was a certain author whom Bickerton was for ever attacking. They had had a private quarrel, and Bickerton revenged himself in this way. In reply to Philip's outcries and remonstrances, Mr. Mugford only laughed: "The two men are enemies, and Bickerton hits him whenever he can. Why, that's only human nature, Mr. F.," says Philip's employer.

"Great heavens!" bawls out Firmin, "do you mean to say that the man is base enough to strike at his private enemies through the press?"

"Private enemies! private gammon, Mr. Firmin!" cries Philip's employer. "If I have enemies — and I have, there's no doubt about that — I serve them out whenever and wherever I can. And let me tell you I don't half relish having my conduct called base. Its only natural; and it's right. Perhaps you would like to praise your enemies, and abuse your friend? If that's your line, let me tell you you won't do in the noospaper business, and had better take to some other trade." And the employer parted from his subordinate in some heat.

Mugford, indeed, feelingly spoke to me about this insubordination of Philip. "What does the fellow mean by quarrelling with his bread and butter?" Mr. Mugford asked. "Speak to him, and show him what's what, Mr. P., or we shall come to a quarrel, mind you — and I don't want that, for the sake of his little wife, poor little delicate thing. Whatever is to happen to them, if we don't stand by them?"

What was to happen to them, indeed? Any one who knew Philip's temper, as we did, was aware how little advice or remonstrance were likely to affect that gentleman. "Good heavens?" he said to me, when I endeavoured to make him adopt a conciliatory tone towards his employer, "do you want to make me Mugford's galley-slave? I shall have him standing over me and swearing at me as he does at the printers. He looks into my room at times when he is in a passion, and glares at me, as if he would like to seize me by the throat; and after a word or two he goes off, and I hear him curse the boys in the passage. One day it will be on me that he will turn, I feel sure of that. I tell you the slavery is beginning to be awful. I wake of a night and groan and chafe, and poor Char, too, wakes and asks, 'What is it, Philip?' I say it is rheumatism. Rheumatism!" Of course to Philip's malady his friends tried to apply the commonplace anodynes and consolations. He must be gentle in his bearing. He must remember that his employer had not been bred a gentleman, and that though rough and coarse in language, Mugford had a kind heart. "There is no need to tell me he is not a gentleman, I know that," says poor Phil. "He is kind to Char and the child, that is the truth, and so is his wife. I am a slave for all that. He is my driver. He feeds me. He hasn't beat me yet. When I was away at Paris I did not feel the chain so much. But it is scarcely tolerable now, when I have to see my gaoler four or five times a week. My poor little Char, why did I drag you into this slavery?"

"Because you wanted a consoler, I suppose," remarks one of Philip's comforters. "And do you suppose Charlotte would be happier if she were away from you? Though you live up two pair of stairs, is any home happier than yours, Philip? You often own as much, when you are in happier moods. Who has not his work to do, and his burden to bear? You say sometimes that you are imperious and hot-tempered. Perhaps your slavery, as you call it, may be good for you."

"I have doomed myself and her to it," says Philip, hanging down his head.

"Does she ever repine?" asks his adviser. "Does she not think herself the happiest little wife in the world? See, here, Philip, here is a note from her yesterday in which she says as much. Do you want to know what the note is about, sir?" says the lady, with a smile. "Well, then, she wanted a receipt for that dish which you liked so much on Friday, and she and Mrs. Brandon will make it for you."

"And if it consisted of minced Charlotte," says Philip's other friend, "you know she would cheerfully chop herself up, and have herself served with a little cream-sauce and sippets of toast for your honour's dinner."

This was undoubtedly true. Did not Job's friends make many true remarks when they visited him in his affliction? Patient as he was, the patriarch groaned and lamented, and why should not poor Philip be allowed to grumble, who was not a model of patience at all? He was not broke in as yet. The mill-horse was restive and kicked at his work. He would chafe not seldom at the daily drudgery, and have his fits of revolt and despondency. Well? Have others not had to toil, to bow the proud head, and carry the daily burden? Don't you see Pegasus, who was going to win the plate, a weary, broken-knee'd, broken-down old cab hack shivering in the rank; or a sleek gelding, mayhap, pacing under a corpulent master in Rotten Row? Philip's crust began to be scanty, and was dipped in bitter waters. I am not going to make a long story of this part of his career, or parade my friend as too hungry and poor. He is safe now, and out of all peril, heaven be thanked! but he had to pass through hard times and to look out very wistfully lest the wolf should enter at the door. He never laid claim to be a man of genius, nor was he a successful quack who could pass as a man of genius. When there were French prisoners in England, we know how stout old officers who had plied their sabres against Mamelouks, or Russians, or Germans, were fain to carve little gimcracks in bone with their penknives, or make baskets and boxes of chipped straw, and piteously sell them to casual visitors to their prison. Philip was poverty's prisoner. He had to make such shifts, and do such work, as he could find in his captivity. I do not think men who have undergone the struggle, and served the dire task-master, like to look back and recal the grim apprenticeship. When Philip says now, "What fools we were to marry, Char," she looks up radiantly, with love and happiness in her eyes — looks up to heaven, and is thankful; but grief and sadness come over her husband's face at the thought of those days of pain and gloom. She may soothe him, and he may be thankful too; but the wounds are still there which were dealt to him in the cruel battle with fortune. Men are ridden down in it. Men are poltroons and run. Men maraud, break ranks, are guilty of meanness, cowardice, shabby plunder. Men are raised to rank and honour, or drop and perish unnoticed on the field. Happy he who comes from it with his honour pure! Philip did not win crosses and epaulets. He is like us, my dear sir, not a heroic genius at all. And it is to be hoped that all three have behaved with an average pluck, and have been guilty of no meanness, or treachery, or desertion. Did you behave otherwise, what would wife and children say? As for Mrs. Philip, I tell you she thinks to this day that there is no man like her husband, and is ready to fall down and worship the boots in which he walks.

How do men live? How is rent paid? How does the dinner come day after day? As a rule, there is dinner. You might

live longer with less of it, but you can't go without it and live long. How did my neighbour 23 earn his carriage, and how did 24 pay for his house? As I am writing this sentence, Mr. Cox, who collects the taxes in this quarter, walks in. How do you do, Mr. Cox? We are not in the least afraid of meeting one another. Time was — two, three years of time — when poor Philip was troubled at the sight of Cox; and this troublous time his biographer intends to pass over in a very few pages.

At the end of six months the Upper Ten Thousand of New York heard with modified wonder that the editor of that fashionable journal had made a retreat from the city, carrying with him the scanty contents of the till; so the contributions of Philalethes never brought our poor friend any dollars at all. But though one fish is caught and eaten, are there not plenty more left in the sea? At this very time, when I was in a natural state of despondency about poor Philip's affairs, it struck Tregarvan, the wealthy Cornish member of Parliament, that the Government and the House of Commons slighted his speeches and his views on foreign politics; that the wife of the Foreign Secretary had been very inattentive to Lady Tregarvan; that the designs of a certain Great Power were most menacing and dangerous, and ought to be exposed and counteracted; and that the peerage which he had long desired ought to be bestowed on him. Sir John Tregarvan applied to certain literary and political gentlemen with whom he was acquainted. He would bring out the *European Review*. He would expose the designs of that Great Power which was menacing Europe. He would show up in his proper colours a Minister who was careless of the country's honour, and forgetful of his own: a Minister whose arrogance ought no longer to be tolerated by the country gentlemen of England. Sir John, a little man in brass buttons, and a tall head, who loves to hear his own voice, came and made a speech on the above topics to the writer of the present biography; that writer's lady was in his study as Sir John expounded his views at some length. She listened to him with the greatest attention and respect. She was shocked to hear of the ingratitude of Government; astounded and terrified by his exposition of the designs of — of that Great Power whose intrigues were so menacing to European tranquillity. She was most deeply interested in the idea of establishing the *Review*. He would, of course, be himself the editor; and — and — (here the woman looked across the table at her husband with a strange triumph in her eyes) — she knew, they both knew, the very man of all the world who was most suited to act as sub-editor under Sir John — a gentleman, one of the truest that ever lived — a university man; a man remarkably versed in the European languages — that is, in French most certainly. And now the reader, I dare say, can guess who this individual was. "I knew it at once," says the lady, after Sir John had taken his leave. "I told you that those dear children would not be forsaken." And I would no more try and persuade her that the *European Review* was not ordained of all time to afford maintenance to Philip, than I would induce her to turn Mormon, and accept all the consequences to which ladies must submit when they make profession of that creed.

"You see, my love," I say to the partner of my existence, "what other things must have been ordained of all time as well as Philip's appointment to be sub-editor of the *European Review*. It must have been decreed ab initio that Lady Plinlimmon should give evening parties, in order that she might offend Lady Tregarvan by not asking her to those parties. It must have been ordained by fate that Lady Tregarvan should be of a jealous disposition, so that she might hate Lady Plinlimmon, and was to work upon her husband, and inspire him with anger and revolt against his chief. It must have been ruled by destiny that Tregarvan should be rather a weak and wordy personage, fancying that he had a talent for literary composition. Else he would not have thought of setting up the *Review*. Else he would never have been angry with Lord Plinlimmon for not inviting him to tea. Else he would not have engaged Philip as sub-editor. So, you see, in order to bring about this event, and put a couple of hundreds a year into Philip Firmin's pocket, the Tregarvans have to be born from the earliest times; the Plinlimmons have to spring up in the remotest ages, and come down to the present day: Dr. Firmin has to be a rogue, and undergo his destiny of cheating his son of money:— all mankind up to the origin of our race are involved in your proposition, and we actually arrive at Adam and Eve, who are but fulfilling their destiny, which was to be the ancestors of Philip Firmin."

"Even in our first parents there was doubt and scepticism and misgiving," says the lady, with strong emphasis on the words. "If you mean to say that there is no such thing as a Superior Power watching over us, and ordaining things for our good, you are an atheist — and such a thing as an atheist does not exist in the world, and I would not believe you if you said you were one twenty times over."

I mention these points by the way, and as samples of lady-like logic. I acknowledge that Philip himself, as he looks back at his past career, is very much moved. "I do not deny," he says, gravely, "that these things happened in the natural order. I say I am grateful for what happened; and look back at the past not without awe. In great grief and danger maybe, I have had timely rescue. Under great suffering I have met with supreme consolation. When the trial has seemed almost too

hard for me it has ended, and our darkness has been lightened." *Ut vivo et valeo — si valeo*, I know by Whose permission this is, — and would you forbid me to be thankful? to be thankful for my life; to be thankful for my children; to be thankful for the daily bread which has been granted to me, and the temptation from which I have been rescued? As I think of the past and its bitter trials, I bow my head in thanks and awe. I wanted succour, and I found it. I fell on evil times, and good friends pitied and helped me — good friends like yourself, your dear wife, many another I could name. In what moments of depression, old friend, have you not seen me, and cheered me? Do you know in the moments of our grief the inexpressible value of your sympathy? Your good Samaritan takes out only twopence maybe for the wayfarer whom he has rescued, but the little timely supply saves a life. You remember dear old Ned St. George — dead in the West Indies years ago? Before he got his place, Ned was hanging on in London, so utterly poor and ruined, that he had not often a shilling to buy a dinner. He used often to come to us, and my wife and our children loved him; and I used to leave a heap of shillings on my study-table, so that he might take two or three as he wanted them. Of course you remember him. You were at the dinner which we gave him on his getting his place. I forget the cost of that dinner; but I remember my share amounted to the exact number of shillings which poor Ned had taken off my table. He gave me the money then and there at the tavern at Blackwall. He said it seemed providential. But for those shillings, and the constant welcome at our poor little table, he said he thought he should have made away with his life. I am not bragging of the twopence which I gave, but thanking God for sending me there to give it. *Benedico benedictus*. I wonder sometimes am I the I of twenty years ago? before our heads were bald, friend, and when the little ones reached up to our knees? Before dinner you saw me in the library reading in that old *European Review* which your friend Tregarvan established. I came upon an article of my own, and a very dull one, on a subject which I knew nothing about. "Persian politics, and the intrigues at the Court of Teheran." It was done to order. Tregarvan had some special interest about Persia, or wanted to vex Sir Thomas Nobbles, who was Minister there. I breakfasted with Tregarvan in the Albany, the facts (we will call them facts) and papers were supplied to me, and I went home to point out the delinquencies of Sir Thomas, and the atrocious intrigues of the Russian Court. Well, sir, Nobbles, Tregarvan, Teheran, all disappeared as I looked at the text in the old volume of the *Review*. I saw a deal table in a little room, and a reading lamp, and a young fellow writing at it, with a sad heart, and a dreadful apprehension torturing him. One of our children was ill in the adjoining room, and I have before me the figure of my wife coming in from time to time to my room and saying, "She is asleep now, and the fever is much lower."

Here our conversation was interrupted by the entrance of a tall young lady, who says, "Papa, the coffee is quite cold: and the carriage will be here very soon, and both mamma and my godmother say they are growing very angry. Do you know you have been talking here for two hours?"

Had two hours actually slipped away, as we sate prattling about old times? As I narrate them, I prefer to give Mr. Firmin's account of his adventures in his own words, where I can recal or imitate them. Both of us are graver and more reverend seigniors than we were at the time of which I am writing. Has not Firmin's girl grown up to be taller than her godmother? Veterans both, we love to prattle about the merry days when we were young — (the merry days? no, the past is never merry) — about the days when we were young; and do we grow young in talking of them, or only indulge in a senile cheerfulness and prolixity?

Tregarvan sleeps with his Cornish fathers: Europe for many years has gone on without her *Review*: but it is a certainty that the establishment of that occult organ of opinion tended very much to benefit Philip Firmin, and helped for a while to supply him and several innocent people dependent on him with their daily bread. Of course, as they were so poor, this worthy family increased and multiplied; and as they increased, and as they multiplied, my wife insists that I should point out how support was found for them. When there was a second child in Philip's nursery, he would have removed from his lodgings in Thornhaugh Street, but for the prayers and commands of the affectionate Little Sister, who insisted that there was plenty of room in the house for everybody, and who said that if Philip went away she would cut off her little godchild with a shilling. And then indeed it was discovered for the first time, that this faithful and affectionate creature had endowed Philip with all her little property. These are the rays of sunshine in the dungeon. These are the drops of water in the desert. And with a full heart our friend acknowledges how comfort came to him in his hour of need.

Though Mr. Firmin has a very grateful heart, it has been admitted that he was a loud, disagreeable Firmin at times, impetuous in his talk, and violent in his behaviour: and we are now come to that period of his history, when he had a quarrel in which I am sorry to say Mr. Philip was in the wrong. Why do we consort with those whom we dislike? Why is it that men will try and associate between whom no love is? I think it was the ladies who tried to reconcile Philip and his

master; who brought them together, and strove to make them friends; but the more they met the more they disliked each other; and now the Muse has to relate their final and irreconcilable rupture.

Of Mugford's wrath the direful tale relate, O Muse! and Philip's pitiable fate. I have shown how the men had long been inwardly envenomed one against another. "Because Firmin is as poor as a rat, that's no reason why he should adopt that hawhaw manner, and them high and mighty airs towards a man who gives him the bread he eats," Mugford argued not unjustly. "What do I care for his being a university man? I am as good as he is. I am better than his old scamp of a father, who was a college man too, and lived in fine company. I made my own way in the world, independent, and supported myself since I was fourteen years of age, and helped my mother and brothers too, and that's more than my sub-editor can say, who can't support himself yet. I could get fifty sub-editors as good as he is, by calling out of the window into the street, I could. I say, hang Firmin! I'm a-losing all patience with him." On the other hand, Mr. Philip was in the habit of speaking his mind with equal candour. "What right has that person to call me Firmin?" he asked. "I am Firmin to my equals and friends. I am this man's labourer at four guineas a week. I give him his money's worth, and on every Saturday evening we are quits. Call me Philip indeed, and strike me in the side! I choke, sir, as I think of the confounded familiarity!" "Confound his impudence!" was the cry, and the not unjust cry of the labourer and his employer. The men should have been kept apart: and it was a most mistaken Christian charity and female conspiracy which brought them together. "Another invitation from Mugford. It was agreed that I was never to go again, and I won't go," says Philip to his meek wife. "Write and say we are engaged, Charlotte."

"It is for the 18th of next month, and this is the 23rd," said poor Charlotte. "We can't well say that we are engaged so far off."

"It is for one of his grand ceremony parties," urged the Little Sister. "You can't come to no quarrelling there. He has a good heart. So have you. There's no good quarrelling with him. Oh, Philip, do forgive, and be friends!" Philip yielded to the remonstrances of the women, as we all do; and a letter was sent to Hampstead, announcing that Mr. and Mrs. P. F. would have the honour,

In his quality of newspaper proprietor, musical professors and opera singers paid much court to Mr. Mugford; and he liked to entertain them at his hospitable table; to brag about his wines, cookery, plate, garden, prosperity, and private virtue, during dinner, whilst the artists sate respectfully listening to him; and to go to sleep and snore, or wake up and join cheerfully in a chorus, when the professional people performed in the drawing-room. Now, there was a lady who was once known on the theatre by the name of Mrs. Ravenswing, and who had been forced on to the stage by the misconduct of her husband, a certain Walker, one of the greatest scamps who ever entered a gaol. On Walker's death, this lady married a Mr. Woolsey, a wealthy tailor, who retired from his business, as he caused his wife to withdraw from hers.

Now, more worthy and honourable people do not live than Woolsey and his wife, as those know who were acquainted with their history. Mrs. Woolsey is loud. Her h's are by no means where they should be; her knife at dinner is often where it should not be. She calls men aloud by their names, and without any prefix of courtesy. She is very fond of porter, and has no scruple in asking for it. She sits down to play the piano, and to sing with perfect good nature, and if you look at her hands as they wander over the keys — well, I don't wish to say anything unkind, — but I am forced to own that those hands are not so white as the ivory which they thump. Woolsey sits in perfect rapture listening to his wife. Mugford presses her to take a glass of "somethink" afterwards; and the good-natured soul says she will take something 'ot. She sits and listens with infinite patience and good-humour whilst the little Mugfords go through their horrible little musical exercises; and these over, she is ready to go back to the piano again, and sing more songs, and drink more 'ot.

I do not say that this was an elegant woman, or a fitting companion for Mrs. Philip; but I know that Mrs. Woolsey was a good, clever, and kindly woman, and that Philip behaved rudely to her. He never meant to be rude to her, he said; but the truth is, he treated her, her husband, Mugford, and Mrs. Mugford, with a haughty ill-humour which utterly exasperated and perplexed them.

About this poor lady, who was modest and innocent as Susannah, Philip had heard some wicked elders at wicked clubs tell wicked stories in old times. There was that old Trail, for instance, what woman escaped from his sneers and slander? There were others who could be named, and whose testimony was equally untruthful. On an ordinary occasion Philip would never have cared or squabbled about a question of precedence, and would have taken any place assigned to him at any table. But when Mrs. Woolsey, in crumpled satins and blowsy lace made her appearance, and was eagerly and respectfully saluted by the host and hostess, Philip remembered those early stories about the poor lady: his eyes flashed

wrath, and his breast beat with an indignation which almost choked him. Ask that woman to meet my wife? he thought to himself, and looked so ferocious and desperate that the timid little wife gazed with alarm at her Philip, and crept up to him and whispered, "What is it, dear?"

Meanwhile, Mrs. Mugford and Mrs. Woolsey were in full colloquy about the weather, the nursery, and so forth — and Woolsey and Mugford giving each other the hearty grasp of friendship. Philip, then, scowling at the newly arrived guests, turning his great hulking back upon the company and talking to his wife, presented a not agreeable figure to his entertainer.

"Hang the fellow's pride!" thought Mugford. "He chooses to turn his back upon my company, because Woolsey was a tradesman. An honest tailor is better than a bankrupt, swindling doctor, I should think. Woolsey need not be ashamed to show his face, I suppose. Why did you make me ask that fellar again, Mrs. M.? Don't you see our society ain't good enough for him?"

Philip's conduct, then, so irritated Mugford, that when dinner was announced, he stepped forward and offered his arm to Mrs. Woolsey; having intended in the first instance to confer that honour upon Charlotte. "I'll show him," thought Mugford, "that an honest tradesman's lady who pays his way, and is not afraid of anybody, is better than my sub-editor's wife, the daughter of a bankrupt swell." Though the dinner was illuminated by Mugford's grandest plate, and accompanied by his very best wine, it was a gloomy and weary repast to several people present, and Philip and Charlotte, and I daresay Mugford, thought it never would be done. Mrs. Woolsey, to be sure, placidly ate her dinner, and drank her wine; whilst, remembering these wicked legends against her, Philip sate before the poor unconscious lady, silent, with glaring eyes, insolent and odious; so much so, that Mrs. Woolsey imparted to Mrs. Mugford her surmise that the tall gentleman must have got out of bed the wrong leg foremost.

Well, Mrs. Woolsey's carriage and Mr. Firmin's cab were announced at the same moment; and immediately Philip started up and beckoned his wife away. But Mrs. Woolsey's carriage and lamps of course had the precedence; and this lady Mr. Mugford accompanied to her carriage step.

He did not pay the same attention to Mrs. Firmin. Most likely he forgot. Possibly he did not think etiquette required he should show that sort of politeness to a sub-editor's wife: at any rate, he was not so rude as Philip himself had been during the evening, but he stood in the hall looking at his guests departing in their cab, when, in a sudden gust of passion, Philip stepped out of the carriage, and stalked up to his host, who stood there in his own hall confronting him, Philip declared, with a most impudent smile on his face.

"Come back to light a pipe I suppose? Nice thing for your wife, ain't it?" said Mugford, relishing his own joke.

"I'm come back, sir," said Philip, glaring at Mugford, "to ask how you dared invite Mrs. Philip Firmin to meet that woman?" Here, on his side, Mr. Mugford lost his temper, and from this moment his wrong begins. When he was in a passion, the language used by Mr. Mugford was not, it appears, choice. We have heard that when angry, he was in the habit of swearing freely at his subordinates. He broke out on this occasion also with many oaths. He told Philip that he would stand his impudence no longer; that he was as good as a swindling doctor's son; that though he hadn't been to college he could buy and pay them as had; and that if Philip liked to come into the back yard for ten minutes, he'd give him one — two, and show him whether he was a man or not. Poor Charlotte, who, indeed, fancied that her husband had gone back to light his cigar, sat awhile unconscious in her cab, and supposed that the two gentlemen were engaged on newspaper business. When Mugford began to pull his coat off, she sat wondering, but not in the least understanding the meaning of the action. Philip had described his employer as walking about his office without a coat and using energetic language. But when, attracted by the loudness of the talk, Mrs. Mugford came forth from her neighbouring drawing-room, accompanied by such of her children as had not yet gone to roost — when seeing Mugford pulling off his dress-coat, she began to scream — when, lifting his voice over hers, Mugford poured forth oaths, and frantically shook his fists at Philip, asking how that blackguard dared insult him in his own house, and proposing to knock his head off at that moment — then poor Char, in a wild alarm, sprang out of the cab, ran to her husband, whose whole frame was throbbing, whose nostrils were snorting with passion. Then Mrs. Mugford springing forward, placed her ample form before her husband's, and calling Philip a great cowardly beast, asked him if he was going to attack that little old man? Then Mugford dashing his coat down to the ground, called with fresh oaths to Philip to come on. And, in fine, there was a most unpleasant row, occasioned by Mr. Philip Firmin's hot temper.

CHAPTER 6

RES ANGUSTA DOMI.

To reconcile these two men was impossible, after such a quarrel as that described in the last chapter. The only chance of peace was to keep the two men apart. If they met, they would fly at each other. Mugford always persisted that he could have got the better of his great hulking sub-editor, who did not know the use of his fists. In Mugford's youthful time, bruising was a fashionable art; and the old gentleman still believed in his own skill and prowess. "Don't tell me," he would say; "though the fellar is as big as a life-guardsman, I would have doubled him up in two minutes." I am very glad, for poor Charlotte's sake and his own, that Philip did not undergo the doubling-up process. He himself felt such a wrath and surprise at his employer as, I suppose, a lion does when a little dog attacks him. I should not like to be that little dog; nor does my modest and peaceful nature at all prompt and impel me to combat with lions.

It was mighty well Mr. Philip Firmin had shown his spirit, and quarrelled with his bread-and-butter; but when Saturday came, what philanthropist would hand four sovereigns and four shillings over to Mr. F., as Mr. Burjoyce, the publisher of the Pall Mall Gazette, had been accustomed to do? I will say for my friend that a still keener remorse than that which he felt about money thrown away attended him when he found that Mrs. Woolsey, towards whom he had cast a sidelong stone of persecution, was a most respectable and honourable lady. "I should like to go, sir, and grovel before her," Philip said, in his energetic way. "If I see that tailor, I will request him to put his foot on my head, and trample on me with his highlows. Oh, for shame! for shame! Shall I never learn charity towards my neighbours, and always go on believing in the lies which people tell me? When I meet that scoundrel Trail at the club, I must chastise him. How dared he take away the reputation of an honest woman?" Philip's friends besought him, for the sake of society and peace, not to carry this quarrel farther. "If," we said, "every woman whom Trail has maligned had a champion who should box Trail's ears at the club, what a vulgar, quarrelsome place that club would become! My dear Philip, did you ever know Mr. Trail say a good word of man or woman?" and by these or similar entreaties and arguments, we succeeded in keeping the Queen's peace.

Yes: but how find another Pall Mall Gazette? Had Philip possessed seven thousand pounds in the three per cents., his income would have been no greater than that which he drew from Mugford's faithful bank. Ah! how wonderful ways and means are! When I think how this very line, this very word, which I am writing represents money, I am lost in a respectful astonishment. A man takes his own case, as he says his own prayers, on behalf of himself and his family. I am paid, we will say, for the sake of illustration, at the rate of sixpence per line. With the words "Ah, how wonderful," to the words "per line," I can buy a loaf, a piece of butter, a jug of milk, a modicum of tea, — actually enough to make breakfast for the family; and the servants of the house; and the charwoman, their servant, can shake up the tea-leaves with a fresh supply of water, sop the crusts, and get a meal, tant bien que mal. Wife, children, guests, servants, charwoman, we are all actually making a meal off Philip Firmin's bones as it were. And my next-door neighbour, whom I see marching away to chambers, umbrella in hand? And next door but one, the city man? And next door but two the doctor! — I know the baker has left loaves at every one of their doors this morning, that all their chimnies are smoking, and they will all have breakfast. Ah, thank God for it! I hope, friend, you and I are not too proud to ask for our daily bread, and to be grateful for getting it? Mr. Philip had to work for his, in care and trouble, like other children of men: — to work for it, and I hope to pray for it, too. It is a thought to me awful and beautiful, that of the daily prayer, and of the myriads of fellow-men uttering it, in care and in sickness, in doubt and in poverty, in health and in wealth. *Panem nostrum da nobis hodie.* Philip whispers it by the bedside where wife and child lie sleeping, and goes to his early labour with a stouter heart: as he creeps to his rest when the day's labour is over, and the quotidian bread is earned, and breathes his hushed thanks to the bountiful Giver of the meal. All over this world what an endless chorus is singing of love, and thanks, and prayer. Day tells to day the wondrous story, and night recounts it unto night. — How do I come to think of a sunrise which I saw near twenty years ago on the Nile, when the river and sky flushed and glowed with the dawning light, and as the luminary appeared, the boatmen knelt on the rosy deck, and adored Allah? So, as thy sun rises, friend, over the humble housetops round about your home, shall you wake many and many a day to duty and labour. May the task have been honestly done when the night comes; and the steward deal kindly with the labourer.

So two of Philip's cables cracked and gave way after a very brief strain, and the poor fellow held by nothing now but

that wonderful European Review established by the mysterious Tregarvan. Actors, a people of superstitions and traditions, opine that heaven, in some mysterious way, makes managers for their benefit. In like manner, Review proprietors are sent to provide the pabulum for us men of letters. With what complacency did my wife listen to the somewhat long-winded and pompous oratory of Tregarvan! He pompous and commonplace? Tregarvan spoke with excellent good sense. That wily woman never showed she was tired of his conversation. She praised him to Philip behind his back, and would not allow a word in his disparagement. As a doctor will punch your chest, your liver, your heart, listen at your lungs, squeeze your pulse, and what not, so this practitioner studied, shampooed, auscultated Tregarvan. Of course, he allowed himself to be operated upon. Of course, he had no idea that the lady was flattering, wheedling, humbugging him; but thought that he was a very well-informed, eloquent man, who had seen and read a great deal, and had an agreeable method of imparting his knowledge, and that the lady in question was a sensible woman, naturally eager for more information. Go, Dalilah! I understand your tricks! I know many another Omphale in London, who will coax Hercules away from his club, to come and listen to her wheedling talk.

One great difficulty we had was to make Philip read Tregarvan's own articles in the Review. He at first said he could not, or that he could not remember them; so that there was no use in reading them. And Philip's new master used to make artful allusions to his own writings in the course of conversation, so that our unwary friend would find himself under examination in any casual interview with Tregarvan, whose opinions on free-trade, malt-tax, income-tax, designs of Russia, or what not, might be accepted or denied, but ought at least to be known. We actually made Philip get up his owner's articles. We put questions to him, privily, regarding them — "coached" him, according to the university phrase. My wife humbugged that wretched Member of Parliament in a way which makes me shudder, when I think of what hypocrisy the sex is capable. Those arts and dissimulations with which she wheedles others, suppose she exercise them on me? Horrible thought! No, angel! To others thou mayst be a coaxing hypocrite; to me thou art all candour! Other men may have been humbugged by other women; but I am not to be taken in by that sort of thing; and thou art all candour!

We had then so much per annum as editor. We were paid, besides, for our articles. We had really a snug little pension out of this Review, and we prayed it might last for ever. We might write a novel. We might contribute articles to a daily paper; get a little parliamentary practice as a barrister. We actually did get Philip into a railway case or two, and my wife must be coaxing and hugging solicitors' ladies, as she had wheedled and coaxed Members of Parliament. Why, I do believe my Dalilah set up a flirtation with old Bishop Crossticks, with an idea of getting her protégé a living; and though the lady indignantly repudiates this charge, will she be pleased to explain how the bishop's sermons were so outrageously praised in the Review?

Philip's roughness and frankness did not displease Tregarvan, to the wonder of us all, who trembled lest he should lose this as he had lost his former place. Tregarvan had more country-houses than one, and at these not only was the editor of the Review made welcome, but the editor's wife and children, whom Tregarvan's wife took in especial regard. In London, Lady Mary had assemblies, where our little friend Charlotte made her appearance; and half-a-dozen times in the course of the season the wealthy Cornish gentleman feasted his retainers of the Review. His wine was excellent and old; his jokes were old, too; his table pompous, grave, plentiful. If Philip was to eat the bread of dependence, the loaf was here very kindly prepared for him; and he ate it humbly, and with not too much grumbling. This diet chokes some proud stomachs and disagrees with them; but Philip was very humble now, and of a nature grateful for kindness. He is one who requires the help of friends, and can accept benefits without losing independence — not all men's gifts, but some men's, whom he repays not only with coin, but with an immense affection and gratitude. How that man did laugh at my witticisms! How he worshipped the ground on which my wife walked! He elected himself our champion. He quarrelled with other people, who found fault with our characters, or would not see our perfections. There was something affecting in the way in which this big man took the humble place. We could do no wrong in his eyes; and woe betide the man who spoke disparagingly of us in his presence!

One day, at his patron's table, Philip exercised his valour and championship in our behalf by defending us against the evil speaking of that Mr. Trail, who has been mentioned before as a gentleman difficult to please, and credulous of ill regarding his neighbour. The talk happened to fall upon the character of the reader's most humble servant, and Trail, as may be imagined, spared me no more than the rest of mankind. Would you like to be liked by all people? That would be a reason why Trail should hate you. Were you an angel fresh dropped from the skies, he would espy dirt on your robe, and a black feather or two in your wing. As for me, I know I am not angelical at all; and in walking my native earth, can't help a

little mud on my trousers. Well: Mr. Trail began to paint my portrait, laying on those dark shadows which that well-known master is in the habit of employing. I was a parasite of the nobility; I was a heartless sycophant, house-breaker, drunkard, murderer, returned convict, With a little imagination, Mrs. Candour can fill up the outline, and arrange the colours so as to suit her amiable fancy.

Philip had come late to dinner; of this fault, I must confess, he is guilty only too often. The company were at table; he took the only place vacant, and this happened to be at the side of Mr. Trail. On Trail's other side was a portly individual of a healthy and rosy countenance and voluminous white waistcoat, to whom Trail directed much of his amiable talk, and whom he addressed once or twice as Sir John. Once or twice already we have seen how Philip has quarrelled at table. He cried *mea culpa* loudly and honestly enough. He made vows of reform in this particular. He succeeded, dearly beloved brethren, not much worse or better than you and I do, who confess our faults, and go on promising to improve, and stumbling and picking ourselves up every day. The pavement of life is strewn with orange-peel; and who has not slipped on the flags?

"He is the most conceited man in London," — Trail was going on, "and one of the most worldly. He will throw over a colonel to dine with a general. He wouldn't throw over you two baronets — he is a great deal too shrewd a fellow for that. He wouldn't give you up, perhaps, to dine with a lord; but any ordinary baronet he would."

"And why not us as well as the rest?" asks Tregarvan, who seemed amused at the speaker's chatter.

"Because you are not like common baronets at all. Because your estates are a great deal too large. Because, I suppose, you might either of you go to the Upper House any day. Because, as an author, he may be supposed to be afraid of a certain Review," cries Trail, with a loud laugh.

"Trail is speaking of a friend of yours," said the host, nodding and smiling to the new comer.

"Very lucky for my friend," growls Philip, and eats his soup in silence.

"By the way, that article of his on Madame de Sévigné is poor stuff. No knowledge of the period. Three gross blunders in French. A man can't write of French society unless he has lived in French society. What does Pendennis know of it? A man who makes blunders like those can't understand French. A man who can't speak French can't get on in French society. Therefore he can't write about French society. All these propositions are clear enough. Thank you. Dry champagne, if you please. He is enormously overrated, I tell you; and so is his wife. They used to put her forward as a beauty: and she is only a dowdy woman out of a nursery. She has no style about her."

"She is only one of the best women in the world," Mr. Firmin called out, turning very red; and hereupon entered into a defence of our characters, and pronounced a eulogium upon both and each of us, in which I hope there was some little truth. However, he spoke with great enthusiasm, and Mr. Trail found himself in a minority.

"You are right to stand up for your friends, Firmin!" cried the host. "Let me introduce you to —"

"Let me introduce myself," said the gentleman on the other side of Mr. Trail. "Mr. Firmin, you and I are kinsmen, — I am Sir John Ringwood." And Sir John reached a hand to Philip across Trail's chair. They talked a great deal together in the course of the evening: and when Mr. Trail found that the great county gentleman was friendly and familiar with Philip, and claimed a relationship with him, his manner towards Firmin altered. He pronounced afterwards a warm eulogy upon Sir John for his frankness and good nature in recognizing his unfortunate relative, and charitably said, "Philip might not be like the doctor, and could not help having a rogue for a father." In former days, Trail had eaten and drunken freely at that rogue's table. But we must have truth, you know, before all things: and if your own brother has committed a sin, common justice requires that you should stone him.

In former days, and not long after Lord Ringwood's death, Philip had left his card at this kinsman's door, and Sir John's butler, driving in his master's brougham, had left a card upon Philip, who was not over well pleased by this acknowledgment of his civility, and, in fact, employed abusive epithets when he spoke of the transaction. But when the two gentlemen actually met, their intercourse was kindly and pleasant enough. Sir John listened to his relative's talk — and it appears, Philip comported himself with his usual free and easy manner — with interest and curiosity; and owned afterwards that evil tongues had previously been busy with the young man's character, and that slander and untruth had been spoken regarding him. In this respect, if Philip is worse off than his neighbours, I can only say his neighbours are fortunate.

Two days after the meeting of the cousins, the tranquillity of Thornhaugh Street was disturbed by the appearance of a

magnificent yellow chariot, with crests, hammer-cloths, a bewigged coachman, and a powdered footman. Betsy, the nurse, who was going to take baby out for a walk, encountered this giant on the threshold of Mrs. Brandon's door: and a lady within the chariot delivered three cards to the tall menial, who transferred them to Betsy. And Betsy persisted in saying that the lady in the carriage admired baby very much, and asked its age, at which baby's mamma was not in the least surprised. In due course, an invitation to dinner followed, and our friends became acquainted with their kinsfolk.

If you have a good memory for pedigrees — and in my youthful time every man de bonne maison studied genealogies, and had his English families in his memory — you know that this Sir John Ringwood, who succeeded to the principal portion of the estates, but not to the titles of the late earl, was descended from a mutual ancestor, a Sir John, whose elder son was ennobled (temp Geo. I.), whilst the second son, following the legal profession, became a judge, and had a son, who became a baronet, and who begat that present Sir John who has just been shaking hands with Philip across Trail's back. [Note: Copied, by permission of P. Firmin, Esq., from the Genealogical Tree in his possession.] Thus the two men were cousins; and in right of the heiress, his poor mother, Philip might quarter the Ringwood arms on his carriage whenever he drove out. These, you know, are argent, a dexter sinople on a fesse wavy of the first — or pick out, my dear friend, any coat you like out of the whole heraldic wardrobe, and accommodate it to our friend Firmin.

When he was a young man at college, Philip had dabbled a little in this queer science of heraldry, and used to try and believe the legends about his ancestry, which his fond mother imparted to him. He had a great book-plate made for himself, with a prodigious number of quarterings, and could recite the alliances by which such and such a quartering came into his shield. His father rather confirmed these histories, and spoke of them and of his wife's noble family with much respect: and Philip, artlessly whispering to a vulgar boy at school that he was descended from King John, was thrashed very unkindly by the vulgar upper boy, and nicknamed King John for many a long day after. I daresay many other gentlemen who profess to trace their descent from ancient kings have no better or worse authority for their pedigree than friend Philip.

When our friend paid his second visit to Sir John Ringwood, he was introduced to his kinsman's library; a great family tree hung over the mantelpiece, surrounded by a whole gallery of defunct Ringwoods, of whom the baronet was now the representative. He quoted to Philip the hackneyed old Ovidian lines (some score of years ago a great deal of that old coin was current in conversation). As for family, he said, and ancestors, and what we have not done ourselves, these things we can hardly call ours. Sir John gave Philip to understand that he was a staunch liberal. Sir John was for going with the age. Sir John had fired a shot from the Paris barricades. Sir John was for the rights of man everywhere all over the world. He had pictures of Franklin, Lafayette, Washington, and the first Consul Bonaparte, on his walls along with his ancestors. He had lithograph copies of Magna Charta, the Declaration of American Independence, and the Signatures to the Death of Charles I. He did not scruple to own his preference for republican institutions. He wished to know what right had any man — the late Lord Ringwood, for example — to sit in a hereditary House of Peers and legislate over him? That lord had had a son, Cinqbars, who died many years before, a victim of his own follies and debaucheries. Had Lord Cinqbars survived his father, he would now be sitting an earl in the House of Peers — the most ignorant young man, the most unprincipled young man, reckless, dissolute, of the feeblest intellect, and the worst life. Well, had he lived and inherited the Ringwood property, that creature would have been an earl: whereas he, Sir John, his superior in morals, in character, in intellect, his equal in point of birth (for had they not both a common ancestor?) was Sir John still. The inequalities in men's chances in life were monstrous and ridiculous. He was determined, henceforth, to look at a man for himself alone, and not esteem him for any of the absurd caprices of fortune.

As the republican was talking to his relative, a servant came into the room and whispered to his master that the plumber had come with his bill as by appointment; upon which Sir John rose up in a fury, asked the servant how he dared to disturb him, and bade him tell the plumber to go to the lowest depths of Tartarus. Nothing could equal the insolence and rapacity of tradesmen, he said, except the insolence and idleness of servants; and he called this one back, and asked him how he dared to leave the fire in that state? — stormed and raged at him with a volubility which astonished his new acquaintance; and, the man being gone, resumed his previous subject of conversation, viz., natural equality and the outrageous injustice of the present social system. After talking for half an hour, during which Philip found that he himself could hardly find an opportunity of uttering a word, Sir John took out his watch, and got up from his chair; at which hint Philip too rose, not sorry to bring the interview to an end. And herewith Sir John accompanied his kinsman into the hall, and to the street-door, before which the baronet's groom was riding, leading his master's horse. And Philip heard the

baronet using violent language to the groom, as he had done to the servant within doors. Why, the army in Flanders did not swear more terribly than this admirer of republican institutions and advocate of the rights of man.

Philip was not allowed to go away without appointing a day when he and his wife would partake of their kinsman's hospitality. On this occasion, Mrs. Philip comported herself with so much grace and simplicity, that Sir John and Lady Ringwood pronounced her to be a very pleasing and ladylike person; and I daresay wondered how a person in her rank of life could have acquired manners that were so refined and agreeable. Lady Ringwood asked after the child which she had seen, praised its beauty; of course, won the mother's heart, and thereby caused her to speak with perhaps more freedom than she would otherwise have felt at a first interview. Mrs. Philip has a dainty touch on the piano, and a sweet singing voice that is charmingly true and neat. She performed after dinner some of the songs of her little *répertoire*, and pleased her audience. Lady Ringwood loved good music, and was herself a fine performer of the ancient school, when she played Haydn and Mozart under the tuition of good old Sir George Thrum. The tall and handsome beneficed clergyman who acted as major-domo of Sir John's establishment, placed a parcel in the carriage when Mr. and Mrs. Philip took their leave, and announced with much respectful deference that the cab was paid. Our friends no doubt would have preferred to dispense with this ceremony; but it is ill looking even a gift cab-horse in the mouth, and so Philip was a gainer of some two shillings by his kinsman's liberality.

When Charlotte came to open the parcel which majordomo, with his lady's compliments, had placed in the cab, I fear she did not exhibit that elation which we ought to feel for the favours of our friends. A couple of little frocks, of the cut of George IV., some little red shoes of the same period, some crumpled sashes, and other small articles of wearing apparel, by her ladyship's order by her ladyship's lady's-maid; and Lady Ringwood kissing Charlotte at her departure, told her that she had caused this little packet to be put away for her. "H'm," says Philip, only half pleased. "Suppose, Sir John had told his butler to put up one of his blue coats and brass buttons for me, as well as pay the cab?"

"If it was meant in kindness, Philip, we must not be angry," pleaded Philip's wife; — "and I am sure if you had heard her and the Miss Ringwoods speak of baby, you would like them as I intend to do."

But Mrs. Philip never put those mouldy old red shoes upon baby; and as for the little frocks, children's frocks are made so much fuller now that Lady Ringwood's presents did not answer at all. Charlotte managed to furbish up a sash, and a pair of epaulets for her child — epaulets are they called? Shoulder-knots — what you will, ladies; and with these ornaments Miss Firmin was presented to Lady Ringwood and some of her family.

The goodwill of these new-found relatives of Philip's was laborious, was evident, and yet I must say was not altogether agreeable. At the first period of their intercourse — for this, too, I am sorry to say, came to an end, or presently suffered interruption — tokens of affection in the shape of farm produce, country butter and poultry, and actual butcher's meat, came from Berkeley Square to Thornhaugh Street. The Duke of Double-Glo'ster I know is much richer than you are; but if he were to offer to make you a present of half-a-crown, I doubt whether you would be quite pleased. And so with Philip and his relatives. A hamper brought in the brougham, containing hot-house grapes and country butter is very well, but a leg of mutton I own was a gift that was rather tough to swallow. It was tough. That point we ascertained and established amongst roars of laughter one day when we dined with our friends. Did Lady Ringwood send a sack of turnips in the brougham too? In a word, we ate Sir John's mutton, and we laughed at him, and be sure many a man has done the same by you and me. Last Friday, for instance, as Jones and Brown go away after dining with your humble servant. "Did you ever see such profusion and extravagance?" asks Brown. "Profusion and extravagance!" cries Jones, that well-known epicure. "I never saw anything so shabby in my life. What does the fellow mean by asking me to such a dinner?" "True," says the other, "it was an abominable dinner, Jones, as you justly say; but it was very profuse in him to give it. Don't you see?" and so both our good friends are agreed.

Ere many days were over the great yellow chariot and its powdered attendants again made their appearance before Mrs. Brandon's modest door in Thornhaugh Street, and Lady Ringwood and two daughters descended from the carriage and made their way to Mr. Philip's apartments in the second floor, just as that worthy gentleman was sitting down to dinner with his wife. Lady Ringwood, bent upon being gracious, was in ecstasies with everythings he saw — a clean house — a nice little maid — pretty picturesque rooms — odd rooms — and what charming pictures! Several of these were the work of the fond pencil of poor J. J., who, as has been told, had painted Philip's beard and Charlotte's eyebrow, and Charlotte's baby a thousand and a thousand times. "May we come in? Are we disturbing you? What dear little bits of china! What a beautiful mug, Mr. Firmin!" This was poor J. J.'s present to his goddaughter. "How nice the luncheon looks!

Dinner is it? How pleasant to dine at this hour!" The ladies were determined to be charmed with everything round about them.

"We are dining on your poultry. May we offer some to you and Miss Ringwood," says the master of the house.

"Why don't you dine in the dining-room? Why do you dine in a bedroom?" asks Franklin Ringwood, the interesting young son of the Baron of Ringwood.

"Somebody else lives in the parlour," says Mrs. Philip. On which the boy remarks, "We have two dining-rooms in Berkeley Square. I mean for us, besides papa's study, which I mustn't go into. And the servants have two dining-rooms and —"

"Hush!" here cries mamma, with the usual remark regarding the beauty of silence in little boys.

But Franklin persists, in spite of the "Hushes:" "And so we have at Ringwood; and at Whipham there's ever so many dining-rooms — ever so many — and I like Whipham a great deal better than Ringwood, because my pony is at Whipham. You have not got a pony. You are too poor."

"Franklin!"

"You said he was too poor; and you would not have had chickens if we had not given them to you. Mamma, you know you said they were very poor, and would like them."

And here mamma looked red, and I daresay Philip's cheeks and ears tingled, and for once Mrs. Philip was thankful at hearing her baby cry, for it gave her a pretext for leaving the room and flying to the nursery, whither the other two ladies accompanied her.

Meanwhile Master Franklin went on with his artless conversation. "Mr. Philip, why do they say you are wicked? You do not look wicked; and I am sure Mrs. Philip does not look wicked — she looks very good."

"Who says I am wicked?" asks Mr. Firmin of his candid young relative.

"Oh, ever so many! Cousin Ringwood says so; and Blanche says so; and Woolcomb says so; only I don't like him, he's so very brown. And when they heard you had been to dinner, 'Has that beast been here?' Ringwood says. And I don't like him a bit. But I like you, at least I think I do. You only have oranges for dessert. We always have lots of things for dessert at home. You don't, I suppose, because you've got no money — only a very little."

"Well: I have got only a very little," says Philip.

"I have some — ever so much. And I'll buy something for your wife; and I shall like to have you better at home than Blanche, and Ringwood, and that Woolcomb; and they never give me anything. You can't, you know; because you are so very poor — you are; but we'll often send you things, I daresay. And I'll have an orange, please, thank you. And there's a chap at our school, and his name is Suckling, and he ate eighteen oranges, and wouldn't give one away to anybody. Wasn't he a greedy pig? And I have wine with my oranges — I do: a glass of wine — thank you. That's jolly. But you don't have it often, I suppose, because you're so very poor."

I am glad Philip's infant could not understand, being yet of too tender age, the compliments which Lady Ringwood and her daughter passed upon her. As it was, the compliments charmed the mother, for whom indeed they were intended, and did not inflame the unconscious baby's vanity. "What would the polite mamma and sister have said, if they had heard that unlucky Franklin's prattle?" The boy's simplicity amused his tall cousin. "Yes," says Philip, "we are very poor, but we are very happy, and don't mind — that's the truth."

"Mademoiselle, that's the German governess, said she wondered how you could live at all; and I don't think you could if you ate as much as she did. You should see her eat; she is such a oner at eating. Fred, my brother, that's the one who is at college, one day tried to see how Mademoiselle Wallfisch could eat, and she had twice of soup, and then she said sivoplay; and then twice of fish, and she said sivoplay for more: and then she had roast mutton — no, I think, roast beef it was; and she eats the pease with her knife: and then she had raspberry jam pudding, and ever so much beer, and then — " But what came then we never shall know; because while young Franklin was choking with laughter (accompanied with a large piece of orange) at the ridiculous recollection of Miss Wallfisch's appetite, his mamma and sister came downstairs from Charlotte's nursery, and brought the dear boy's conversation to an end. The ladies chose to go home, delighted with Philip, baby, Charlotte. Everything was so proper. Everything was so nice. Mrs. Firmin was so ladylike. The fine ladies watched her, and her behaviour, with that curiosity which the Brobdingnag ladies displayed when they held up little Gulliver on their palms, and saw him bow, smile, dance, draw his sword, and take off his hat, just like a man.

CHAPTER 7

IN WHICH THE DRAWING ROOMS ARE NOT FURNISHED AFTER ALL.

WE cannot expect to be loved by a relative whom we have knocked into an illuminated pond, and whose coattails, pantaloons, nether limbs, and best feelings, we have lacerated with ill-treatment and broken glass. A man whom you have so treated behind his back will not be sparing of his punishment behind yours. Of course all the Twysdens, male and female, and Woolcomb, the dusky husband of Philip's former love, hated and feared, and maligned him; and were in the habit of speaking of him as a truculent and reckless savage and monster, coarse and brutal in his language and behaviour, ragged, dirty and reckless in his personal appearance; reeking with smoke, perpetually reeling in drink, indulging in oaths, actions, laughter which rendered him intolerable in civilized society. The Twysdens, during Philip's absence abroad, had been very respectful and assiduous in courting the new head of the Ringwood family. They had flattered Sir John, and paid court to my lady. They had been welcomed at Sir John's houses in town and country. They had adopted his politics in a great measure, as they had adopted the politics of the deceased peer. They had never lost an opportunity of abusing poor Philip and of ingratiating themselves. They had never refused any invitation from Sir John in town or country, and had ended by utterly boring him and Lady Ringwood and the Ringwood family in general. Lady Ringwood learned somewhere how pitilessly Mrs. Woolcomb had jilted her cousin when a richer suitor appeared in the person of the West Indian. Then news came how Philip had administered a beating to Woolcomb, to young Twysden, to a dozen who set on him. The early prejudices began to pass away. A friend or two of Philip's told Ringwood how he was mistaken in the young man, and painted a portrait of him in colours much more favourable than those which his kinsfolk employed. Indeed, dear relations, if the public wants to know our little faults and errors, I think I know who will not grudge the requisite information. Dear Aunt Candour, are you not still alive, and don't you know what we had for dinner yesterday, and the amount (monstrous extravagance!) of the washerwoman's bill?

Well, the Twysden family so bespattered poor Philip with abuse, and represented him as a monster of such hideous mien, that no wonder the Ringwoods avoided him. They then began to grow utterly sick and tired of his detractors. And then Sir John, happening to talk with his brother Member of Parliament, Tregarvan, in the House of Commons, heard quite a different story regarding our friend to that with which the Twysdens had regaled him, and, with no little surprise on Sir John's part, was told by Tregarvan how honest, rough, worthy, affectionate and gentle this poor maligned fellow was; how he had been sinned against by his wretch of a father, whom he had forgiven and actually helped out of his wretched means; and how he was making a brave battle against poverty, and had a sweet little loving wife and child, whom every kind heart would willingly strive to help. Because people are rich they are not of necessity ogres. Because they are born gentlemen and ladies of good degree, are in easy circumstances, and have a generous education, it does not follow that they are heartless and will turn their back on a friend. *Moi qui vous parle* — I have been in a great strait of sickness near to death, and the friends who came to help me with every comfort, succour, sympathy, were actually gentlemen, who lived in good houses, and had a good education. They didn't turn away because I was sick, or fly from me because they thought I was poor; on the contrary, hand, purse, succour, sympathy were ready, and praise be to heaven. And so too did Philip find help when he needed it, and succour when he was in poverty. Tregarvan, we will own, was a pompous little man, his House of Commons speeches were dull, and his written documents awfully slow; but he had a kind heart: he was touched by that picture which Laura drew of the young man's poverty, and honesty, and simple hopefulness in the midst of hard times: and we have seen how the *European Review* was thus entrusted to Mr. Philip's management. Then some artful friends of Philip's determined that he should be reconciled to his relations, who were well to do in the world, and might serve him. And I wish, dear reader, that your respectable relatives and mine would bear this little paragraph in mind and leave us both handsome legacies. Then Tregarvan spoke to Sir John Ringwood, and that meeting was brought about, where, for once at least, Mr. Philip quarrelled with nobody.

And now came another little piece of good luck, which, I suppose, must be attributed to the same kind friend who had been scheming for Philip's benefit, and who is never so happy as when her little plots for her friend's benefit can be made to succeed. Yes: when that arch jobber — don't tell me; — I never knew a woman worth a pin who wasn't — when that archjobber, I say, has achieved a job by which some friend is made happy, her eyes and cheeks brighten with triumph.

Whether she has put a sick man into a hospital, or got a poor woman a family's washing, or made a sinner repent and return to wife, husband, or what not, that woman goes off and pays her thanks, where thanks are due, with such fervour, with such lightsomeness, with such happiness, that I assure you she is a sight to behold. Hush! When one sinner is saved, who are glad? Some of us know a woman or two pure as angels — know, and are thankful.

When the person about whom I have been prattling has one of her benevolent jobs in hand, or has completed it, there is a sort of triumph and mischief in her manner, which I don't know otherwise how to describe. She does not understand my best jokes at this period, or answers them at random, or laughs very absurdly and vacantly. She embraces her children wildly, and, at the most absurd moments, is utterly unmindful when they are saying their lessons, prattling their little questions, and so forth. I recal all these symptoms (and put this and that together, as the saying is) as happening on one especial day, at the commencement of Easter Term, eighteen hundred and never mind what — as happening on one especial morning when this lady had been astoundingly distraite and curiously excited. I now remember, how during her children's dinner-time, she sat looking into the square out of her window, and scarcely attending to the little innocent cries for mutton which the children were offering up.

At last there was a rapid clank over the pavement, a tall figure passed the parlour windows, which, our kind friends know, look into Queen Square, and then came a loud ring at the bell, and I thought the mistress of the house gave an ah — a sigh — as though her heart was relieved.

The street door was presently opened, and then the dining-room door, and Philip walks in with his hat on, his blue eyes staring before him, his hair flaming about, and "La, uncle Philip!" cry the children. "What have you done to yourself? You have shaved off your moustache." And so he had, I declare!

"I say, Pen, look here! This has been left at chambers; and Cassidy has sent it on by his clerk," our friend said. I forget whether it has been stated that Philip's name still remained on the door of those chambers in Parchment Buildings, where we once heard his song of "Doctor Luther," and were present at his call-supper.

The document which Philip produced was actually a brief. The papers were superscribed, "In Parliament, Polwheedle and Tredyddlum Railway. To support bill, Mr. Firmin; retainer, five guineas; brief, fifty guineas; consultation, five guineas. With you Mr. Armstrong, Sir J. Whitworth, Mr. Pinkerton." Here was a wonder of wonders! A shower of gold was poured out on my friend. A light dawned upon me. The proposed bill was for a Cornish line. Our friend Tregarvan was concerned in it, the line passing through his property, and my wife had canvassed him privately, and by her wheedling and blandishments had persuaded Tregarvan to use his interest with the agents and get Philip this welcome aid.

Philip eyed the paper with a queer expression. He handled it as some men handle a baby. He looked as if he did not know what to do with it, and as if he should like to drop it. I believe I made some satirical remark to this effect as I looked at our friend with his paper.

"He holds a child beautifully," said my wife with much enthusiasm; "much better than some people who laugh at him."

"And he will hold this no doubt much to his credit. May this be the father of many briefs. May you have bags full of them!" Philip had all our good wishes. They did not cost much, or avail much, but they were sincere. I know men who can't for the lives of them give even that cheap coin of good will, but hate their neighbours' prosperity, and are angry with them when they cease to be dependent and poor.

We have said how Cassidy's astonished clerk had brought the brief from chambers to Firmin at his lodgings at Mrs. Brandon's in Thornhaugh Street. Had a bailiff served him with a writ, Philip could not have been more surprised, or in a greater tremor. A brief? Grands Dieux! What was he to do with a brief? He thought of going to bed, and being ill, of flying from home, country, family. Brief? Charlotte, of course, seeing her husband alarmed, began to quake too. Indeed, if his worship's finger aches, does not her whole body suffer? But Charlotte's and Philip's constant friend, the Little Sister, felt no such fear. "Now there's this opening, you must take it, my dear," she said. "Suppose you don't know much about law — " "Much! nothing," interposed Philip. "You might ask me to play the piano; but as I never happened to have learned — "

"La — don't tell me! You mustn't show a faint heart. Take the business, and do it best you can. You'll do it better next time, and next. The Bar's a gentleman's business. Don't I attend a judge's lady, which I remember her with her first in a little bit of a house in Bernard Street, Russell Square; and now haven't I been to her in Eaton Square, with a butler, and two footmen, and carriages ever so many? You may work on at your newspapers, and get a crust, and when you're old, and if you quarrel — and you have a knack of quarrelling — he has, Mrs. Firmin. I knew him before you did. Quarrelsome he is,

and he will be, though you think him an angel, to be sure. — Suppose you quarrel with your newspaper masters, and your reviews, and that, you lose your place? A gentleman like Mr. Philip oughtn't to have a master. I couldn't bear to think of your going down of a Saturday to the publishing office to get your wages like a workman."

"But I am a workman," interposes Philip.

"La! But do you mean to remain one for ever? I would rise, if I was a man!" said the intrepid little woman; "I would rise, or I'd know the reason why. Who knows how many in family you're going to be? I'd have more spirit than to live in a second floor — I would!"

And the Little Sister said this, though she clung round Philip's child with a rapture of fondness which she tried in vain to conceal; though she felt that to part from it would be to part from her life's chief happiness; though she loved Philip as her own son: and Charlotte — well, Charlotte for Philip's sake — as women love other women.

Charlotte came to her friends in Queen Square, and told us of the resolute Little Sister's advice and conversation. She knew that Mrs. Brandon only loved her as something belonging to Philip. She admired this Little Sister; and trusted her; and could afford to bear that little somewhat scornful domination which Brandon exercised. "She does not love me, because Philip does," Charlotte said. "Do you think I could like her, or any woman, if I thought Philip loved them? I could kill them, Laura, that I could!" And at this sentiment I imagine daggers shooting out of a pair of eyes that were ordinarily very gentle and bright.

Not having been engaged in the case in which Philip had the honour of first appearing, I cannot enter into particulars regarding it, but am sure that case must have been uncommonly strong in itself, which could survive such an advocate. He passed a frightful night of torture before appearing in committee room. During that night, he says, his hair grew grey. His old college friend and comrade Pinkerton, who was with him in the case, "coached" him on the day previous; and indeed it must be owned that the work which he had to perform was not of a nature to impair the inside or the outside of his skull. A great man was his leader; his friend Pinkerton followed; and all Mr. Philip's business was to examine a half-dozen witnesses by questions previously arranged between them and the agents.

When you hear that, as a reward of his services in this case, Mr. Firmin received a sum of money sufficient to pay his modest family expenses for some four months, I am sure, dear and respected literary friends, that you will wish the lot of a parliamentary barrister had been yours, or that your immortal works could be paid with such a liberality as rewards the labours of these lawyers. "Nimmer erscheinen die Götter allein." After one agent had employed Philip, another came and secured his valuable services: him two or three others followed, and our friend positively had money in bank. Not only were apprehensions of poverty removed for the present, but we had every reason to hope that Firmin's prosperity would increase and continue. And when a little son and heir was born, which blessing was conferred upon Mr. Philip about a year after his daughter, our godchild, saw the light, we should have thought it shame to have any misgivings about the future, so cheerful did Philip's prospects appear. "Did I not tell you," said my wife, with her usual kindling romance, "that comfort and succour would be found for these in the hour of their need?" Amen. We were grateful that comfort and succour should come. No one I am sure was more humbly thankful than Philip himself for the fortunate chances which befel him.

He was alarmed rather than elated by his sudden prosperity. "It can't last," he said. "Don't tell me. The attorneys must find me out before long. They cannot continue to give their business to such an ignoramus; and I really think I must remonstrate with them." You should have seen the Little Sister's indignation when Philip uttered this sentiment in her presence. "Give up your business? Yes, do!" she cried, tossing up Philip's youngest born. "Fling this baby out of window, why not indeed, which heaven has sent it you! — You ought to go down on your knees and ask pardon for having thought anything so wicked." Philip's heir, by the way, immediately on his entrance into the world, had become the prime favourite of this unreasoning woman. The little daughter was passed over as a little person of no account, and so began to entertain the passion of jealousy at almost the very earliest age at which even the female breast is capable of enjoying it.

And though this Little Sister loved all these people with an almost ferocious passion of love, and lay awake, I believe, hearing their infantine cries, or crept on stealthy feet in darkness to their mother's chamber-door, behind which they lay sleeping; though she had, as it were, a range for these infants, and was wretched out of their sight, yet, when a third and a fourth brief came to Philip, and he was enabled to put a little money aside, nothing would content Mrs. Brandon but that he should go into a house of his own. "A gentleman," she said, "ought not to live in a two-pair lodging; he ought to have a house of his own." So, you see, she hastened on the preparations for her own execution. She trudged to the brokers' shops

and made wonderful bargains of furniture. She cut chintzes, and covered sofas, and sewed, and patched, and fitted. She found a house and took it — Milman Street, Guildford Street, opposite the Fondling (as the dear little soul called it), a most genteel, quiet little street, “and quite near for me to come,” she said, “to see my dears.” Did she speak with dry eyes? Mine moisten sometimes when I think of the faith, of the generosity, of the sacrifice, of that devoted, loving creature.

I am very fond of Charlotte. Her sweetness and simplicity won all our hearts at home. No wife or mother ever was more attached and affectionate; but I own there was a time when I hated her, though of course that highly principled woman, the wife of the author of the present memoirs, says that the statement I am making here is stuff and nonsense, not to say immoral and irreligious. Well, then, I hated Charlotte for the horrible eagerness which she showed in getting away from this Little Sister, who clung round those children, whose first cries she had heard. I hated Charlotte for a cruel happiness which she felt as she hugged the children to her heart: her own children in their own room, whom she would dress, and watch, and wash, and tend; and for whom she wanted no aid. No aid, *entendez-vous*? Oh, it was a shame, a shame! In the new house, in the pleasant little trim new nursery (fitted up by whose fond hands we will not say), is the mother glaring over the cot, where the little soft round cheeks are pillowed; and yonder in the rooms in Thornhaugh Street, where she has tended them for two years, the Little Sister sits lonely, as the moonlight streams in. God help thee, little suffering, faithful heart! Never but once in her life before had she known so exquisite a pain.

Of course, we had an entertainment in the new house; and Philip’s friends, old and new, came to the house-warming. The family coach of the Ringwoods blocked up that astonished little street. The powder on their footmen’s heads nearly brushed the ceiling, as the monsters rose when the guests passed in and out of the hall. The Little Sister merely took charge of the tea-room. Philip’s ‘library’ was that usual little cupboard beyond the dining-room. The little drawing-room was dreadfully crowded by an ex-nursery piano, which the Ringwoods bestowed upon their friends; and somebody was in duty bound to play upon it on the evening of this *soirée*; though the Little Sister chafed downstairs at the music. In fact, her very words were “Rat that piano!” She “ratted” the instrument, because the music would wake her little dears upstairs. And that music did wake them; and they howled melodiously, and the Little Sister, who was about to serve Lady Jane Tregarvan with some tea, dashed upstairs to the nursery: and Charlotte had reached the room already: and she looked angry when the Little Sister came in: and she said, “I am sure, Mrs. Brandon, the people downstairs will be wanting their tea;” and she spoke with some asperity. And Mrs. Brandon went downstairs without one word; and, happening to be on the landing, conversing with a friend, and a little out of the way of the duet which the Miss Ringwoods were performing — riding their great old horse, as it were, and putting it through its paces in Mrs. Firmin’s little paddock; happening, I say, to be on the landing when Caroline passed, I took a hand as cold as stone, and never saw a look of grief more tragic than that worn by her poor little face as it passed. “My children cried,” she said, “and I went up to the nursery. But she don’t want me there now.” Poor Little Sister! She humbled herself and grovelled before Charlotte. You could not help trampling upon her then, madam; and I hated you — and a great number of other women. Ridley and I went down to her tea-room, where Caroline resumed her place. She looked very nice and pretty, with her pale sweet face, and her neat cap and blue ribbon. Tortures I know she was suffering. Charlotte had been stabbing her. Women will use the edge sometimes, and drive the steel in. Charlotte said to me, some time afterwards, “I was jealous of her, and you were right; and a dearer, more faithful creature never lived.” But who told Charlotte I said she was jealous? O fool! I told Ridley, and Mr. Ridley told Mrs. Firmin.

If Charlotte stabbed Caroline, Caroline could not help coming back again and again to the knife. On Sundays, when she was free, there was always a place for her at Philip’s modest table; and when Mrs. Philip went to church, Caroline was allowed to reign in the nursery. Sometimes Charlotte was generous enough to give Mrs. Brandon this chance. When Philip took a house — a whole house to himself — Philip’s mother-in-law proposed to come and stay with him, and said that, wishing to be beholden to no one, she would pay for her board and lodging. But Philip declined this treat, representing, justly, that his present house was no bigger than his former lodgings. “My poor love is dying to have me,” Mrs. Baynes remarked on this. “But her husband is so cruel to her, and keeps her under such terror, that she dares not call her life her own.” Cruel to her! Charlotte was the happiest of the happy in her little house. In consequence of his parliamentary success, Philip went regularly to chambers now, in the fond hope that more briefs might come. At chambers he likewise conducted the chief business of his Review: and, at the accustomed hour of his return, that usual little procession of mother and child and nurse would be seen on the watch for him; and the young woman — the happiest young woman in Christendom — would walk back clinging on her husband’s arm.

All this while letters came from Philip’s dear father at New York, where, it appeared, he was engaged not only in his

profession, but in various speculations, with which he was always about to make his fortune. One day Philip got a newspaper advertising a new insurance company, and saw, to his astonishment, the announcement of "Counsel in London, Philip Firmin, Esq., Parchment Buildings, Temple." A paternal letter promised Philip great fees out of this insurance company, but I never heard that poor Philip was any the richer. In fact, his friends advised him to have nothing to do with this insurance company, and to make no allusion to it in his letters. "They feared the Danaï, and the gifts they brought," as old Firmin would have said. They had to impress upon Philip an abiding mistrust of that wily old Greek, his father. Firmin senior always wrote hopefully and magnificently, and persisted in believing or declaring that ere very long he should have to announce to Philip that his fortune was made. He speculated in Wall Street, I don't know in what shares, inventions, mines, railways. One day, some few months after his migration to Milman Street, Philip, blushing and hanging down his head, had to tell me that his father had drawn upon him again. Had he not paid up his shares in a certain mine, they would have been forfeited, and he and his son after him would have lost a certain fortune, old Danaus said. I fear an artful, a long-bow-pulling Danaus. What, shall a man have birth, wealth, friends, high position, and end so that we dare not leave him alone in the room with our spoons? "And you have paid this bill which the old man drew?" we asked. Yes, Philip had paid the bill. He vowed he would pay no more. But it was not difficult to see that the doctor would draw more bills upon this accommodating banker. "I dread the letters which begin with a flourish about the fortune which he is just going to make," Philip said. He knew that the old parent prefaced his demands for money in that way.

Mention has been made of a great medical discovery which he had announced to his correspondent, Mrs. Brandon, and by which the doctor declared as usual that he was about to make a fortune. In New York and Boston he had tried experiments which had been attended with the most astonishing success. A remedy was discovered, the mere sale of which in Europe and America must bring an immense revenue to the fortunate inventors. For the ladies whom Mrs. Brandon attended, the remedy was of priceless value. He would send her some. His friend, Captain Morgan, of the Southampton packet-ship, would bring her some of this astonishing medicine. Let her try it. Let her show the accompanying cases to Doctor Goodenough — to any of his brother physicians in London. Though himself an exile from his country, he loved it, and was proud in being able to confer upon it one of the greatest blessings with which science had endowed mankind.

Goodenough, I am sorry to say, had such a mistrust of his confrère that he chose to disbelieve any statement Firmin made. "I don't believe, my good Brandon, the fellow has nous enough to light upon any scientific discovery more useful than a new sauce for cutlets. He invent anything but fibs, never!" You see this Goodenough is an obstinate old heathen; and when he has once found reason to mistrust a man, he for ever after declines to believe him.

However, the doctor is a man for ever on the lookout for more knowledge of his profession, and for more remedies to benefit mankind: he hummed and ha'd over the pamphlet, as the Little Sister sat watching him in his study. He clapped it down after a while, and slapped his hands on his little legs as his wont is. "Brandon," he says, "I think there is a great deal in it, and I think so the more because it turns out that Firmin has nothing to do with the discovery, which has been made at Boston." In fact, Dr. Firmin, late of London, had only been present in the Boston hospital, where the experiments were made with the new remedy. He had cried "Halves," and proposed to sell it as a secret remedy, and the bottle which he forwarded to our friend the Little Sister was labelled "Firmin's Anodyne." What Firmin did, indeed, was what he had been in the habit of doing. He had taken another man's property, and was endeavouring to make a flourish with it. The Little Sister returned home, then, with her bottle of Chloroform — for this was what Dr. Firmin chose to call his discovery, and he had sent home a specimen of it; as he sent home a cask of petroleum from Virginia; as he sent proposals for new railways upon which he promised Philip a munificent commission, if his son could but place the shares amongst his friends.

And with regard to these valuables, the sanguine doctor got to believe that he really was endowing his son with large sums of money. "My boy has set up a house, and has a wife and two children, the young jackanapes!" he would say to people in New York; "as if he had not been extravagant enough in former days! When I married, I had private means, and married a nobleman's niece with a large fortune. Nither of these two young folks has a penny. Well, well, the old father must help them as well as he can!" And I am told there were ladies who dropped the tear of sensibility, and said, "What a fond father this doctor is! How he sacrifices himself for that scapegrace of a son! Think of the dear doctor at his age, toiling cheerfully for that young man, who helped to ruin him!" And Firmin sighed; and passed a beautiful white handkerchief over his eyes with a beautiful white hand; and, I believe, really cried; and thought himself quite a good, affectionate, injured man. He held the plate at Church; he looked very handsome and tall, and bowed with a charming melancholy grace

to the ladies as they put in their contributions. The dear man! His plate was fuller than other people's — so a traveller told us who saw him in New York; and described a very choice dinner which the doctor gave to a few friends, at one of the smartest hotels just then opened.

With all the Little Sister's good management Mr. and Mrs. Philip were only able to instal themselves in their new house at a considerable expense, and beyond that great Ringwood piano which swaggered in Philip's little drawing-room, I am constrained to say that there was scarce any furniture at all. One of the railway accounts was not paid as yet, and poor Philip could not feed upon mere paper promises to pay. Nor was he inclined to accept the offers of private friends, who were willing enough to be his bankers. "One in a family is enough for that kind of business," he said, gloomily; and it came out that again and again the interesting exile at New York who was deploring his son's extravagance and foolish marriage, had drawn bills upon Philip which our friend accepted and paid — bills, who knows to what amount? He has never told; and the engaging parent who robbed him — must I use a word so unpolite? — will never now tell to what extent he helped himself to Philip's small means. This I know, that when autumn came — when September was past — we in our cosy little retreat at the seaside received a letter from the Little Sister, in her dear little bad spelling, (about which there used to be somehow a pathos which the very finest writing does not possess;) — there came, I say, a letter from the Little Sister in which she told us, with many dashes, that dear Mrs. Philip and the children were pining and sick in London, and 'that Philip, he had too much pride and sperit to take money from any one; that Mr. Tregarvan was away travelling on the continent, and that wretch — that monster, you know who — have drawn upon Philip again for money, and again he have paid, and the dear, dear children can't have fresh air.'

"Did she tell you," said Philip, brushing his hands across his eyes when a friend came to remonstrate with him, "did she tell you that she brought me money herself, but we would not use it? Look! I have her little marriage gift yonder in my desk, and pray God I shall be able to leave it to my children. The fact is, the doctor has drawn upon me, as usual; he is going to make a fortune next week. I have paid another bill of his. The parliamentary agents are out of town, at their moors in Scotland, I suppose. The air of Russell Square is uncommonly wholesome, and when the babies have had enough of that, why, they must change it for Brunswick Square. Talk about the country! what country can be more quiet than Guildford Street in September? I stretch out of a morning, and breathe the mountain-air on Ludgate Hill." And with these dismal pleasantries and jokes our friend chose to put a good face upon bad fortune. The kinsmen of Ringwood offered hospitality kindly enough, but how was poor Philip to pay railway expenses for servants, babies, and wife? In this strait Tregarvan from abroad, having found out some monstrous design of Russ — of the Great Power of which he stood in daily terror, and which, as we are in strict amity with that Power, no other Power shall induce me to name — Tregarvan wrote to his editor, and communicated to him in confidence a most prodigious and nefarious plot against the liberties of all the rest of Europe, in which the Power in question was engaged, and in a postscript added, "By the way, the Michaelmas quarter is due, and I send you a cheque," O precious postscript!

"Didn't I tell you it would be so?" said my wife, with a self-satisfied air. "Was I not certain that succour would come?"

And succour did come, sure enough; and a very happy little party went down to Brighton in a second-class carriage, and got an extraordinarily cheap lodging, and the roses came back to the little pale cheeks, and mamma was wonderfully invigorated and refreshed, as all her friends could have seen when the little family came back to town, only there was such a thick dun fog that it was impossible to see complexions at all.

When the shooting season was come to an end, the parliamentary agents who had employed Philip, came back to London; and, I am happy to say, gave him a cheque for his little account. My wife cried, "Did I not tell you so?" more than ever. "Is not everything for the best? I knew dear Philip would prosper!"

Everything was for the best, was it? Philip was sure to prosper, was he? What do you think of the next news which the poor fellow brought to us? One night in December he came to us, and I saw by his face that some event of importance had befallen him.

"I am almost heart-broken," he said, thumping on the table when the young ones had retreated from it. "I don't know what to do. I have not told you all. I have paid four bills for him already, and now he has — he has signed my name."

"Who has?"

"He at New York. You know," said poor Philip. "I tell you he has put my name on a bill, and without my authority."

"Gracious heavens! You mean your father has for — " I could not say the word.

“Yes,” groaned Philip. “Here is a letter from him;” and he handed a letter across the table in the doctor’s well-known handwriting.

“Dearest Philip,” the father wrote, “a sad misfortune has befallen me, which I had hoped to conceal, or at any rate, to avert from my dear son.” For you, Philip, are a participator in that misfortune through the imprudence — must I say it? — of your father. Would I had struck off the hand which has done the deed, ere it had been done! But the fault has taken wings and flown out of my reach. Immeritus, dear boy, you have to suffer for the delicta majorum. Ah, that a father should have to own his fault; to kneel and ask pardon of his son!

“I am engaged in many speculations. Some have succeeded beyond my wildest hopes: some have taken in the most rational, the most prudent, the least sanguine of our capitalists in Wall Street, and promising the greatest results have ended in the most extreme failure! To meet a call in an undertaking which seemed to offer the MOST CERTAIN PROSPECTS of success, which seemed to promise a fortune for me and my boy, and your dear children, I put in amongst other securities which I had to realize on a sudden, a bill, on which I used your name. I dated it as drawn six months back by me at New York, on you at Parchment Buildings, Temple; and I wrote your acceptance, as though the signature were yours. I give myself up to you. I tell you what I have done. Make the matter public. Give my confession to the world, as here I write, and sign it, and your father is branded for ever to the world as a — Spare me the word!”

“As I live, as I hope for your forgiveness, long ere that bill became due — it is at five months’ date, for 386l. 4s. 3d. value received, and dated from the Temple, on the fourth of July — I passed it to one who promised to keep it until I myself should redeem it! The commission which he charged me was enormous, rascally; and not content with the immense interest which he extorted from me, the scoundrel has passed the bill away, and it is in Europe, in the hands of an enemy.”

“You remember Tufton Hunt? Yes. You most justly chastised him. The wretch lately made his detested appearance in this city, associated with the lowest of the base, and endeavoured to resume his old practice of threats, cajoleries, and extortions! In a fatal hour the villain heard of the bill of which I have warned you. He purchased it from the gambler, to whom it had been passed. As New York was speedily too hot to hold him (for the unhappy man has even left me to pay his hotel score) he has fled — and fled to Europe — taking with him that fatal bill, which he says he knows you will pay. Ah! dear Philip, if that bill were but once out of the wretch’s hands! What sleepless hours of agony should I be spared! I pray you, I implore you, make every sacrifice to meet it! You will not disown it? No. As you have children of your own — as you love them — you would not willingly let them have a dishonoured”

“Father.”

“I have a share in a great medical discovery, [Note: Æther was first employed, I believe, in America: and I hope the reader will excuse the substitution of Chloroform in this instance. —

W. M. T.

] regarding which I have written to our friend, Mrs. Brandon, and which is sure to realize an immense profit, as introduced into England by a physician so well known — may I not say professionally? respected as myself. The very first profits resulting from that discovery I promise, on my honour, to devote to you. They will very soon far more than repay the loss which my imprudence has brought on my dear boy. Farewell! Love to your wife and little ones. — G. B. F.”



CHAPTER 8

NEC PLENA CRUORIS HIRUDO.

The reading of this precious letter filled Philip's friend with an inward indignation which it was very hard to control or disguise. It is no pleasant task to tell a gentleman that his father is a rogue. Old Firmin would have been hanged a few years earlier, for practices like these. As you talk with a very great scoundrel, or with a madman, has not the respected reader sometimes reflected, with a grim self-humiliation, how the fellow is of our own kind; and homo est? Let us, dearly beloved, who are outside — I mean outside the hulks or the asylum — be thankful that we have to pay a barber for snipping our hair, and are entrusted with the choice of the cut of our own jerkins. As poor Philip read his father's letter, my thought was: "And I can remember the soft white hand of that scoundrel, which has just been forging his own son's name, putting sovereigns into my own palm when I was a schoolboy." I always liked that man:— but the story is not de me — it regards Philip.

"You won't pay this bill?" Philip's friend indignantly said, then.

"What can I do?" says poor Phil, shaking a sad head.

"You are not worth five hundred pounds in the world," remarks the friend.

"Who ever said I was? I am worth this bill: or my credit is," answers the victim.

"If you pay this, he will draw more."

"I daresay he will:" that Firmin admits.

"And he will continue to draw, as long as there is a drop of blood to be had out of you."

"Yes," owns poor Philip, putting a finger to his lip. He thought I might be about to speak. His artless wife and mine were conversing at that moment upon the respective merits of some sweet chintzes which they had seen at Shoolbred's, in Tottenham Court Road, and which were so cheap and pleasant, and lively to look at! Really those drawing-room curtains would cost scarcely anything! Our Regulus, you see, before stepping into his torture-tub, was smiling on his friends, and talking upholstery with a cheerful, smirking countenance. On chintz, or some other household errand, the ladies went prattling off: but there was no care, save for husband and children, in Charlotte's poor little innocent heart just then.

"Nice to hear her talking about sweet drawing-room chintzes, isn't it?" says Philip. "Shall we try Shoolbred's, or the other shop?" And then he laughs. It was not a very lively laugh.

"You mean that you are determined, then, on — "

"On acknowledging my signature? Of course," says Philip, "if ever it is presented to me, I would own it." And having formed and announced this resolution, I knew my stubborn friend too well to think that he ever would shirk it.

The most exasperating part of the matter was, that however generously Philip's friends might be disposed towards him, they could not in this case give him a helping hand. The doctor would draw more bills, and more. As sure as Philip supplied, the parent would ask; and that devouring dragon of a doctor had stomach enough for the blood of all of us, were we inclined to give it. In fact, Philip saw as much, and owned everything with his usual candour. "I see what is going on in your mind, old boy!" the poor fellow said, "as well as if you spoke. You mean that I am helpless and irreclaimable, and doomed to hopeless ruin. So it would seem. A man can't escape his fate, friend, and my father has made mine for me. If I manage to struggle through the payment of this bill, of course he will draw another. My only chance of escape is, that he should succeed in some of his speculations. As he is always gambling, there may be some luck for him one day or another. He won't benefit me, then. That is not his way. If he makes a coup, he will keep the money, or spend it. He won't give me any. But he will not draw upon me as he does now, or send forth fancy imitations of the filial autograph. It is a blessing to have such a father, isn't it? I say, Pen, as I think from whom I am descended, and look at your spoons, I am astonished I have not put any of them in my pocket. You leave me in the room with 'em quite unprotected. I say it is quite affecting the way in which you and your dear wife have confidence in me." And with a bitter execration at his fate, the poor fellow pauses for a moment in his lament.

His father was his fate, he seemed to think, and there were no means of averting it. "You remember that picture of Abraham and Isaac in the doctor's study in Old Parr Street?" he would say. "My patriarch has tied me up, and had the knife

in me repeatedly. He does not sacrifice me at one operation; but there will be a final one some day, and I shall bleed no more. It's gay and amusing, isn't it? Especially when one has a wife and children." I, for my part, felt so indignant, that I was minded to advertise in the papers that all acceptances drawn in Philip's name were forgeries; and let his father take the consequences of his own act. But the consequences would have been life imprisonment for the old man, and almost as much disgrace and ruin for the young one, as were actually impending. He pointed out his clearly enough; nor could we altogether gainsay his dismal logic. It was better, at any rate, to meet this bill, and give the doctor warning for the future. Well: perhaps it was; only suppose the doctor should take the warning in good part, accept the rebuke with perfect meekness, and at an early opportunity commit another forgery? To this Philip replied, that no man could resist his fate: that he had always expected his own doom through his father: that when the elder went to America he thought possibly the charm was broken; "but you see it is not," groaned Philip, "and my father's emissaries reach me, and I am still under the spell." The bearer of the bowstring, we know, was on his way, and would deliver his grim message ere long.

Having frequently succeeded in extorting money from Dr. Firmin, Mr. Tufton Hunt thought he could not do better than follow his banker across the Atlantic: and we need not describe the annoyance and rage of the doctor on finding this black care still behind his back. He had not much to give; indeed the sum which he took away with him, and of which he robbed his son and his other creditors, was but small: but Hunt was bent upon having a portion of this; and, of course, hinted that, if the doctor refused, he would carry to the New York press the particulars of Firmin's early career and latest defalcations. Mr. Hunt had been under the gallery of the House of Commons half a dozen times, and knew our public men by sight. In the course of a pretty long and disreputable career he had learned anecdotes regarding members of the aristocracy, turf-men, and the like; and he offered to sell this precious knowledge of his to more than one American paper, as other amiable exiles from our country have done. But Hunt was too old, and his stories too stale for the New York public. They dated from George IV., and the boxing and coaching times. He found but little market for his wares; and the tipsy parson reeled from tavern to bar, only the object of scorn to younger reprobates who despised his old-fashioned stories, and could top them with blackguardism of a much more modern date.

After some two years' sojourn in the United States, this worthy felt the passionate longing to revisit his native country which generous hearts often experience, and made his way from Liverpool to London; and when in London directed his steps to the house of the Little Sister, of which he expected to find Philip still an inmate. Although Hunt had been once kicked out of the premises, he felt little shame now about re-entering them. He had that in his pocket which would insure him respectful behaviour from Philip. What were the circumstances under which that forged bill was obtained? Was it a speculation between Hunt and Philip's father? Did Hunt suggest that, to screen the elder Firmin from disgrace and ruin, Philip would assuredly take the bill up? That a forged signature was, in fact, a better document than a genuine acceptance? We shall never know the truth regarding this transaction now. We have but the statements of the two parties concerned; and as both of them, I grieve to say, are entirely unworthy of credit, we must remain in ignorance regarding this matter. Perhaps Hunt forged Philip's acceptance: perhaps his unhappy father wrote it: perhaps the doctor's story that the paper was extorted from him was true, perhaps false. What matters? Both the men have passed away from amongst us, and will write and speak no more lies.

Caroline was absent from home when Hunt paid his first visit after his return from America. Her servant described the man, and his appearance. Mrs. Brandon felt sure that Hunt was her visitor, and foreboded no good to Philip from the parson's arrival. In former days we have seen how the Little Sister had found favour in the eyes of this man. The besotted creature, shunned of men, stained with crime, drink, debt, had still no little vanity in his composition, and gave himself airs in the tavern parlours which he frequented. Because he had been at the University thirty years ago, his idea was that he was superior to ordinary men who had not had the benefit of an education at Oxford or Cambridge; and that the "snobs," as he called them, respected him. He would assume grandiose airs in talking to a tradesman ever so wealthy; speak to such a man by his surname; and deem that he honoured him by his patronage and conversation. The Little Sister's grammar, I have told you, was not good; her poor little h's were sadly irregular. A letter was a painful task to her. She knew how ill she performed it, and that she was for ever making blunders.

She would invent a thousand funny little pleas and excuses for her faults of writing. With all the blunders of spelling, her little letters had a pathos which somehow brought tears into the eyes. The Rev. Mr. Hunt believed himself to be this woman's superior. He thought his University education gave him a claim upon her respect, and draped himself and swaggered before her and others in his dingy college gown. He had paraded his Master of Arts degree in many thousand

tavern parlours, where his Greek and learning had got him a kind of respect. He patronized landlords, and strutted by hostesses' bars with a vinous leer or a tipsy solemnity. He must have been very far gone and debased indeed when he could still think that he was any living man's better:— he, who ought to have waited on the waiters, and blacked boots's own shoes. When he had reached a certain stage of liquor he commonly began to brag about the University, and recite the titles of his friends of early days. Never was kicking more righteously administered than that which Philip once bestowed on this miscreant. The fellow took to the gutter as naturally as to his bed, Firmin used to say; and vowed that the washing there was a novelty which did him good.

Brandon soon found that her surmises were correct regarding her nameless visitor. Next day, as she was watering some little flowers in her window, she looked from it into the street, where she saw the shambling parson leering up at her. When she saw him he took off his greasy hat and made her a bow. At the moment she saw him, she felt that he was come upon some errand hostile to Philip. She knew he meant mischief as he looked up with that sodden face, those bloodshot eyes, those unshorn, grinning lips.

She might have been inclined to faint, or disposed to scream, or to hide herself from the man, the sight of whom she loathed. She did not faint, or hide herself, or cry out; but she instantly nodded her head and smiled in the most engaging manner on that unwelcome, dingy stranger. She went to her door; she opened it (though her heart beat so that you might have heard it, as she told her friend afterwards). She stood there a moment archly smiling at him, and she beckoned him into her house with a little gesture of welcome. "Law bless us" (these, I have reason to believe, were her very words) — "Law bless us, Mr. Hunt, where ever have you been this ever so long?" And a smiling face looked at him resolutely from under a neat cap and fresh ribbon. Why, I know some women can smile, and look at ease, when they sit down in a dentist's chair.

"Law bless me, Mr. Hunt," then says the artless creature, "who ever would have thought of seeing you, I do declare!" And she makes a nice cheery little curtsy, and looks quite gay, pleased, and pretty; and so did Judith look gay, no doubt, and smile, and prattle before Holofernes; and then of course she said, "Won't you step in?" And then Hunt swaggered up the steps of the house, and entered the little parlour, into which the kind reader has often been conducted, with its neat little ornaments, its pictures, its glistening corner cupboard, and its well-scrubbed, shining furniture.

"How is the captain?" asks the man (alone in the company of this Little Sister, the fellow's own heart began to beat, and his bloodshot eyes to glisten).

He had not heard about poor Pa? "That shows how long you have been away!" Mrs. Brandon remarks, and mentions the date of her father's fatal illness. Yes: she was alone now, and had to care for herself; and straightway, I have no doubt, Mrs. Brandon asked Mr. Hunt whether he would "take" anything. Indeed, that good little woman was for ever pressing her friends to "take" something, and would have thought the laws of hospitality violated unless she had made this offer.

Hunt was never known to refuse a proposal of this sort. He would take a taste of something — of something warm. He had had fever and ague at New York, and the malady hung about him. Mrs. Brandon was straightway very much interested to hear about Mr. Hunt's complaint, and knew that a comfortable glass was very efficacious in removing threatening fever. Her nimble, neat little hands mixed him a cup. He could not but see what a trim little housekeeper she was. "Ah, Mrs. Brandon, if I had had such a kind friend watching over me, I should not be such a wreck as I am!" he sighed. He must have advanced to a second, nay, a third glass, when he sighed and became sentimental regarding his own unhappy condition; and Brandon owed to her friends afterwards that she made those glasses very strong.

Having "taken something" in considerable quantities, then, Hunt condescended to ask how his hostess was getting on, and how were her lodgers? How she was getting on? Brandon drew the most cheerful picture of herself and her circumstances. The apartments let well, and were never empty. Thanks to good Dr. Goodenough and other friends, she had as much professional occupation as she could desire. Since you know who has left the country, she said, her mind had been ever so much easier. As long as he was near, she never felt secure. But he was gone, and bad luck go with him! said this vindictive Little Sister.

"Was his son still lodging up-stairs?" asked Mr. Hunt.

On this, what does Mrs. Brandon do but begin a most angry attack upon Philip and his family. He lodge there? No, thank goodness! She had had enough of him and his wife, with her airs and graces, and the children crying all night, and the furniture spoiled, and the bills not even paid! "I wanted him to think that me and Philip was friends no longer; and

heaven forgive me for telling stories! I know this fellow means no good to Philip; and before long I will know what he means, that I will," she vowed.

For, on the very day when Mr. Hunt paid her a visit, Mrs. Brandon came to see Philip's friends, and acquaint them with Hunt's arrival. We could not be sure that he was the bearer of the forged bill with which poor Philip was threatened. As yet Hunt had made no allusion to it. But, though we are far from sanctioning deceit or hypocrisy, we own that we were not very angry with the Little Sister for employing dissimulation in the present instance, and inducing Hunt to believe that she was by no means an accomplice of Philip. If Philip's wife pardoned her, ought his friends to be less forgiving? To do right, you know you must not do wrong; though I own this was one of the cases in which I am inclined not to deal very hardly with the well-meaning little criminal.

Now, Charlotte had to pardon (and for this fault, if not for some others, Charlotte did most heartily pardon) our little friend, for this reason, that Brandon most wantonly maligned her. When Hunt asked what sort of wife Philip had married? Mrs. Brandon declared that Mrs. Philip was a pert, odious little thing; that she gave herself airs, neglected her children, bullied her husband, and what not; and, finally, Brandon vowed that she disliked Charlotte, and was very glad to get her out of the house: and that Philip was not the same Philip since he married her, and that he gave himself airs, and was rude, and in all things led by his wife; and to get rid of them was a good riddance.

Hunt gracefully suggested that quarrels between landladies and tenants were not unusual; that lodgers sometimes did not pay their rent punctually; at others were unreasonably anxious about the consumption of their groceries, liquors, and so forth; and little Brandon, who, rather than steal a pennyworth from her Philip, would have cut her hand off, laughed at her guest's joke, and pretended to be amused with his knowing hints that she was a rogue. There was not a word he said but she received it with a gracious acquiescence: she might shudder inwardly at the leering familiarity of the odious tipsy wretch, but she gave no outward sign of disgust or fear. She allowed him to talk as much as he would, in hopes that he would come to a subject which deeply interested her. She asked about the doctor and what he was doing, and whether it was likely that he would ever be able to pay back any of that money which he had taken from his son? And she spoke with an indifferent tone, pretending to be very busy over some work at which she was stitching.

"Oh, you are still hankering after him," says the chaplain, winking a bloodshot eye.

"Hankering after that old man! What should I care for him? As if he haven't done me harm enough already!" cries poor Caroline.

"Yes. But women don't dislike a man the worse for a little ill-usage," suggests Hunt. No doubt the fellow had made his own experiments on woman's fidelity.

"Well, I suppose," says Brandon, with a toss of her head, "women may get tired as well as men, mayn't they? I found out that man, and wearied of him years and years ago. Another little drop out of the green bottle, Mr. Hunt! It's very good for ague-fever, and keeps the cold fit off wonderful!"

And Hunt drank, and he talked a little more — much more: and he gave his opinion of the elder Firmin, and spoke of his chances of success, and of his rage for speculations, and doubted whether he would ever be able to lift his head again — though he might, he might still. He was in the country where, if ever a man could retrieve himself, he had a chance. And Philip was giving himself airs, was he? He was always an arrogant chap, that Mr. Philip. And he had left her house? and was gone ever so long? and where did he live now?

Then I am sorry to say Mrs. Brandon asked, how should she know where Philip lived now? She believed it was near Gray's Inn, or Lincoln's Inn, or somewhere; and she was for turning the conversation away from this subject altogether: and sought to do so by many lively remarks and ingenious little artifices which I can imagine, but which she only in part acknowledged to me — for you must know that as soon as her visitor took leave — to turn into the "Admiral Byng" public-house, and renew acquaintance with the worthies assembled in the parlour of that tavern, Mrs. Brandon ran away to a cab, drove in it to Philip's house in Milman Street, where only Mrs. Philip was at home — and after a banale conversation with her, which puzzled Charlotte not a little, for Brandon would not say on what errand she came, and never mentioned Hunt's arrival and visit to her — the Little Sister made her way to another cab, and presently made her appearance at the house of Philip's friends in Queen Square. And here she informed me, how Hunt had arrived, and how she was sure he meant no good to Philip, and how she had told certain — certain stories which were not founded in fact — to Mr. Hunt; for the telling of which fibs I am not about to endeavour to excuse her.

Though the interesting clergyman had not said one word regarding that bill of which Philip's father had warned him, we believed that the document was in Hunt's possession, and that it would be produced in due season. We happened to know where Philip dined, and sent him word to come to us.

"What can he mean?" the people asked at the table — a bachelors' table at the Temple (for Philip's good wife actually encouraged him to go abroad from time to time, and make merry with his friends). "What can this mean?" and they read out the scrap of paper which he had cast down as he was summoned away.

Philip's correspondent wrote: "Dear Philip, — I believe the BEARER OF THE BOWSTRING has arrived; and has been with the L. S. this very day."

The L. S? — the bearer of the bowstring? Not one of the bachelors dining in Parchment Buildings could read the riddle. Only after receiving the scrap of paper Philip had jumped up and left the room; and a friend of ours, a sly wag and Don Juan of Pump Court, offered to take odds that there was a lady in the case.

At the hasty little council which was convened at our house on the receipt of the news, the Little Sister, whose instinct had not betrayed her, was made acquainted with the precise nature of the danger which menaced Philip; and exhibited a fine hearty wrath when she heard how he proposed to meet the enemy. He had a certain sum in hand. He would borrow more of his friends, who knew that he was an honest man. This bill he would meet, whatever might come; and avert at least this disgrace from his father.

What? Give in to those rogues? Leave his children to starve, and his poor wife to turn drudge and house-servant, who was not fit for anything but a fine lady? (There was no love lost, you see, between these two ladies, who both loved Mr. Philip). It was a sin and a shame! Mrs. Brandon averred, and declared she thought Philip had been a man of more spirit. Philip's friend has before stated his own private sentiments regarding the calamity which menaced Firmin. To pay this bill was to bring a dozen more down upon him. Philip might as well resist now as at a later day. Such, in fact, was the opinion given by the reader's very humble servant at command.

My wife, on the other hand, took Philip's side. She was very much moved at his announcement that he would forgive his father this once at least, and endeavour to cover his sin.

"As you hope to be forgiven yourself, dear Philip, I am sure you are doing right," Laura said; "I am sure Charlotte will think so."

"Oh, Charlotte, Charlotte!" interposes the Little Sister, rather peevishly; "of course, Mrs. Philip thinks whatever her husband tells her!"

"In his own time of trial Philip has been met with wonderful succour and kindness," Laura urged. "See how one thing after another has contributed to help him! When he wanted, there were friends always at his need. If he wants again, I am sure my husband and I will share with him." (I may have made a wry face at this; for with the best feelings towards a man, and that kind of thing, you know it is not always convenient to be lending him five or six hundred pounds without security). "My dear husband and I will share with him," goes on Mrs. Laura; "won't we, Arthur? Yes, Brandon, that we will. Be sure, Charlotte and the children shall not want because Philip covers his father's wrong, and hides it from the world! God bless you, dear friend!" and what does this woman do next, and before her husband's face? Actually she goes up to Philip; she takes his hand — and — Well, what took place before my own eyes, I do not choose to write down.

"She's encouraging him to ruin the children for the sake of that — that wicked old brute!" cries Mrs. Brandon. "It's enough to provoke a saint, it is!" And she seizes up her bonnet from the table, and claps it on her head, and walks out of our room in a little tempest of wrath.

My wife, clasping her hands, whispers a few words, which say: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them who trespass against us."

"Yes," says Philip, very much moved. "It is the Divine order. You are right, dear Laura. I have had a weary time; and a terrible gloom of doubt and sadness over my mind whilst I have been debating this matter, and before I had determined to do as you would have me. But a great weight is off my heart since I have been enabled to see what my conduct should be. What hundreds of struggling men as well as myself have met with losses, and faced them! I will pay this bill, and I will warn the drawer to — to spare me for the future."

Now that the Little Sister had gone away in her fit of indignation, you see I was left in a minority in the council of war, and the opposition was quite too strong for me. I began to be of the majority's opinion. I daresay I am not the only

gentleman who has been led round by a woman. We men of great strength of mind very frequently are. Yes: my wife convinced me with passages from her text-book, admitting of no contradiction according to her judgment, that Philip's duty was to forgive his father.

"And how lucky it was we did not buy the chintzes that day!" says Laura with a laugh. "Do you know there were two which were so pretty that Charlotte could not make up her mind which of the two she would take?"

Philip roared out one of his laughs, which made the windows shake. He was in great spirits. For a man who was going to ruin himself, he was in the most enviable good-humour. Did Charlotte know about this — this claim which was impending over him? No. It might make her anxious, — poor little thing. Philip had not told her. He had thought of concealing the matter from her. What need was there to disturb her rest, poor innocent child? You see, we all treated Mrs. Charlotte more or less like a child. Philip played with her. J. J., the painter, coaxed and dandled her, so to speak. The Little Sister loved her, but certainly with a love that was not respectful; and Charlotte took everybody's good-will with a pleasant meekness and sweet smiling content. It was not for Laura to give advice to man and wife (as if the woman was not always giving lectures to Philip and his young wife!); but in the present instance she thought Mrs. Philip certainly ought to know what Philip's real situation was; what danger was menacing; "and how admirable and right, and Christian — and you will have your reward for it, dear Philip!" interjects the enthusiastic lady — "your conduct has been!"

When we came, as we straightway did in a cab, to Charlotte's house, to expound the matter to her, goodness bless us! she was not shocked, or anxious, or frightened at all. Mrs. Brandon had just been with her, and told her of what was happening, and she had said, "Of course, Philip ought to help his father; and Brandon had gone away quite in a tantrum of anger, and had really been quite rude; and she should not pardon her, only she knew how dearly the Little Sister loved Philip; and of course they must help Dr. Firmin; and what dreadful, dreadful distress he must have been in to do as he did! But he had warned Philip, you know," and so forth. "And as for the chintzes, Laura, why I suppose we must go on with the old shabby covers. You know, they will do very well till next year." This was the way in which Mrs. Charlotte received the news which Philip had concealed from her, lest it should terrify her. As if a loving woman was ever very much frightened at being called upon to share her husband's misfortune!

As for the little case of forgery, I don't believe the young person could ever be got to see the heinous nature of Dr. Firmin's offence. The desperate little logician seemed rather to pity the father than the son in the business. "How dreadfully pressed he must have been when he did it, poor man!" she said. "To be sure, he ought not to have done it at all; but think of his necessity! That is what I said to Brandon. Now, there's little Philip's cake in the cupboard which you brought him. Now suppose papa was very hungry, and went and took some without asking Philly, he wouldn't be so very wrong, I think, would he? A child is glad enough to give for his father, isn't he? And when I said this to Brandon, she was so rude and violent, I really have no patience with her! And she forgets that I am a lady, and" So it appeared the Little Sister had made a desperate attempt to bring over Charlotte to her side, was still minded to rescue Philip in spite of himself, and had gone off in wrath at her defeat.

We looked to the doctor's letters, and ascertained the date of the bill. It had crossed the water and would be at Philip's door in a very few days. Had Hunt brought it? The rascal would have it presented through some regular channel, no doubt; and Philip and all of us totted up ways and means, and strove to make the slender figures look as big as possible, as the thrifty housewife puts a patch here and a darn there, and cuts a little slice out of this old garment, so as to make the poor little frock serve for winter wear. We had so much at the banker's. A friend might help with a little advance. We would fairly ask a loan from the Review. We were in a scrape, but we would meet it. And so with resolute hearts, we would prepare to receive the Bearer of the Bowstring.



CHAPTER 9

THE BEARER OF THE BOWSTRING.

The poor Little Sister trudged away from Milman Street, exasperated with Philip, with Philip's wife, and with the determination of the pair to accept the hopeless ruin impending over them. "Three hundred and eighty-six pounds four and threepence," she thought, "to pay for that wicked old villain! It is more than poor Philip is worth, with all his savings and his little sticks of furniture. I know what he will do: he will borrow of the money-lenders, and give those bills, and renew them, and end by ruin. When he have paid this bill, that old villain will forge another, and that precious wife of his will tell him to pay that, I suppose; and those little darlings will be begging for bread, unless they come and eat mine, to which — God bless them! — they are always welcome." She calculated — it was a sum not difficult to reckon — the amount of her own little store of saved ready money. To pay four hundred pounds out of such an income as Philip's, she felt, was an attempt vain and impossible. "And he mustn't have my poor little stocking now," she argued; "they will want that presently when their pride is broken down — as it will be — and my darlings are hungering for their dinner!" Revolving this dismal matter in her mind, and scarce knowing where to go for comfort and counsel, she made her way to her good friend, Dr. Goodenough, and found that worthy man, who had always a welcome for his Little Sister.

She found Goodenough alone in his great dining-room, taking a very slender meal, after visiting his hospital and his fifty patients, among whom I think there were more poor than rich: and the good sleepy doctor woke up with a vengeance, when he heard his little nurse's news, and fired off a volley of angry language against Philip and his scoundrel of a father; "which it was a comfort to hear him," little Brandon told us afterwards. Then Goodenough trotted out of the dining-room into the adjoining library and consulting-room, whither his old friend followed him. Then he pulled out a bunch of keys and opened a secretaire, from which he took a parchment-covered volume, on which J. Goodenough, Esq., M.D., was written in a fine legible hand, — and which, in fact, was a banker's book. The inspection of the MS. volume in question must have pleased the worthy physician: for a grin came over his venerable features, and he straightway drew out of the desk a slim volume of grey paper, on each page of which were inscribed the highly respectable names of Messrs. Stumpy, Rowdy and Co., of Lombard Street, Bankers. On a slip of grey paper the doctor wrote a prescription for a draught, *statim sumendus* — (a draught — mark my pleasantry) — which he handed over to his little friend.

"There, you little fool!" said he. "The father is a rascal, but the boy is a fine fellow; and you, you little silly thing, I must help in this business myself, or you will go and ruin yourself; I know you will! Offer this to the fellow for his bill. Or, stay! How much money is there in the house? Perhaps the sight of notes and gold will tempt him more than a cheque." And the doctor emptied his pockets of all the fees which happened to be therein — I don't know how many fees of shining shillings and sovereigns, neatly wrapped up in paper; and he emptied a drawer in which there was more silver and gold: and he trotted up to his bedroom, and came panting, presently, downstairs with a fat little pocket-book, containing a bundle of notes, and, with one thing or another, he made up a sum of — I won't mention what; but this sum of money, I say, he thrust into the Little Sister's hand, and said, "Try the fellow with this, Little Sister; and see if you can get the bill from him. Don't say it's my money, or the scoundrel will be for having twenty shillings in the pound. Say it's yours, and there's no more where that came from; and coax him, and wheedle him, and tell him plenty of lies, my dear. It won't break your heart to do that. What an immortal scoundrel Brummell Firmin is, to be sure! Though, by the way, in two more cases at the hospital I have tried that — " And here the doctor went off into a professional conversation with his favourite nurse, which I could not presume to repeat to any non-medical man.

The Little Sister bade God bless Doctor Goodenough, and wiped her glistening eyes with her handkerchief, and put away the notes and gold with a trembling little hand, and trudged off with a lightsome step and a happy heart. Arrived at Tottenham Court Road, she thought, shall I go home, or shall I go to poor Mrs. Philip and take her this money? No. Their talk that day had not been very pleasant: words, very like high words, had passed between them, and our Little Sister had to own to herself that she had been rather rude in her late colloquy with Charlotte. And she was a proud Little Sister: at least she did not care for to own that she had been hasty or disrespectful in her conduct to that young woman. She had too much spirit for that. Have we ever said that our little friend was exempt from the prejudices and vanities of this wicked world? Well, to rescue Philip, to secure the fatal bill, to go with it to Charlotte, and say, "There, Mrs. Philip, there's your

husband's liberty." It would be a rare triumph, that it would! And Philip would promise, on his honour, that this should be the last and only bill he would pay for that wretched old father. With these happy thoughts swelling in her little heart, Mrs. Brandon made her way to the familiar house in Thornhaugh Street, and would have a little bit of supper, so she would. And laid her own little cloth; and set forth her little forks and spoons, which were as bright as rubbing could make them; and I am authorized to state that her repast consisted of two nice little lamb chops, which she purchased from her neighbour Mr. Chump, in Tottenham Court Road, after a pleasant little conversation with that gentleman and his good lady. And, with her bit of supper, after a day's work, our little friend would sometimes indulge in a glass — a little glass — of something comfortable. The case-bottle was in the cupboard, out of which her poor Pa had been wont to mix his tumblers for many a long day. So, having prepared it with her own hands, down she sat to her little meal, tired and happy; and as she thought of the occurrences of the day, and of the rescue which had come so opportunely to her beloved Philip and his children, I am sure she said a grace before her meat.

Her candles being lighted and her blind up, any one in the street could see that her chamber was occupied; and at about ten o'clock at night there came a heavy step clinking along the pavement, the sound of which, I have no doubt, made the Little Sister start a little. The heavy foot paused before her window, and presently clattered up the steps of her door. Then, as her bell rang — I consider it is most probable that her cheek flushed a little. She went to her hall door and opened it herself. "Lor, is it you, Mr. Hunt? Well, I never! that is, I thought you might come. Really, now" — and with the moonlight behind him, the dingy Hunt swaggered in.

"How comfortable you looked at your little table," says Hunt, with his hat over his eye.

"Won't you step in and set down to it, and take something?" asks the smiling hostess.

Of course, Hunt would take something. And the greasy hat is taken off his head with a flourish, and he struts into the poor Little Sister's little room, pulling a wisp of grizzling hair and endeavouring to assume a careless, fashionable look. The dingy hand had seized the case-bottle in a moment. "What! you do a little in this way, do you?" he says, and winks amiably at Mrs. Brandon and the bottle. She takes ever so little, she owns; and reminds him of days which he must remember, when she had a wine-glass out of poor Pa's tumbler. A bright little kettle is singing on the fire, — will not Mr. Hunt mix a glass for himself? She takes a bright beaker from the corner-cupboard, which is near her, with her keys hanging from it.

"Oh, ho! that's where we keep the ginnums, is it?" says the graceful Hunt, with a laugh.

"My papa always kep it there," says Caroline, meekly. And whilst her back is turned to fetch a canister from the cupboard, she knows that the astute Mr. Hunt has taken the opportunity to fill a good large measure from the square bottle. "Make yourself welcome," says the Little Sister, in her gay, artless way; "there's more where that came from!" And Hunt drinks his hostess's health: and she bows to him, and smiles, and sips a little from her own glass; and the little lady looks quite pretty, and rosy, and bright. Her cheeks are like apples, her figure is trim and graceful, and always attired in the neatest-fitting gown. By the comfortable light of the candles on her sparkling tables, you scarce see the silver lines in her light hair, or the marks which time has made round her eyes. Hunt's gaze on her with admiration.

"Why," says he, "I vow you look younger and prettier than when — when I saw you first."

"Ah, Mr. Hunt?" cries Mrs. Brandon, with a flush on her cheek, which becomes it, "don't recal that time, or that — that wretch who served me so cruel!"

"He was a scoundrel, Caroline, to treat as he did such a woman as you! The fellow has no principle; he was a bad one from the beginning. Why, he ruined me as well as you: got me to play; run me into debt by introducing me to his fine companions. I was a simple young fellow then, and thought it was a fine thing to live with fellow commoners and noblemen who drove their tandems and gave their grand dinners. It was he that led me astray, I tell you. I might have been Fellow of my college — had a living — married a good wife — risen to be a bishop, by George! — for I had great talents, Caroline; only I was so confounded idle, and fond of the cards and the bones."

"The bones?" cries Caroline, with a bewildered look.

"The dice, my dear! 'Seven's the main' was my ruin. 'Seven's the main' and eleven's the nick to seven. That used to be the little game!" And he made a graceful gesture with his empty wine-glass, as though he was tossing a pair of dice on the table. "The man next to me in lecture is a bishop now, and I could knock his head off in Greek iambics and Latin hexameters, too. In my second year I got the Latin declamation prize, I tell you —"

"Brandon always said you were one of the cleverest men at the college. He always said that, I remember," remarks the

lady, very respectfully.

"Did he? He did say a good word for me, then? Brummell Firmin wasn't a clever man; he wasn't a reading man. Whereas I would back myself for a sapphic ode against any man in my college — against any man! Thank you. You do mix it so uncommon hot and well, there's no saying no; indeed, there ain't! Though I have had enough — upon my honour, I have."

"Lor! I thought you men could drink anything! And Mr. Brandon — Mr. Firmin you said?"

"Well, I said Brummell Firmin was a swell somehow. He had a sort of grand manner with him — "

"Yes, he had," sighed Caroline. And I daresay her thoughts wandered back to a time long, long ago, when this grand gentleman had captivated her.

"And it was trying to keep up with him that ruined me! I quarrelled with my poor old governor about money, of course; grew idle, and lost my Fellowship. Then the bills came down upon me. I tell you, there are some of my college ticks ain't paid now."

"College ticks? Law!" ejaculates the lady. "And — "

"Tailor's ticks, tavern ticks, livery-stable ticks — for there were famous hacks in our days, and I used to hunt with the tip-top men. I wasn't bad across country, I wasn't. But we can't keep the pace with those rich fellows. We try, and they go ahead — they ride us down. Do you think, if I hadn't been very hard up, I would have done what I did to you, Caroline? You poor little innocent suffering thing. It was a shame. It was a shame!"

"Yes, a shame it was," cries Caroline. "And that I never gainsay." You did deal hard with a poor girl, both of you.

"It was rascally. But Firmin was the worst. He had me in his power. It was he led me wrong. It was he drove me into debt, and then abroad, and then into qu — into gaol, perhaps: and then into this kind of thing." ("This kind of thing" has before been explained elegantly to signify a tumbler of hot grog). "And my father wouldn't see me on his death-bed; and my brothers and sisters broke with me; and I owe it all to Brummell Firmin — all. Do you think, after ruining me, he oughtn't to pay me?" and again he thumps a dusky hand upon the table. It made dingy marks on the poor Little Sister's spotless table-cloth. It rubbed its owner's forehead and lank, grizzling hair.

"And me, Mr. Hunt? What do he owe me?" asks Hunt's hostess.

"Caroline!" cries Hunt, "I have made Brummell Firmin pay me a good bit back already, but I'll have more;" and he thumped his breast, and thrust his hand into his breast-pocket as he spoke, and clutched at something within.

"It is there!" thought Caroline. She might turn pale; but he did not remark her pallor. He was all intent on drink, on vanity, on revenge.

"I have him," I say. "He owes me a good bit; and he has paid me a good bit; and he shall pay me a good bit more. Do you think I am a fellow who will be ruined and insulted, and won't revenge myself? You should have seen his face when I turned up at New York at the Astor House, and said, 'Brummell, old fellow, here I am,' I said: and he turned as white — as white as this table-cloth. 'I'll never leave you, my boy,' I said. 'Other fellows may go from you, but old Tom Hunt will stick to you. Let's go into the bar and have a drink!' and he was obliged to come. And I have him now in my power, I tell you. And when I say to him, 'Brummell, have a drink,' drink he must. His bald old head must go into the pail!" And Mr. Hunt laughed a laugh which I daresay was not agreeable.

After a pause he went on: "Caroline! Do you hate him, I say? or do you like a fellow who deserted you and treated you like a scoundrel? Some women do. I could tell of women who do. I could tell you of other fellows, perhaps, but I won't. Do you hate Brummell Firmin, that bald-headed Brum — hypocrite, and that — that insolent rascal who laid his hand on a clergyman, and an old man, by George! and hit me — and hit me in that street. Do you hate him, I say? Hoo! hoo! hick! I've got 'em both! — here, in my pocket — both!"

"You have got — what?" gasped Caroline.

"I have got their — hallo! stop, what's that to you what I've got?" And he sinks back in his chair, and winks, and leers, and triumphantly tosses his glass.

"Well, it ain't much to me; I— I never got any good out of either of 'em yet," says poor Caroline, with a sinking heart. "Let's talk about somebody else than them two plagues. Because you were a little merry one night — and I don't mind what a gentleman says when he has had a glass — for a great big strong man to hit an old one — "

"To strike a clergyman!" yells Hunt.

"It was a shame — a cowardly shame! And I gave it him for it, I promise you!" cries Mrs. Brandon.

"On your honour, now, do you hate 'em?" cries Hunt, starting up, and clenching his fist, and dropping again into his chair.

"Have I any reason to love 'em, Mr. Hunt? Do sit down and have a little —"

"No: you have no reason to like 'em. You hate 'em — I hate 'em. Look here. Promise — 'pon your honour, now, Caroline — I've got 'em both, I tell you. Strike a clergyman, will he? What do you say to that?"

And starting from his chair once more, and supporting himself against the wall (where hung one of J. J.'s pictures of Philip), Hunt pulls out the greasy pocket-book once more, and fumbles amongst the greasy contents; and as the papers flutter on to the floor and the table, he pounces down on one with a dingy hand, and yells a laugh, and says, "I've cotched you! That's it. What do you say to that? — London, July 4th. — Five months after date, I promise to pay to — No, you don't."

"La! Mr. Hunt, won't you let me look at it?" cries the hostess. "Whatever is it? A bill? My Pa had plenty of em."

"What? with candles in the room? No, you don't, I say."

"What is it? Won't you tell me?"

"It's the young one's acceptance of the old man's draft," says Hunt, hissing and laughing.

"For how much?"

"Three hundred and eighty-six four three — that's all; and I guess I can get more where that came from!" says Hunt, laughing more and more cheerfully.

"What will you take for it? I'll buy it of you," cries the Little Sister. "I— I've seen plenty of my Pa's bills; and I'll — I'll discount this, if you like."

"What! are you a little discounteer? Is that the way you make your money, and the silver spoons, and the nice supper, and everything delightful about you? A little discountess, are you — you little rogue? Little discountess, by George! How much will you give, little discountess?" And the reverend gentleman laughs, and winks, and drinks, and laughs, and tears twinkle out of his tipsy old eyes, as he wipes them with one hand, and again says, "How much will you give, little discountess?"

When poor Caroline went to her cupboard, and from it took the notes and the gold which she had had we know from whom, and added to these, out of a cunning box, a little heap of her own private savings, and with trembling hands poured the notes, and the sovereigns, and the shillings into a dish on the table, I never heard accurately how much she laid down. But she must have spread out everything she had in the world; for she felt her pockets and emptied them; and, tapping her head, she again applied to the cupboard, and took from thence a little store of spoons and forks, and then a brooch, and then a watch; and she piled these all up in a dish, and she said, "Now, Mr. Hunt, I will give you all these for that bill;" and looked up at Philip's picture, which hung over the parson's blood-shot, satyr face. "Take these," she said, "and give me that! There's two hundred pound, I know; and there's thirty-four, and two eighteen, thirty-six eighteen, and there's the plate and watch, and I want that bill."

"What? have you got all this, you little dear?" cried Hunt, dropping back into his chair again. "Why, you're a little fortune, by Jove! — a pretty little fortune, a little discountess, a little wife, a little fortune. I say, I'm a university man; I could write alcaics once as well as any man. I'm a gentleman. I say, how much have you got? Count it over again, my dear."

And again she told him the amount of the gold, and the notes, and the silver, and the number of the poor little spoons.

A thought came across the fellow's boozy brain:—"If you offer so much," says he, "and you're a little discountess, the bill's worth more; that fellow must be making his fortune! Or do you know about it? I say, do you know about it? No. I'll have my bond. I'll have my bond!" And he gave a tipsy imitation of Shylock, and lurched back into his chair, and laughed.

"Let's have a little more, and talk about things," said the poor Little Sister; and she daintily heaped her little treasures and arranged them in her dish, and smiled upon the parson laughing in his chair.

"Caroline," says he, after a pause, "you are still fond of that old bald-headed scoundrel! That's it! Just like you women — just like, but I won't tell. No, no, I won't tell! You are fond of that old swindler still, I say! Wherever did you get that lot of money? Look here now — with that, and this little bill in my pocket, there's enough to carry us on for ever so long. And

when this money's gone, I tell you I know who'll give us more, and who can't refuse us, I tell you. Look here, Caroline, dear Caroline! I'm an old fellow, I know; but I'm a good fellow: I'm a classical scholar: and I'm a gentleman."

The classical scholar and gentleman bleared over his words as he uttered them, and with his vinous eyes and sordid face gave a leer which must have frightened the poor little lady to whom he proffered himself as a suitor, for she started back with a pallid face, and an aspect of such dislike and terror, that even her guest remarked it.

"I said I was a scholar and gentleman," he shrieked again. "Do you doubt it? I'm as good a man as Brummell Firmin, I say. I ain't so tall. But I'll do a copy of Latin alcaics or Greek iambics against him or any man of my weight. Do you mean to insult me? Don't I know who you are? Are you better than a Master of Arts and a clergyman? He went out in medicine, Firmin did. Do you mean, when a Master of Arts and classical scholar offers you his hand and fortune, that you're above him and refuse him, by George?"

The Little Sister was growing bewildered and frightened by the man's energy and horrid looks. "Oh, Mr. Hunt!" she cried, "see here, take this! See — there are two hundred and thirty — thirty-six pounds and all these things! Take them, and give me that paper."

"Sovereigns, and notes, and spoons, and a watch, and what I have in my pocket — and that ain't much — and Firmin's bill! Three hundred and eighty-six four three. It's a fortune, my dear, with economy! I won't have you going on being a nurse and that kind of thing. I'm a scholar and a gentleman — I am — and that place ain't fit for Mrs. Hunt. We'll first spend your money. No: we'll first spend my money — three hundred and eighty-six and — and hang the change — and when that's gone, we'll have another bill from that bald-headed old scoundrel: and his son who struck a poor cler — We will, I say, Caroline — we — "

The wretch was suiting actions to his words, and rose once more, advancing towards his hostess, who shrank back, laughing half-hysterically, and retreating as the other neared her. Behind her was that cupboard which had contained her poor little treasure and other stores, and appended to the lock of which her keys were still hanging. As the brute approached her, she flung back the cupboard-door smartly upon him. The keys struck him on the head; and bleeding, and with a curse and a cry, he fell back on his chair.

In the cupboard was that bottle which she had received from America not long since; and about which she had talked with Goodenough on that very day. It had been used twice or thrice by his direction, by hospital surgeons, and under her eye. She suddenly seized this bottle. As the ruffian before her uttered his imprecations of wrath, she poured out a quantity of the contents of the bottle on her handkerchief. She said, "Oh! Mr. Hunt, have I hurt you? I didn't mean it. But you shouldn't — you shouldn't frighten a lonely woman so! Here, let me bathe you! Smell this! It will — it will do you — good — it will — it will, indeed." The handkerchief was over his face. Bewildered by drink before, the fumes of the liquor which he was absorbing served almost instantly to overcome him. He struggled for a moment or two. "Stop — stop! you'll be better in a moment," she whispered. "Oh, yes! better, quite better!" She squeezed more of the liquor from the bottle on to the handkerchief. In a minute Hunt was quite inanimate.

Then the little pale woman leant over him, and took the pocket-book out of his pocket, and from it the bill which bore Philip's name. As Hunt lay in stupor before her, she now squeezed more of the liquor over his head; and then thrust the bill into the fire, and saw it burn to ashes. Then she put back the pocket-book into Hunt's breast. She said afterwards that she never should have thought about that Chloroform, but for her brief conversation with Dr. Goodenough, that evening, regarding a case in which she had employed the new remedy under his orders.

How long did Hunt lie in that stupor? It seemed a whole long night to Caroline. She said afterwards that the thought of that act that night made her hair grow grey. Poor little head! Indeed, she would have laid it down for Philip.

Hunt, I suppose, came to himself when the handkerchief was withdrawn, and the fumes of the potent liquor ceased to work on his brain. He was very much frightened and bewildered. "What was it? Where am I?" he asked, in a husky voice.

"It was the keys struck in the cupboard-door when you — you ran against it," said pale Caroline. "Look! you are all bleeding on the head. Let me dry it."

"No; keep off!" cried the terrified man.

"Will you have a cab to go home? The poor gentleman hit himself against the cupboard-door, Mary. You remember him here before, don't you, one night?" And Caroline, with a shrug, pointed out to her maid, whom she had summoned, the great square bottle of spirits still on the table, and indicated that there lay the cause of Hunt's bewilderment.

“Are you better now? Will you — will you — take a little more refreshment?” asked Caroline.

“No!” he cried with an oath, and with glaring, bloodshot eyes he lurched towards his hat.

“Lor, mum! what ever is it? And this smell in the room, and all this here heap of money and things on the table?”

Caroline flung open her window. “It’s medicine, which Dr. Goodenough has ordered for one of his patients. I must go and see her to night,” she said. And at midnight, looking as pale as death, the Little Sister went to the doctor’s house, and roused him up from his bed, and told him the story here narrated. “I offered him all you gave me,” she said, “and all I had in the world besides, and he wouldn’t — and — ” Here she broke out into a fit of hysterics. The doctor had to ring up his servants; to administer remedies to his little nurse; to put her to bed in his own house.

“By the immortal Jove,” he said afterwards, “I had a great mind to beg her never to leave it! But that my housekeeper would tear Caroline’s eyes out, Mrs. Brandon should be welcome to stay for ever. Except her h’s, that woman has every virtue: constancy, gentleness, generosity, cheerfulness, and the courage of a lioness! To think of that fool, that dandified idiot, that triple ass, Firmin” — (there were few men in the world for whom Goodenough entertained a greater scorn than for his late confrère, Firmin, of Old Parr Street) — “think of the villain having possessed such a treasure — let alone his having deceived and deserted her — of his having possessed such a treasure and flung it away! Sir, I always admired Mrs. Brandon; but I think ten thousand times more highly of her, since her glorious crime, and most righteous robbery. If the villain had died, dropped dead in the street — the drunken miscreant, forger, housebreaker, assassin — so that no punishment could have fallen upon poor Brandon, I think I could have respected her only the more!”

At an early hour Dr. Goodenough had thought proper to send off messengers to Philip and myself, and to make us acquainted with the strange adventure of the previous night. We both hastened to him. I myself was summoned, no doubt, in consequence of my profound legal knowledge, which might be of use in poor little Caroline’s present trouble. And Philip came because she longed to see him. By some instinct, she knew when he arrived. She crept down from the chamber where the doctor’s housekeeper had laid her on a bed. She knocked at the doctor’s study, where we were all in consultation. She came in quite pale, and tottered towards Philip, and flung herself into his arms, with a burst of tears that greatly relieved her excitement and fever. Firmin was scarcely less moved.

“You’ll pardon me for what I have done, Philip,” she sobbed. “If they — if they take me up, you won’t forsake me?”

“Forsake you? Pardon you? Come and live with us, and never leave us!” cried Philip.

“I don’t think Mrs. Philip would like that, dear,” said the little woman sobbing on his arm; “but ever since the Grey Friars school, when you was so ill, you have been like a son to me, and somehow I couldn’t help doing that last night to that villain — I couldn’t.”

“Serve the scoundrel right. Never deserved to come to life again, my dear,” said Dr. Goodenough. “Don’t you be exciting yourself, little Brandon! I must have you sent back to lie down on your bed. Take her up’ Philip, to the little room next mine: and order her to lie down and be as quiet as a mouse. You are not to move till I give you leave, Brandon — mind that, and come back to us, Firmin, or we shall have the patients coming.”

So Philip led away this poor Little Sister; and trembling, and clinging to his arm, she returned to the room assigned to her.

“She wants to be alone with him,” the doctor said; and he spoke a brief word or two of that strange delusion under which the little woman laboured, that this was her dead child come back to her.

“I know that is in her mind,” Goodenough said; “she never got over that brain fever in which I found her. If I were to swear her on the book, and say, ‘Brandon, don’t you believe he is your son alive again?’ she would not dare to say no. She will leave him everything she has got. I only gave her so much less than that scoundrel’s bill yesterday, because I knew she would like to contribute her own share. It would have offended her mortally to have been left out of the subscription. They like to sacrifice themselves. Why, there are women in India who, if not allowed to roast with their dead husbands, would die of vexation.” And by this time Mr. Philip came striding back into the room again, rubbing a pair of very red eyes.

“Long ere this, no doubt, that drunken ruffian is sobered, and knows that the bill is gone. He is likely enough to accuse her of the robbery,” says the doctor.

“Suppose,” says Philip’s other friend, “I had put a pistol to your head, and was going to shoot you, and the doctor took the pistol out of my hand and flung it into the sea? would you help me to prosecute the doctor for robbing me of the pistol?”

"You don't suppose it will be a pleasure to me to pay that bill?" said Philip. "I said, if a certain bill were presented to me, purporting to be accepted by Philip Firmin, I would pay it. But if that scoundrel, Hunt, only says that he had such a bill, and has lost it; I will cheerfully take my oath that I have never signed any bill at all — and they can't find Brandon guilty of stealing a thing which never existed."

"Let us hope, then, that the bill was not in duplicate!"

And to this wish all three gentlemen heartily said Amen!

And now the doctor's door-bell began to be agitated by arriving patients. His dining-room was already full of them. The Little Sister must lie still, and the discussion of her affairs must be deferred to a more convenient hour; and Philip and his friend agreed to reconnoitre the house in Thornhaugh Street, and see if anything had happened since its mistress had left it.

Yes: something had happened. Mrs. Brandon's maid, who ushered us into her mistress's little room, told us that in the early morning that horrible man who had come over-night, and been so tipsy, and behaved so ill, — the very same man who had come there tipsy afore once, and whom Mr. Philip had flung into the street — had come battering at the knocker, and pulling at the bell, and swearing and cursing most dreadful, and calling for "Mrs. Brandon! Mrs. Brandon! Mrs. Brandon!" and frightening the whole street. After he had rung, he knocked and battered ever so long. Mary looked out at him from her upper window, and told him to go along home, or she would call the police. On this the man roared out that he would call the police himself if Mary did not let him in; and as he went on calling "Police!" and yelling from the door, Mary came down-stairs, and opened the hall-door, keeping the chain fastened, and asked him what he wanted?

Hunt, from the steps without, began to swear and rage more loudly, and to demand to be let in. He must and would see Mrs. Brandon.

Many, from behind her chain barricade, said that her mistress was not at home, but that she had been called out that night to a patient of Dr. Goodenough's.

Hunt, with more shrieks and curses, said it was a lie; and that she was at home; and that he would see her; and that he must go into her room; and that he had left something there; that he had lost something; and that he would have it.

"Lost something here?" cried Mary. "Why here? when you reeled out of this house, you couldn't scarce walk, and you almost fell into the gutter, which I have seen you there before. Get away, and go home! You are not sober yet, you horrible man!"

On this, clinging on to the area-railings, and demeaning himself like a madman, Hunt continued to call out, "Police, police! I have been robbed, I've been robbed! Police!" until astonished heads appeared at various windows in the quiet street, and a policeman actually came up.

When the policeman appeared, Hunt began to sway and pull at the door, confined by it's chain: and he frantically reiterated his charge, that he had been robbed and hocussed in that house, that night, by Mrs. Brandon.

The policeman, by a familiar expression, conveyed his utter disbelief of the statement, and told the dirty, disreputable man to move on, and go to bed. Mrs. Brandon was known and respected all round the neighbourhood. She had befriended numerous poor round about; and was known for a hundred charities. She attended many respectable families. In that parish there was no woman more esteemed. And by the word "Gammon," the policeman expressed his sense of the utter absurdity of the charge against the good lady.

Hunt still continued to yell out that he had been robbed and hocussed; and Mary from behind her door repeated to the officer (with whom she perhaps had relations not unfriendly) her statement that the beast had gone reeling away from the house the night before, and if he had lost anything, who knows where he might not have lost it?

"It was taken out of this pocket, and out of this pocket-book," howled Hunt, clinging to the rail. "I give her in charge. I give the house in charge! It's a den of thieves!"

During this shouting and turmoil, the sash of a window in Ridley's studio was thrown up. The painter was going to his morning work. He had appointed an early model. The sun could not rise too soon for Ridley; and, as soon as ever it gave its light, found

him happy at his labour. He had heard from his bedroom the brawl going on about the door.

"Mr. Ridley!" says the policeman, touching the glazed hat with much respect — (in fact, and out of uniform, Z 25 has

figured in more than one of J. J.'s pictures) — “here’s a fellow disturbing the whole street, and shouting out that Mrs. Brandon have robbed and hocussed him!”

Ridley ran downstairs in a high state of indignation. He is nervous, like men of his tribe; quick to feel, to pity, to love, to be angry. He undid the chain, and ran into the street.

“I remember that fellow drunk here before,” said the painter; “and lying in that very gutter.”

“Drunk and disorderly! Come along!” cries Z 25; and his hand was quickly fastened on the parson’s greasy collar, and under its strong grasp Hunt is forced to move on. He goes, still yelling out that he has been robbed.

“Tell that to his worship,” says the incredulous Z. And this was the news which Mrs. Brandon’s friends received from her maid, when they called at her house.



CHAPTER 10

IN WHICH SEVERAL PEOPLE HAVE THEIR TRIALS.

If Philip and his friend had happened to pass through High Street, Marylebone, on their way to Thornhaugh Street to reconnoitre the Little Sister's house, they would have seen the Reverend Mr. Hunt, in a very dirty, battered, crestfallen and unsatisfactory state marching to Marylebone from the station, where the reverend gentleman had passed the night, and under the custody of the police. A convoy of street boys followed the prisoner and his guard, making sarcastic remarks on both. Hunt's appearance was not improved since we had the pleasure of meeting him on the previous evening. With a grizzled beard and hair, a dingy face, a dingy shirt, and a countenance mottled with dirt and drink, we may fancy the reverend man passing in tattered raiment through the street to make his appearance before the magistrate.

You have no doubt forgotten the narrative which appeared in the morning papers two days after the Thornhaugh Street incident, but my clerk has been at the pains to hunt up and copy the police report, in which events connected with our history are briefly recorded.

"Marylebone, Wednesday. — Thomas Tufton Hunt, professing to be a clergyman, but wearing an appearance of extreme squalor, was brought before Mr. Beaksby at this office, charged by Z 25, with being drunk and very disorderly on Tuesday se'nnight, and endeavouring by force and threats to effect his reentrance into a house in Thornhaugh Street, from which he had been previously ejected in a most unclerical and inebriated state."

"On being taken to the station-house, the reverend gentleman lodged a complaint on his own side, and averred that he had been stupefied and hocused in the house in Thornhaugh Street by means of some drug, and that whilst in this state he had been robbed of a bill for 386l. 4s. 3d., drawn by a person in New York, and accepted by Mr. P. Firmin, barrister, of Parchment Buildings, Temple."

"Mrs. Brandon, the landlady of the house, No. — Thornhaugh Street, has been in the habit of letting lodgings for many years past, and several of her friends, including Mr. Firmin, Mr. Ridley, the Rl. Acad., and other gentlemen, were in attendance to speak to her character, which is most respectable. After Z 25 had given evidence, the servant deposed that Hunt had been more than once disorderly and drunk before that house, and had been forcibly ejected from it. On the night when the alleged robbery was said to have taken place, he had visited the house in Thornhaugh Street, had left it in an inebriated state, and returned some hours afterwards vowing that he had been robbed of the document in question."

"Mr. P. Firmin said: 'I am a barrister, and have chambers at Parchment Buildings, Temple, and know the person calling himself Hunt. I have not accepted any bill of exchange, nor is my signature affixed to any such document.'"

"At this stage the worthy magistrate interposed, and said that this only went to prove that the bill was not completed by Mr. F.'s acceptance, and would by no means conclude the case set up before him. Dealing with it, however, on the merits, and looking at the way in which the charge had been preferred, and the entire absence of sufficient testimony to warrant him in deciding that even a piece of paper had been abstracted in that house, or by the person accused, and believing that if he were to commit, a conviction would be impossible, he dismissed the charge."

"The lady left the court with her friends, and the accuser, when called upon to pay a fine for drunkenness, broke out into very unclerical language, in the midst of which he was forcibly removed."

Philip Firmin's statement that he had given no bill of exchange, was made not without hesitation on his part, and indeed at his friends' strong entreaty. It was addressed not so much to the sitting magistrate, as to that elderly individual at New York, who was warned no more to forge his son's name. I fear a coolness ensued between Philip and his parent in consequence of the younger man's behaviour. The doctor had thought better of his boy than to suppose that, at a moment of necessity, Philip would desert him. He forgave Philip, nevertheless. Perhaps since his marriage other influences were at work upon him, The parent made further remarks in this strain. A man who takes your money is naturally offended if you remonstrate; you wound his sense of delicacy by protesting against his putting his hand in your pocket. The elegant doctor in New York continued to speak of his unhappy son with a mournful shake of the head; he said, perhaps believed, that Philip's imprudence was in part the cause of his own exile. "This is not the kind of entertainment to which I would have invited you at my own house in England," he would say. "I thought to have ended my days there, and to have left my son in

comfort, nay splendour. I am an exile in poverty: and he — but I will use no hard words.” And to his female patients he would say: “No, my dear madam! Not a syllable of reproach shall escape these lips regarding that misguided boy! But you can feel for me; I know you can feel for me.” In the old days, a high-spirited highwayman, who took a coach-passenger’s purse, thought himself injured, and the traveller a shabby fellow, if he secreted a guinea or two under the cushions. In the doctor’s now rare letters, he breathed a manly sigh here and there, to think that he had lost the confidence of his boy. I do believe that certain ladies of our acquaintance were inclined to think that the elder Firmin had been not altogether well used, however much they loved and admired the Little Sister for her lawless act in her boy’s defence. But this main point we had won. The doctor at New York took the warning, and wrote his son’s signature upon no more bills of exchange. The good Goodenough’s loan was carried back to him in the very coin which he had supplied. He said that his little nurse Brandon was splendide mendax, and that her robbery was a sublime and courageous act of war.

In so far, since his marriage, Mr. Philip had been pretty fortunate. At need, friends had come to him. In moments of peril he had had succour and relief. Though he had married without money, fate had sent him a sufficiency. His flask had never been empty, and there was always meal in his bin. But now hard trials were in store for him: hard trials which we have said were endurable, and which he has long since lived through. Any man who has played the game of life or whist, knows how for one while he will have a series of good cards dealt him, and again will get no trumps at all. After he got into his house in Milman Street and quitted the Little Sister’s kind roof, our friend’s good fortune seemed to desert him. “Perhaps it was a punishment for my pride, because I was haughty with her, and — and jealous of that dear good little creature,” poor Charlotte afterwards owned in conversation with other friends:— “but our fortune seemed to change when we were away from her, and that I must own.”

Perhaps, when she was yet under Mrs. Brandon’s roof, the Little Sister’s provident care had done a great deal more for Charlotte than Charlotte knew. Mrs. Philip had the most simple tastes in the world, and upon herself never spent an unnecessary shilling. Indeed, it was a wonder, considering her small expenses, how neat and nice Mrs. Philip ever looked. But she never could deny herself when the children were in question; and had them arrayed in all sorts of fine clothes; and stitched and hemmed all day and night to decorate their little prsons; and in reply to the remonstrances of the matrons her friends, showed how it was impossible children could be dressed for less cost. If anything ailed them, quick, the doctor must be sent for. Not worthy Goodenough, who came without a fee, and pooh-poohed her alarms and anxieties; but dear Mr. Bland, who had a feeling heart, and was himself a father of children, and who supported those children by the produce of the pills, draughts, powders, visits, which he bestowed on all families into whose doors he entered. Bland’s sympathy was very consolatory; but it was found to be very costly at the end of the year. “And, what then?” says Charlotte, with kindling cheeks. “Do you suppose we should grudge that money, which was to give health to our dearest, dearest babies? No. You can’t have such a bad opinion of me as that!” And accordingly Mr. Bland received a nice little annuity from our friends. Philip had a joke about his wife’s housekeeping which perhaps may apply to other young women who are kept by over-watchful mothers too much in statu pupillari. When they were married, or about to be married, Philip asked Charlotte what she would order for dinner? She promptly said she would order leg of mutton. “And after leg of mutton?” “Leg of beef, to be sure!” says Mrs. Charlotte, looking very pleased, and knowing. And the fact is, as this little housekeeper was obliged demurely to admit, their household bills increased prodigiously after they left Thornhaugh Street. “And I can’t understand, my dear, how the grocer’s book should mount up so; and the butterman’s, and the beer,” We have often seen the pretty little head bent over the dingy volumes, puzzling, puzzling: and the eldest child would hold up a warning finger to ours, and tell them to be very quiet, as mamma was at her “atounts.”

And now, I grieve to say, money became scarce for the payment of these accounts; and though Philip fancied he hid his anxieties from his wife, he sure she loved him too much to be deceived by one of the clumsiest hypocrites in the world. Only, being a much cleverer hypocrite than her husband, she pretended to be deceived, and acted her part so well that poor Philip was mortified with her gaiety, and chose to fancy his wife was indifferent to their misfortunes. She ought not to be so smiling and happy, he thought; and, as usual, bemoaned his lot to his friends. “I come home, racked with care, and thinking of those inevitable bills: I shudder, sir, at every note that lies on the hall table, and would tremble as I dashed them open as they do on the stage. But I laugh and put on a jaunty air, and humbug Char. And I hear her singing about the house and laughing and cooing with the children, by Jove. She’s not aware of anything. She does not know how dreadfully the res domi is squeezing me. But before marriage she did, I tell you. Then, if anything annoyed me, she divined it. If I felt ever so little unwell, you should have seen the alarm in her face! It was ‘Philip, dear, how pale you are;’ or, ‘Philip, how

flushed you are;' or, 'I am sure you have had a letter from your father. Why do you conceal anything from me, sir? You never should — never!' And now when the fox is gnawing at my side under my cloak, I laugh and grin so naturally that she believes I am all right, and she comes to meet me flouncing the children about in my face, and wearing an air of consummate happiness! I would not deceive her for the world, you know. But it's mortifying. Don't tell me. It is mortifying to be tossing awake all night, and racked with care all day, and have the wife of your bosom chattering and singing and laughing, as if there were no cares, or doubts, or duns in the world. If I had the gout and she were to laugh and sing, I should not call that sympathy. If I were arrested for debt, and she were to come grinning and laughing to the sponging-house, I should not call that consolation. Why doesn't she feel? She ought to feel. There's Betsy, our parlour-maid. There's the old fellow who comes to clean the boots and knives. They know how hard up I am. And my wife sings and dances whilst I am on the verge of ruin, by Jove; and giggles and laughs as if life was a pantomime!"

Then the man and woman into whose ears poor Philip roared out his confessions and griefs, hung down their blushing heads in humbled silence. They are tolerably prosperous in life, and, I fear, are pretty well satisfied with themselves and each other. A woman who scarcely ever does any wrong, and rules and governs her own house and family, as my — as the wife of the reader's humble servant most notoriously does, often becomes — must it be said? — to certain of her own virtue, and is too sure of the correctness of her own opinion. We virtuous people give advice a good deal, and set a considerable value upon that advice. We meet a certain man who has fallen among thieves, let us say. We succour him readily enough. We take him kindly to the inn, and pay his score there: but we say to the landlord, "You must give this poor man his bed; his medicine at such a time, and his broth at such another. But, mind you, he must have that physic, and no other; that broth when we order it. We take his case in hand, you understand. Don't listen to him or anybody else. We know all about everything. Good-by. Take care of him. Mind the medicine and the broth!" and Mr. Benefactor or Lady Bountiful goes away, perfectly self-satisfied.

Do you take this allegory? When Philip complained to us of his wife's friskiness and gaiety; when he bitterly contrasted her levity and carelessness with his own despondency and doubt, Charlotte's two principal friends were smitten by shame. "Oh, Philip! dear Philip!" his female adviser said (having looked at her husband once or twice as Firmin spoke, and in vain endeavoured to keep her guilty eyes down on her work), "Charlotte has done this, because she is humble, and because she takes the advice of friends who are not. She knows everything, and more than everything; for her dear tender heart is filled with apprehension. But we told her to show no sign of care, lest her husband should be disturbed. And she trusted in us; and she puts her trust elsewhere, Philip; and she has hidden her own anxieties, lest yours should be increased; and has met you gaily when her heart was full of dread. We think she has done wrong now; but she did so because she was so simple, and trusted in us who advised her wrongly. Now we see that there ought to have been perfect confidence always between you; and that it is her simplicity and faith in us which have misled her."

Philip hung down his head for a moment, and hid his eyes; and we knew, during that minute when his face was concealed from us, how his grateful heart was employed.

"And you know, dear Philip — " says Laura, looking at her husband, and nodding to that person, who certainly understood the hint.

"And I say, Firmin," breaks in the lady's husband, "You understand, if you are at all — that is, if you — that is, if we can — "

"Hold your tongue!" shouts Firmin, with a face beaming over with happiness. "I know what you mean. You beggar, you are going to offer me money! I see it in your face; bless you both! But we'll try and do without, please heaven. And — and it's worth feeling a pinch of poverty to find such friends as I have had, and to share it with such a — such a — dash — dear little thing as I have at home. And I won't try and humbug Char any more. I'm bad at that sort of business. And good-night, and I'll never forget your kindness, never!" And he is off a moment afterwards, and jumping down the steps of our door, and so into the park. And though there were not five pounds in the poor little house in Milman Street, there were not two happier people in London that night than Charlotte and Philip Firmin. If he had his troubles, our friend had his immense consolations. Fortunate he, however poor, who has friends to help, and love to console him in his trials.



CHAPTER 11

IN WHICH THE LUCK GOES VERY MUCH AGAINST US.

Every man and woman amongst us has made his voyage to Lilliput, and his tour in the kingdom of Brobdingnag. When I go to my native country town, the local paper announces our arrival; the labourers touch their hats as the pony-chaise passes, the girls and old women drop curtsies; Mr. Hicks, the grocer and hatter, comes to his door, and makes a bow, and smirks and smiles. When our neighbour Sir John arrives at the hall, he is a still greater personage; the bell-ringers greet the hall family with a peal; the rector walks over on an early day, and pays his visit; and the farmers at market press round for a nod of recognition. Sir John at home is in Lilliput: in Belgrave Square he is in Brobdingnag, where almost everybody we meet is ever so much taller than ourselves. "Which do you like best, to be a giant amongst the pigmies, or a pigmy among the giants?" I know what sort of company I prefer myself: but that is not the point. What I would hint is, that we possibly give ourselves patronizing airs before small people, as folks higher placed than ourselves give themselves airs before us. Patronizing airs? Old Miss Mumbles, the half-pay lieutenant's daughter, who lives over the plumber's, with her maid, gives herself in her degree more airs than any duchess in Belgravia, and would leave the room if a tradesman's wife sat down in it.

Now it has been said that few men in this city of London are so simple in their manners as Philip Firmin, and that he treated the patron whose bread he ate, and the wealthy relative who condescended to visit him, with a like freedom. He is blunt but not familiar, and is not a whit more polite to my lord than to Jack or Tom at the coffee-house. He resents familiarity from vulgar persons, and those who venture on it retire maimed and mortified after coming into collision with him. As for the people he loves, he grovels before them, worships their boot-tips, and their gown-hems. But he submits to them, not for their wealth or rank, but for love's sake. He submitted very magnanimously at first to the kindnesses and caresses of Lady Ringwood and her daughters, being softened and won by the regard which they showed for his wife and children.

Although Sir John was for the Rights of Man everywhere, all over the world, and had pictures of Franklin, Lafayette, and Washington in his library, he likewise had portraits of his own ancestors in that apartment, and entertained a very high opinion of the present representative of the Ringwood family. The character of the late chief of the house was notorious. Lord Ringwood's life had been irregular and his morals loose. His talents were considerable, no doubt, but they had not been devoted to serious study or directed to useful ends. A wild man in early life, he had only changed his practices in later life in consequence of ill health, and became a hermit as a Certain Person became a monk. He was a frivolous person to the end, and was not to be considered as a public man and statesman; and this light-minded man of pleasure had been advanced to the third rank of the peerage, whilst his successor, his superior in intellect and morality, remained a Baronet still. How blind the Ministry was which refused to recognize so much talent and worth! Had there been public virtue or common sense in the governors of the nation, merits like Sir John's never could have been overlooked. But Ministers were notoriously a family clique, and only helped each other. Promotion and patronage were disgracefully monopolized by the members of a very few families who were not better men of business, men of better character, men of more ancient lineage (though birth, of course, was a mere accident) than Sir John himself. In a word, until they gave him a peerage, he saw very little hope for the cabinet or the country.

In a very early page of this history mention was made of a certain Philip Ringwood, to whose protection Philip Firmin's mother confided her boy when he was first sent to school. Philip Ringwood was Firmin's senior by seven years; he came to Old Parr Street twice or thrice during his stay at school, condescended to take the "tips," of which the poor doctor was liberal enough, but never deigned to take any notice of young Firmin, who looked up to his kinsman with awe and trembling. From school Philip Ringwood speedily departed to college, and then entered upon public life. He was the eldest son of Sir John Ringwood, with whom our friend has of late made acquaintance.

Mr. Ringwood was a much greater personage than the baronet his father. Even when the latter succeeded to Lord Ringwood's estates and came to London, he could scarcely be said to equal his son in social rank; and the younger patronized his parent. What is the secret of great social success? It is not to be gained by beauty, or wealth, or birth, or wit, or valour, or eminence of any kind. It is a gift of Fortune, bestowed, like that goddess's favours, capriciously. Look, dear

madam, at the most fashionable ladies at present reigning in London. Are they better bred, or more amiable, or richer, or more beautiful than yourself? See, good sir, the men who lead the fashion, and stand in the bow window at Black's; are they wiser, or wittier, or more agreeable people than you? And yet you know what your fate would be if you were put up at that club. Sir John Ringwood never dared to be proposed there, even after his great accession of fortune on the earl's death. His son did not encourage him. People even said that Ringwood would blackball his father if he dared to offer himself as a candidate.

I never, I say, could understand the reason of Philip Ringwood's success in life, though you must acknowledge that he is one of our most eminent dandies. He is affable to dukes. He patronizes marquises. He is not witty. He is not clever. He does not give good dinners. How many baronets are there in the British empire? Look to your book, and see. I tell you there are many of these whom Philip Ringwood would scarcely admit to wait at one of his bad dinners. By calmly asserting himself in life, this man has achieved his social eminence. We may hate him; but we acknowledge his superiority. For instance, I should as soon think of asking him to dine with me, as I should of slapping the Archbishop of Canterbury on the back.

Mr. Ringwood has a meagre little house in May Fair, and belongs to a public office, where he patronizes his chef. His own family bow down before him; his mother is humble in his company; his sisters are respectful; his father does not brag of his own liberal principles, and never alludes to the rights of man in the son's presence. He is called "Mr. Ringwood" in the family. The person who is least in awe of him is his younger brother, who has been known to make faces behind the elder's back. But he is a dreadfully headstrong and ignorant child, and respects nothing. Lady Ringwood, by the way, is Mr. Ringwood's stepmother. His own mother was the daughter of a noble house, and died in giving birth to this paragon.

Philip Firmin, who had not set eyes upon his kinsman since they were at school together, remembered some stories which were current about Ringwood, and by no means to that eminent dandy's credit — stories of intrigue, of play, of various libertine exploits on Mr. Ringwood's part. One day, Philip and Charlotte dined with Sir John, who was talking and chirping, and laying down the law, and bragging away according to his wont, when his son entered and asked for dinner. He had accepted an invitation to dine at Garterton House. The duke had one of his attacks of gout just before dinner. The dinner was off. If Lady Ringwood would give him a slice of mutton, he would be very much obliged to her. A place was soon found for him. "And, Philip, this is your namesake, and, our cousin, Mr. Philip Firmin," said the baronet, presenting his son to his kinsman.

"Your father used to give me sovereigns, when I was at school. I have a faint recollection of you, too. Little white-headed boy, weren't you? How is the doctor, and Mrs. Firmin? All right?"

"Why, don't you know his father ran away?" calls out the youngest member of the family. "Don't kick me, Emily. He did run away!"

Then Mr. Ringwood remembered, and a faint blush tinged his face. "Lapse of time. I know. Shouldn't have asked after such a lapse of time." And he mentioned a case in which a duke, who was very forgetful, had asked a marquis about his wife who had run away with an earl, and made inquiries about the duke's son, who, as everybody knew, was not on terms with his father.

"This is Mrs. Firmin — Mrs. Philip Firmin!" cried Lady Ringwood, rather nervously; and I suppose Mrs. Philip blushed, and the blush became her; for Mr. Ringwood afterwards condescended to say to one of his sisters, that their new-found relative seemed one of your rough-and-ready sort of gentlemen, but his wife was really very well bred, and quite a pretty young woman, and presentable anywhere — really anywhere. Charlotte was asked to sing one or two of her little songs after dinner. Mr. Ringwood was delighted. Her voice was perfectly true. What she sang, she sang admirably. And he was good enough to hum over one of her songs (during which performance he showed that his voice was not exempt from little frailties), and to say he had heard Lady Philomela Shakerley sing that very song at Glenmavis, last autumn; and it was such a favourite that the duchess asked for it every night — actually every night. When our friends were going home, Mr. Ringwood gave Philip almost the whole of one finger to shake; and while Philip was inwardly raging at his impertinence, believed that he had entirely fascinated his humble relatives, and that he had been most good-natured and friendly.

I cannot tell why this man's patronage chafed and goaded our worthy friend so as to drive him beyond the bounds of all politeness and reason. The artless remarks of the little boy, and the occasional simple speeches of the young ladies, had only tickled Philip's humour, and served to amuse him when he met his relatives. I suspect it was a certain free-and-easy

manner which Mr. Ringwood chose to adopt towards Mrs. Philip, which annoyed her husband. He had said nothing at which offence could be taken: perhaps he was quite unconscious of offending; nay, thought himself eminently pleasing; perhaps he was not more impertinent towards her than towards other women: but in talking about him, Mr. Firmin's eyes flashed very fiercely, and he spoke of his new acquaintance and relative, with his usual extreme candour, as an upstart, and an arrogant conceited puppy, whose ears he would like to pull.

How do good women learn to discover men who are not good? Is it by instinct? How do they learn those stories about men? I protest I never told my wife anything good or bad regarding this Mr. Ringwood, though of course, as a man about town, I have heard — who has not? — little anecdotes regarding his career. His conduct in that affair with Miss Willowby was heartless and cruel; his behaviour to that unhappy Blanche Painter nobody can defend. My wife conveys her opinion regarding Philip Ringwood, his life, principles, and morality, by looks and silences which are more awful and killing than the bitterest words of sarcasm or reproof. Philip Firmin, who knows her ways, watches her features, and, as I have said, humbles himself at her feet, marked the lady's awful looks, when he came to describe to us his meeting with his cousin, and the magnificent patronizing airs which Mr. Ringwood assumed.

"What?" he said, "you don't like him any more than I do? I thought you would not; and I am so glad."

Philip's friend said she did not know Mr. Ringwood, and had never spoken a word to him in her life.

"Yes; but you know of him," cries the impetuous Firmin. "What do you know of him, with his monstrous puppyism and arrogance?" Oh, Mrs. Laura knew very little of him. She did not believe — she had much rather not believe — what the world said about Mr. Ringwood.

"Suppose we were to ask the Woolcombs their opinion of your character, Philip?" cries the gentleman's biographer, with a laugh.

"My dear!" says Laura, with a yet severer look, the severity of which glance I must explain. The differences of Woolcomb and his wife were notorious. Their unhappiness was known to all the world. Society was beginning to look with a very, very cold face upon Mrs. Woolcomb. After quarrels, jealousies, battles, reconciliations, scenes of renewed violence and furious language, had come indifference, and the most reckless gaiety on the woman's part. Her home was splendid, but mean and miserable; all sorts of stories were rife regarding her husband's brutal treatment of poor Agnes, and her own imprudent behaviour. Mrs. Laura was indignant when this unhappy woman's name was ever mentioned, except when she thought how our warm, true-hearted Philip had escaped from the heartless creature. "What a blessing it was that you were ruined, Philip, and that she deserted you!" Laura would say. "What fortune would repay you for marrying such a woman?"

"Indeed it was worth all I had to lose her," says Philip, "and so the doctor and I are quits. If he had not spent my fortune, Agnes would have married me. If she had married me, I might have turned Othello, and have been hung for smothering her. Why, if I had not been poor, I should never have been married to little Char — and fancy not being married to Char!" The worthy fellow here lapses into silence, and indulges in an inward rapture at the idea of his own excessive happiness. Then he is scared again at the thought which his own imagination has raised.

"I say! Fancy being without the kids and Char!" he cries with a blank look.

"That horrible father — that dreadful mother — pardon me, Philip; but when I think of the worldliness of those unhappy people, and how that poor unhappy woman has been bred in it, and ruined by it — I am so, so, so — enraged, that I can't keep my temper!" cries the lady. "Is the woman answerable, or the parents, who hardened her heart, and sold her — sold her to that — O!" Our illustrious friend Woolcomb was signified by "that O," and the lady once more paused, choked with wrath as she thought about that O, and that O's wife.

"I wonder he has not Othello'd her," remarks Philip, with his hands in his pockets. "I should, if she had been mine, and gone on as they say she is going on."

"It is dreadful, dreadful to contemplate!" continues the lady. "To think she was sold by her own parents, poor thing, poor thing! The guilt is with them who led her wrong."

"Nay," says one of the three interlocutors. "Why stop at poor Mr. and Mrs. Twysden? Why not let them off, and accuse their parents? who lived worldly too in their generation. Or, stay; they descend from William the Conqueror. Let us absolve poor Weldone Twysden, and his heartless wife, and have the Norman into court."

"Ah, Arthur! Did not our sin begin with the beginning," cries the lady, "and have we not its remedy? Oh, this poor creature, this poor creature! May she know where to take refuge from it, and learn to repent in time!"

The Georgian and Circassian girls, they say, used to submit to their lot very complacently, and were quite eager to get to market at Constantinople and be sold. Mrs. Woolcomb wanted nobody to tempt her away from poor Philip. She hopped away from the old love, as soon as ever the new one appeared with his bag of money. She knew quite well to whom she was selling herself, and for what. The tempter needed no skill, or artifice, or eloquence. He had none. But he showed her a purse, and three fine houses — and she came. Innocent child, forsooth! She knew quite as much about the world as papa and mamma; and the lawyers did not look to her settlement more warily, and coolly, than she herself did. Did she not live on it afterwards? I do not say she lived reputably, but most comfortably: as Paris, and Rome, and Naples, and Florence can tell you, where she is well known; where she receives a great deal of a certain kind of company; where she is scorned and flattered, and splendid, and lonely, and miserable. She is not miserable when she sees children: she does not care for other persons' children, as she never did for her own, even when they were taken from her. She is of course hurt and angry, when quite common, vulgar people, not in society, you understand, turn away from her, and avoid her, and won't come to her parties. She gives excellent dinners which jolly fogeys, rattling bachelors, and doubtful ladies frequent: but she is alone and unhappy — unhappy because she does not see parents, sister, or brother? Allons, mon bon monsieur! She never cared for parents, sister, or brother; or for baby: or for man (except once for Philip a little, little bit, when her pulse would sometimes go up two beats in a minute at his appearance). But she is unhappy, because she is losing her figure, and from tight lacing her nose has become very red, and the pearl powder won't lie on it somehow. And though you may have thought Woolcomb an odious, ignorant, and underbred little wretch, you must own that at least he had red blood in his veins. Did he not spend a great part of his fortune for the possession of this cold wife. For whom did she ever make a sacrifice, or feel a pang? I am sure a greater misfortune than any which has befallen friend Philip might have happened to him, and so congratulate him on his escape.

Having vented his wrath upon the arrogance and impertinence of this solemn puppy of a Philip Ringwood, our friend went away somewhat soothed to his club in St. James's Street. The Megatherium Club is only a very few doors from the much more aristocratic establishment of Black's. Mr. Philip Ringwood and Mr. Woolcomb were standing on the steps of Black's. Mr. Ringwood waved a graceful little kid-gloved hand to Philip, and smiled on him. Mr. Woolcomb glared at our friend out of his opal eyeballs. Philip had once proposed to kick Woolcomb into the sea. He somehow felt as if he would like to treat Ringwood to the same bath. Meanwhile, Mr. Ringwood laboured under the notion that he and his new-found acquaintance were on the very best possible terms.

At one time poor little Woolcomb loved to be seen with Philip Ringwood. He thought he acquired distinction from the companionship of that man of fashion, and would hang on Ringwood as they walked the Pall Mall pavement.

"Do you know that great hulking, overbearing brute?" says Woolcomb to his companion on the steps of Black's. Perhaps somebody overheard them from the bow-window. (I tell you everything is overheard in London, and a great deal more too.)

"Brute, is he?" says Ringwood; "seems a rough, overbearing sort of chap."

"Blackguard doctor's son. Bankrupt father ran away," says the dusky man with the opal eyeballs.

"I have heard he was a rogue — the doctor; but I like him. Remember he gave me three sovereigns when I was at school. Always like a fellow who tips you when you are at school." And here Ringwood beckoned his brougham which was in waiting.

"Shall we see you at dinner? Where are you going?" asked Mr. Woolcomb. "If you are going towards —"

"Towards Gray's Inn, to see my lawyer; have an appointment there; be with you at eight!" And Mr. Ringwood skipped into his little brougham and was gone.

Tom Eaves told Philip. Tom Eaves belongs to Black's Club, to Bays's, to the Megatherium, I don't know to how many clubs in St. James's Street. Tom Eaves knows everybody's business, and all the scandal of all the clubs for the last forty years. He knows who has lost money and to whom; what is the talk of the opera box and what the scandal of the coulisses; who is making love to whose daughter. Whatever men and women are doing in May Fair, is the farrago of Tom's libel. He knows so many stories, that of course he makes mistakes in names sometimes, and says that Jones is on the verge of ruin, when he is thriving and prosperous, and it is poor Brown who is in difficulties; or informs us that Mrs. Fanny is flirting with Captain Ogle when both are as innocent of a flirtation as you and I are. Tom certainly is mischievous, and often is wrong; but when he speaks of our neighbours he is amusing.

"It is as good as a play to see Ringwood and Othello together," says Tom to Philip. "How proud the black man is to be seen with him! Heard him abuse you to Ringwood. Ringwood stuck up for you and for your poor governor — spoke up like a man — like a man who sticks up for a fellow who is down. How the black man brags about having Ringwood to dinner! Always having him to dinner. You should have seen Ringwood shake him off! Said he was going to Gray's Inn. Heard him say Gray's Inn Lane to his man. Don't believe a word of it."

Now I dare say you are much too fashionable to know that Milman Street is a little cul de sac of a street, which leads into Guildford Street, which leads into Gray's Inn Lane. Philip went his way homewards, shaking off Tom Eaves, who, for his part, trolled off to his other clubs, telling people how he had just been talking with that bankrupt doctor's son, and wondering how Philip should get money enough to pay his club subscription. Philip then went on his way, striding homewards at his usual manly pace.

Whose black brougham was that? — the black brougham with the chestnut horse walking up and down Guildford Street. Mr. Ringwood's crest was on the brougham. When Philip entered his drawing-room, having opened the door with his own key, there sat Mr. Ringwood, talking to Mrs. Charlotte, who was taking a cup of tea at five o'clock. She and the children liked that cup of tea. Sometimes it served Mrs. Char for dinner when Philip dined from home.

"If I had known you were coming here, you might have brought me home and saved me a long walk," said Philip, wiping a burning forehead.

"So I might — so I might!" said the other. "I never thought of it. I had to see my lawyer in Gray's Inn; and it was then I thought of coming on to see you, as I was telling Mrs. Firmin; and a very nice quiet place you live in!"

This was very well. But for the first and only time of his life, Philip was jealous.

"Don't drub so with your feet! Don't like to ride when you jog so on the floor," said Philip's eldest darling, who had clambered on papa's knee. "Why do you look so? Don't squeeze my arm, papa!"

Mamma was utterly unaware that Philip had any cause for agitation. "You have walked all the way from Westminster, and the club, and you are quite hot and tired!" she said. "Some tea, my dear?"

Philip nearly choked with the tea. From under his hair, which fell over his forehead, he looked into his wife's face. It wore such a sweet look of innocence and wonder, that, as he regarded her, the spasm of jealousy passed off. No: there was no look of guilt in those tender eyes. Philip could only read in them the wife's tender love and anxiety for himself.

But what of Mr. Ringwood's face? When the first little blush and hesitation had passed away, Mr. Ringwood's pale countenance reassumed that calm selfsatisfied smile, which it customarily wore. "The coolness of the man maddened me," said Philip, talking about the little occurrence afterwards, and to his usual confidant.

"Gracious powers," cried the other. "If I went to see Charlotte and the children, would you be jealous of me, you bearded Turk? Are you prepared with sack and bowstring for every man who visits Mrs. Firmin? If you are to come out in this character, you will lead yourself and your wife pretty lives. Of course you quarrelled with Lovelace then and there, and threatened to throw him out of window then and there? Your custom is to strike when you are hot; witness —"

"Oh, dear, no!" cried Philip, interrupting me. "I have not quarrelled with him yet." And he ground his teeth, and gave a very fierce glare with his eyes. "I sate him out quite civilly. I went with him to the door; and I have left directions that he is never to pass it again — that's all. But I have not quarrelled with him in the least. Two men never behaved more politely than we did. We bowed and grinned at each other quite amiably. But I own, when he held out his hand, I was obliged to keep mine behind my back, for they felt very mischievous, and inclined to — Well, never mind. Perhaps it is, as you say; and he means no sort of harm."

Where, I say again, do women learn all the mischief they know? Why should my wife have such a mistrust and horror of this gentleman? She took Philip's side entirely. She said she thought he was quite right in keeping that person out of his house. What did she know about that person? Did I not know myself? He was a libertine, and led a bad life. He had led young men astray, and taught them to gamble, and helped them to ruin themselves. We have all heard stories about the late Sir Philip Ringwood; that last scandal in which he was engaged, three years ago, and which brought his career to an end at Naples, I need not, of course, allude to. But fourteen or fifteen years ago, about which time this present portion of our little story is enacted, what did she know about Ringwood's misdoings?

No: Philip Firmin did not quarrel with Philip Ringwood on this occasion. But he shut his door on Mr. Ringwood. He refused all invitations to Sir John's house, which, of course, came less frequently, and which then ceased to come at all.

Rich folks do not like to be so treated by the poor. Had Lady Ringwood a notion of the reason why Philip kept away from her house? I think it is more than possible. Some of Philip's friends knew her; and she seemed only pained, not surprised or angry, at a quarrel which somehow did take place between the two gentlemen not very long after that visit of Mr. Ringwood to his kinsman in Milman Street.

"Your friend seems very hot-headed and violent-tempered," Lady Ringwood said, speaking of that very quarrel. "I am sorry he keeps that kind of company. I am sure it must be too expensive for him."

As luck would have it, Philip's old school friend, Lord Ascot, met us a very few days after the meeting and parting of Philip and his cousin in Milman Street, and invited us to a bachelor's dinner on the river. Our wives (without whose sanction no good man would surely ever look a whitebait in the face) gave us permission to attend this entertainment, and remained at home, and partook of a tea-dinner (blessings on them!) with the dear children. Men grow young again when they meet at these parties. We talk of flogging, proctors, old cronies; we recite old school and college jokes. I hope that some of us may carry on these pleasant entertainments until we are fourscore, and that our toothless old gums will mumble the old stories, and will laugh over the old jokes with ever-renewed gusto. Does the kind reader remember the account of such a dinner at the commencement of this history? On this afternoon, Ascot, Maynard, Burroughs (several of the men formerly mentioned), re-assembled. I think we actually like each other well enough to be pleased to hear of each other's successes. I know that one or two good fellows, upon whom fortune has frowned, have found other good fellows in that company to help and aid them; and that all are better for that kindly freemasonry.

Before the dinner was served, the guests met on the green of the hotel, and examined that fair landscape, which surely does not lose its charm in our eyes because it is commonly seen before a good dinner. The crested elms, the shining river, the emerald meadows, the painted parterres of flowers around, all wafting an agreeable smell of friture, of flowers and flounders exquisitely commingled. Who has not enjoyed these delights? May some of us, I say, live to drink the '58 claret in the year 1900! I have no doubt that the survivors of our society will still laugh at the jokes which we used to relish when the present century was still only middle-aged. Ascot was going to be married. Would he be allowed to dine next year? Frank Berry's wife would not let him come. Do you remember his tremendous fight with Biggs? Remember? who didn't? Marston was Berry's bottle-holder; poor Marston, who was killed in India. And Biggs and Berry were the closest friends in life ever after. Who would ever have thought of Brackley becoming serious, and being made an archdeacon? Do you remember his fight with Ringwood? What an infernal bully he was, and how glad we all were when Brackley thrashed him. What different fates await men! Who would ever have imagined Nosey Brackley a curate in the mining districts, and ending by wearing a rosette in his hat? Who would ever have thought of Ringwood becoming such a prodigious swell and leader of fashion? He was a very shy fellow; not at all a good-looking fellow: and what a wild fellow he had become, and what a lady-killer. Isn't he some connection of yours, Firmin? Philip said yes, but that he had scarcely met Ringwood at all. And one man after another told anecdotes of Ringwood; how he had young men to play in his house; how he had played in that very "Star and Garter;" and how he always won. You must please to remember that our story dates back some sixteen years, when the dice-box still rattled occasionally, and the king was turned.

As this old school gossip is going on, Lord Ascot arrives, and with him this very Ringwood about whom the old schoolfellows had just been talking. He came down in Ascot's phaeton. Of course, the greatest man of the party always waits for Ringwood. "If we had had a duke at Grey Friars," says some grumbler, "Ringwood would have made the duke bring him down."

Philip's friend, when he beheld the arrival of Mr. Ringwood, seized Firmin's big arm, and whispered —

"Hold your tongue. No fighting. No quarrels. Let bygones be bygones. Remember, there can be no earthly use in a scandal."

"Leave me alone," says Philip, "and don't be afraid."

I thought Ringwood seemed to start back for a moment, and perhaps fancied that he looked a little pale, but he advanced with a gracious smile towards Philip, and remarked, "It is a long time since we have seen you at my father's."

Philip grinned and smiled too. "It was a long time since he had been in Hill Street." But Philip's smile was not at all pleasing to behold. Indeed, a worse performer of comedy than our friend does not walk the stage of this life.

On this the other gaily remarked he was glad Philip had leave to join the bachelor's party. Meeting of old schoolfellows very pleasant. Hadn't been to one of them for a long time: though the "Friars" was an abominable hole; that was the truth.

Who was that in the shovel-hat? a bishop? what bishop?"

It was Brackley, the Archdeacon, who turned very red on seeing Ringwood. For the fact is, Brackley was talking to Pennystone, the little boy about whom the quarrel and fight had taken place at school, when Ringwood had proposed forcibly to take Pennystone's money from him. "I think, Mr. Ringwood, that Pennystone is big enough to hold his own now, don't you?" said the Archdeacon; and with this the Venerable man turned on his heel, leaving Ringwood to face the little Pennystone of former years; now a gigantic country squire, with health ringing in his voice, and a pair of great arms and fists that would have demolished six Ringwoods in the field.

The sight of these quondam enemies rather disturbed Mr. Ringwood's tranquillity.

"I was dreadfully bullied at that school," he said, in an appealing manner, to Mr. Pennystone. "I did as others did. It was a horrible place, and I hate the name of it. I say, Ascot, don't you think that Barnaby's motion last night was very ill-timed, and that the Chancellor of the Exchequer answered him very neatly?"

This became a cant phrase amongst some of us wags afterwards. Whenever we wished to change a conversation, it was, "I say, Ascot, don't you think Barnaby's motion was very ill-timed; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer answered him very neatly?" You know Mr. Ringwood would scarcely have thought of coming amongst such common people as his old schoolfellows, but seeing Lord Ascot's phaeton at Black's, he condescended to drive down to Richmond with his lordship, and I hope a great number of his friends in St. James's Street saw him in that noble company.

Windham was the chairman of the evening — elected to that post because he is very fond of making speeches to which he does not in the least expect you to listen. All men of sense are glad to hand over this office to him: and I hope, for my part, a day will soon arrive (but I own, mind you, that I do not carve well) when we shall have the speeches done by a skilled waiter at the side table, as we now have the carving. Don't you find that you splash the gravy, that you mangle the meat, that you can't nick the joint in helping the company to a dinner-speech? I, for my part, own that I am in a state of tremor and absence of mind before the operation; in a condition of imbecility during the business; and that I am sure of a headache and indigestion the next morning. What then? Have I not seen one of the bravest men in the world, at a city-dinner last year, in a state of equal panic? — I feel that I am wandering from Philip's adventures to his biographer's, and confess I am thinking of the dismal fiasco I myself made on this occasion at the Richmond dinner.

You see, the order of the day at these meetings is to joke at everything — to joke at the chairman, at all the speakers, at the army and navy, at the venerable the legislature, at the bar and bench, and so forth. If we toast a barrister we show how admirably he would have figured in the dock: if a sailor, how lamentably sea-sick he was: if a soldier, how nimbly he ran away. For example, we drank the Venerable Archdeacon Brackley and the army. We deplored the perverseness which had led him to adopt a black coat instead of a red. War had evidently been his vocation, as he had shown by the frequent battles in which he had been engaged at school. For what was the other great warrior of the age famous? for that Roman feature in his face, which distinguished, which gave a name to, our Brackley — a name by which we fondly clung (cries of "Nosey, Nosey!") Might that feature ornament ere long the face of — of one of the chiefs of that army of which he was a distinguished field-officer! Might — Here I confess I fairly broke down, lost the thread of my joke — at which Brackley seemed to look rather severe — and finished the speech with a gobble about regard, esteem, everybody respect you, and good health, old boy — which answered quite as well as a finished oration, however the author might be discontented with it.

The Archdeacon's little sermon was very brief, as the discourses of sensible divines sometimes will be. He was glad to meet old friends — to make friends with old foes (loud cries of "Bravo, Nosey!") In the battle of life, every man must meet with a blow or two; and every brave one would take his fencer with good humour. Had he quarrelled with any old schoolfellow in old times? He wore peace not only on his coat, but in his heart. Peace and good-will were the words of the day in the army to which he belonged; and he hoped that all officers in it were animated by one esprit de corps.

A silence ensued, during which men looked towards Mr. Ringwood, as the "old foe" towards whom the Archdeacon had held out the hand of amity: but Ringwood, who had listened to the Archdeacon's speech with an expression of great disgust, did not rise from his chair — only remarking to his neighbour Ascot, "Why should I get up? Hang him, I have nothing to say. I say, Ascot, why did you induce me to come into this kind of thing?"

Fearing that a collision might take place between Philip and his kinsman, I had drawn Philip away from the place in the room to which Lord Ascot beckoned him, saying, "Never mind, Philip, about sitting by the lord," by whose side I knew

perfectly well that Mr. Ringwood would find a place. But it was our lot to be separated from his lordship by merely the table's breadth, and some intervening vases of flowers and fruits through which we could see and hear our opposite neighbours. When Ringwood spoke "of this kind of thing," Philip glared across the table, and started as if he was going to speak; but his neighbour pinched him on the knee, and whispered to him, "Silence — no scandal. Remember!" The other fell back, swallowed a glass of wine, and made me far from comfortable by performing a tattoo on my chair.

The speeches went on. If they were not more eloquent they were more noisy and lively than before. Then the aid of song was called in to enliven the banquet. The Archdeacon, who had looked a little uneasy for the last half hour, rose up at the call for a song, and quitted the room. "Let us go too, Philip," said Philip's neighbour. "You don't want to hear those dreadful old college songs over again?" But Philip sulkily said, "You go, I should like to stay."

Lord Ascot was seeing the last of his bachelor life. He liked those last evenings to be merry; he lingered over them, and did not wish them to end too quickly. His neighbour was long since tired of the entertainment, and sick of our company. Mr. Ringwood had lived of late in a world of such fashion that ordinary mortals were despicable to him. He had no affectionate remembrance of his early days, or of anybody belonging to them. Whilst Philip was singing his song of Doctor Luther, I was glad that he could not see the face of surprise and disgust which his kinsman bore. Other vocal performances followed, including a song by Lord Ascot, which, I am bound to say, was hideously out of tune; but was received by his near neighbour complacently enough.

The noise now began to increase, the choruses were fuller, the speeches were louder and more incoherent. I don't think the company heard a speech by little Mr. Vanjohn, whose health was drunk as representative of the British Turf, and who said that he had never known anything about the turf or about play, until their old schoolfellow, his dear friend — his swell friend, if he might be permitted the expression — Mr. Ringwood, taught him the use of cards; and once, in his own house, in May Fair, and once in this very house, the "Star and Garter," showed him how to play the noble game of Blind Hookey.

"The men are drunk. Let us go away, Ascot. I didn't come for this kind of thing!" cried Ringwood, furious, by Lord Ascot's side.

This was the expression which Mr. Ringwood had used a short time before, when Philip was about to interrupt him. He had lifted his gun to fire then, but his hand had been held back. The bird passed him once more, and he could not help taking aim.

"This kind of thing is very dull, isn't it, Ringwood?" he called across the table, pulling away a flower, and glaring at the other through the little open space.

"Dull, old boy? I call it doosed good fun," cries Lord Ascot, in the height of good humour.

"Dull? What do you mean?" asked my lord's neighbour.

"I mean, you would prefer having a couple of packs of cards, and a little room, where you could win three or four hundred from a young fellow? It's more profitable and more quiet than 'this kind of thing.'"

"I say, I don't know what you mean!" cries the other.

"What! You have forgotten already? Has not Vanjohn just told you, how you and Mr. Deuceace brought him down here, and won his money from him; and then how you gave him his revenge at your own house in —"

"Did I come here to be insulted by that fellow?" cries Mr. Ringwood, appealing to his neighbour.

"If that is an insult, you may put it in your pipe and smoke it, Mr. Ringwood!" cries Philip.

"Come away, come away, Ascot! Don't keep me here listening to this bla —"

"If you say another word," says Philip, "I'll send this decanter at your head!"

"Come, come — nonsense! No quarrelling! Make it up! Everybody has had too much! Get the bill, and order the omnibus round!" A crowd was on one side of the table, and the other. One of the cousins had not the least wish that the quarrel should proceed any further.

When, being in a quarrel, Philip Firmin assumes the calm and stately manner, he is perhaps in his most dangerous state. Lord Ascot's phaeton (in which Mr. Ringwood showed a great unwillingness to take a seat by the driver) was at the hotel gate, an omnibus and a private carriage or two were in readiness to take home the other guests of the feast. Ascot went into the hotel to light a final cigar, and now Philip springing forward, caught by the arm the gentleman sitting on the

front seat of the phaeton.

"Stop!" he said. "You used a word just now —"

"What word? I don't know anything about words!" cries the other, in a loud voice.

"You said 'insulted,'" murmured Philip, in the gentlest tone.

"I don't know what I said," said Ringwood, peevishly.

"I said, in reply to the words which you forget, 'that I would knock you down,' or words to that effect. If you feel in the least aggrieved, you know where my chambers are — with Mr. Vanjohn, whom you and your mistress inveigled to play cards when he was a boy. You are not fit to come into an honest man's house. It was only because I wished to spare a lady's feelings that I refrained from turning you out of mine. Good-night, Ascot!" and with great majesty Mr. Philip returned to his companion and the Hansom cab which was waiting to convey these two gentlemen to London.

I was quite correct in my surmise that Philip's antagonist would take no further notice of the quarrel to Philip, personally. Indeed, he affected to treat it as a drunken brawl, regarding which no man of sense would allow himself to be seriously disturbed. A quarrel between two men of the same family; — between Philip and his own relative who had only wished him well? — It was absurd and impossible. What Mr. Ringwood deplored was the obstinate ill-temper and known violence of Philip, which were for ever leading him into these brawls, and estranging his family from him. A man seized by the coat, insulted, threatened with a decanter! A man of station so treated by a person whose own position was most questionable, whose father was a fugitive, and who himself was struggling for precarious subsistence! The arrogance was too great. With the best wishes for the unhappy young man, and his amiable (but empty-headed) little wife, it was impossible to take further notice of them. Let the visits cease. Let the carriage no more drive from Berkeley Square to Milman Street. Let there be no presents of game, poultry, legs of mutton, old clothes and what not. Henceforth, therefore, the Ringwood carriage was unknown in the neighbourhood of the Foundling, and the Ringwood footmen no more scented with their powdered heads the Firmins' little hall-ceiling. Sir John said to the end that he was about to procure a comfortable place for Philip, when his deplorable violence obliged Sir John to break off all relations with the most misguided young man.

Nor was the end of the mischief here. We have all read how the gods never appear alone — the gods bringing good or evil fortune. When two or three little pieces of good luck had befallen our poor friend, my wife triumphantly cried out, "I told you so! Did I not always say that heaven would befriend that dear, innocent wife and children; that brave, generous, imprudent father?" And now when the evil days came, this monstrous logician insisted that poverty, sickness, dreadful doubt and terror, hunger and want almost, were all equally intended for Philip's advantage, and would work for good in the end. So that rain was good, and sunshine was good; so that sickness was good, and health was good; that Philip ill was to be as happy as Philip well, and as thankful for a sick house and an empty pocket as for a warm fireside and a comfortable larder. Mind, I ask no Christian philosopher to revile at his ill-fortunes, or to despair. I will accept a toothache (or any evil of life) and bear it without too much grumbling. But I cannot say that to have a tooth pulled out is a blessing, or fondle the hand which wrenches at my jaw.

"They can live without their fine relations, and their donations of mutton and turnips," cries my wife with a toss of her head. "The way in which those people patronized Philip and dear Charlotte was perfectly intolerable. Lady Ringwood knows how dreadful the conduct of that Mr. Ringwood is, and — and I have no patience with her!" How, I repeat, do women know about men? How do they telegraph to each other their notices of alarm and mistrust? and fly as birds rise up with a rush and a skurry when danger appears to be near? All this was very well. But Mr. Tregarvan heard some account of the dispute between Philip and Mr. Ringwood, and applied to Sir John for further particulars; and Sir John — liberal man as he was and ever had been, and priding himself little, heaven knew, on the privilege of rank, which was merely adventitious — was constrained to confess that this young man's conduct showed a great deal too much *laissez aller*. He had constantly, at Sir John's own house, manifested an independence which had bordered on rudeness; he was always notorious for his quarrelsome disposition, and lately had so disgraced himself in a scene with Sir John's eldest son, Mr. Ringwood — had exhibited such brutality, ingratitude and — and inebriation, that Sir John was free to confess he had forbidden the gentleman his door.

"An insubordinate, ill-conditioned fellow, certainly!" thinks Tregarvan. (And I do not say, though Philip is my friend, that Tregarvan and Sir John were altogether wrong regarding their protégé.) Twice Tregarvan had invited him to breakfast,

and Philip had not appeared. More than once he had contradicted Tregarvan about the Review. He had said that the Review was not getting on, and if you asked Philip his candid opinion, it would not get on. Six numbers had appeared, and it did not meet with that attention which the public ought to pay to it. The public was careless as to the designs of that Great Power which it was Tregarvan's aim to defy and confound. He took counsel with himself. He walked over to the publisher's and inspected the books; and the result of that inspection was so disagreeable, that he went home straightway and wrote a letter to Philip Firmin, Esq., New Milman Street, Guildford Street, which that poor fellow brought to his usual advisers. That letter contained a cheque for a quarter's salary, and bade adieu to Mr. Firmin. The writer would not recapitulate the causes of dissatisfaction which he felt respecting the conduct of the Review. He was much disappointed in its progress, and dissatisfied with its general management. He thought an opportunity was lost which never could be recovered for exposing the designs of a Power which menaced the liberty and tranquillity of Europe. Had it been directed with proper energy that Review might have been an aegis to that threatened liberty, a lamp to lighten the darkness of that menaced freedom. It might have pointed the way to the cultivation bonarum literarum; it might have fostered rising talent; it might have chastised the arrogance of so-called critics; it might have served the cause of truth. Tregarvan's hopes were disappointed: he would not say by whose remissness or fault. He had done his utmost in the good work, and finally, would thank Mr. Firmin to print off the articles already purchased and paid for, and to prepare a brief notice for the next number, announcing the discontinuance of the Review; and Tregarvan showed my wife a cold shoulder for a considerable time afterwards, nor were we asked to his tea-parties, I forget for how many seasons. This to us was no great loss or subject of annoyance: but to poor Philip? It was a matter of life and almost death to him. He never could save much out of his little pittance. Here were fifty pounds in his hand, it is true; but bills, taxes, rent, the hundred little obligations of a house, were due and pressing upon him; and in the midst of his anxiety our dear little Mrs. Philip was about to present him with a third ornament to his nursery. Poor little Tertius arrived duly enough, and, such hypocrites were we, that the poor mother was absolutely thinking of calling the child Tregarvan Firmin, as a compliment to Mr. Tregarvan, who had been so kind to them, and Tregarvan Firmin would be such a pretty name she thought. We imagined the Little Sister knew nothing about Philip's anxieties. Of course, she attended Mrs. Philip through her troubles, and we vow that we never said a word to her regarding Philip's own. But Mrs. Brandon went in to Philip one day, as he was sitting very grave and sad with his two first-born children, and she took both his hands, and said, "You know, dear Philip, I have saved ever so much: and I always intended it for — you know who."

And here she loosened one hand from him, and felt in her pocket for a purse, and put it into Philip's hand, and wept on his shoulder. And Philip kissed her, and thanked God for sending him such a dear friend, and gave her back her purse, though indeed he had but five pounds left in his own when this benefactress came to him. Yes: but there were debts owing to him. There was his wife's little portion of fifty pounds a year, which had never been paid since the second quarter after their marriage, which had happened now more than three years ago. As Philip had scarce a guinea in the world, he wrote to Mrs. Baynes, his wife's mother, to explain his extreme want, and to remind her that this money was due. Mrs. General Baynes was living at Jersey at this time in a choice society of half-pay ladies, clergymen, captains, and the like, among whom I have no doubt she moved as a great lady. She wore a large medallion of the deceased General on her neck. She wept dry tears over that interesting cameo at frequent tea-parties. She never could forgive Philip for taking away her child from her, and if any one would take away others of her girls, she would be equally unforgiving. Endowed with that wonderful logic with which women are blessed, I believe she never admitted, or has been able to admit to her own mind, that she did Philip or her daughter a wrong. In the tea-parties of her acquaintance she groaned over the extravagance of her son-in-law and his brutal treatment of her blessed child. Many good people agreed with her and shook their respectable noddles when the name of that prodigal Philip was mentioned over her muffins and Bohea. He was prayed for; his dear widowed mother-in-law was pitied, and blessed with all the comfort reverend gentlemen could supply on the spot. "Upon my honour, Firmin, Emily and I were made to believe that you were a monster, sir," the stout Major MacWhirter once said; "and now I have heard your story, by Jove, I think it is you, and not Eliza Baynes, who were wronged. She has a deuce of a tongue, Eliza has: and a temper — poor Charles knew what that was!" In fine, when Philip, reduced to his last guinea, asked Charlotte's mother to pay her debt to her sick daughter, Mrs. General B. sent Philip a ten-pound note, open, by Captain Swang, of the Indian army, who happened to be coming to England. And that, Philip says, of all the hard knocks of fate, has been the very hardest which he had had to endure. But the poor little wife knew nothing of this cruelty, nor, indeed, of the very poverty which was hemming round her curtain; and in the midst of his griefs, Philip Firmin was immensely consoled by the tender fidelity of the friends whom God had sent him. Their griefs were drawing to an end now. Kind readers all, may your sorrows, may mine, leave us with hearts not embittered, and humbly acquiescent to the Great Will!

CHAPTER 12

IN WHICH WE REACH THE LAST STAGE BUT ONE OF THIS JOURNEY.

Although poverty was knocking at Philip's humble door, little Charlotte in all her trouble never knew how menacing the grim visitor had been. She did not quite understand that her husband in his last necessity sent to her mother for his due, and that the mother turned away and refused him. "Ah," thought poor Philip, groaning in his despair, "I wonder whether the thieves who attacked the man in the parable were robbers of his own family, who knew that he carried money with him to Jerusalem, and waylaid him on the journey?" But again and again he has thanked God, with grateful heart, for the Samaritans whom he has met on life's road, and if he has not forgiven, it must be owned he has never done any wrong to those who robbed him.

Charlotte did not know that her husband was at his last guinea, and a prey to dreadful anxiety for her dear sake, for after the birth of her child a fever came upon her; in the delirium consequent upon which the poor thing was ignorant of all that happened round her. A fortnight with a wife in extremity, with crying infants, with hunger menacing at the door, passed for Philip somehow. The young man became an old man in this time. Indeed, his fair hair was streaked with white at the temples afterwards. But it must not be imagined that he had not friends during his affliction, and he always can gratefully count up the names of many persons to whom he might have applied had he been in need. He did not look or ask for these succours from his relatives. Aunt and uncle Twysden shrieked and cried out at his extravagance, imprudence, and folly. Sir John Ringwood said he must really wash his hands of a young man who menaced the life of his own son. Grenville Woolcomb, with many oaths, in which brother-in-law Ringwood joined chorus, cursed Philip, and said he didn't care, and the beggar ought to be hung, and his father ought to be hung. But I think I know half-a-dozen good men and true who told a different tale, and who were ready with their sympathy and succour. Did not Mrs. Flanagan, the Irish laundress, in a voice broken by sobs and gin, offer to go and chare at Philip's house for nothing, and nurse the dear children? Did not Goodenough say, "If you are in need, my dear fellow, of course you know where to come;" and did he not actually give two prescriptions, one for poor Charlotte, one for fifty pounds to be taken immediately, which he handed to the nurse by mistake? You may be sure she did not appropriate the money, for of course you know that the nurse was Mrs. Brandon. Charlotte has one remorse in her life. She owns she was jealous of the Little Sister. And now when that gentle life is over, when Philip's poverty trials are ended, when the children go sometimes and look wistfully at the grave of their dear Caroline, friend Charlotte leans her head against her husband's shoulder, and owns humbly how good, how brave, how generous a friend heaven sent them in that humble defender.

Have you ever felt the pinch of poverty? In many cases it is like the dentist's chair, more dreadful in the contemplation than in the actual suffering. Philip says he never was fairly beaten, but on that day when, in reply to his solicitation to have his due, Mrs. Baynes's friend, Captain Swang, brought him the open ten-pound note. It was not much of a blow; the hand which dealt it made the hurt so keen. "I remember," says he, "bursting out crying at school, because a big boy hit me a slight tap, and other boys said, 'Oh, you coward.' It was that I knew the boy at home, and my parents had been kind to him. It seemed to me a wrong that Bumps should strike me," said Philip; and he looked, while telling the story, as if he could cry about this injury now. I hope he has revenged himself by presenting coals of fire to his wife's relations. But this day, when he is enjoying good health, and competence, it is not safe to mention mothers-in-law in his presence. He fumes, shouts, and rages against them, as if all were like his; and his, I have been told, is a lady perfectly well satisfied with herself and her conduct in this world; and as for the next — but our story does not dare to point so far. It only interests itself about a little clique of people here below — their griefs, their trials, their weaknesses, their kindly hearts.

People there are in our history who do not seem to me to have kindly hearts at all; and yet, perhaps, if a biography could be written from their point of view, some other novelist might show how Philip and his biographer were a pair of selfish worldlings unworthy of credit: how uncle and aunt Twysden were most exemplary people, and so forth. Have I not told you how many people at New York shook their heads when Philip's name was mentioned, and intimated a strong opinion that he used his father very ill? When he fell wounded and bleeding, patron Tregarvan dropped him off his horse, and cousin Ringwood did not look behind to see how he fared. But these, again, may have had their opinion regarding our friend, who may have been misrepresented to them — I protest as I look back at the past portions of this history, I begin to

have qualms, and ask myself whether the folks of whom we have been prattling have had justice done to them; whether Agnes Twysden is not a suffering martyr justly offended by Philip's turbulent behaviour, and whether Philip deserves any particular attention or kindness at all. He is not transcendently clever; he is not gloriously beautiful. He is not about to illuminate the darkness in which the peoples grovel, with the flashing emanations of his truth. He sometimes owes money, which he cannot pay. He slips, stumbles, blunders, brags. Ah! he sins and repents — pray heaven — of faults, of vanities, of pride, of a thousand shortcomings! This I say — Ego — as my friend's biographer. Perhaps I do not understand the other characters round about him so well, and have overlooked a number of their merits, and caricatured and exaggerated their little defects.

Among the Samaritans who came to Philip's help in these his straits, he loves to remember the name of J. J., the painter, whom he found sitting with the children one day making drawings for them, which the good painter never tired to sketch.

Now if those children would but have kept Ridley's sketches, and waited for a good season at Christy's, I have no doubt they might have got scores of pounds for the drawings, but then, you see, they chose to improve the drawings with their own hands. They painted the soldiers yellow, the horses blue, and so forth. On the horses they put soldiers of their own construction. Ridley's landscapes were enriched with representations of "Omnibuses," which the children saw and admired in the neighbouring New Road. I dare say, as the fever left her, and as she came to see things as they were, Charlotte's eyes dwelt fondly on the pictures of the omnibuses inserted in Mr. Ridley's sketches, and she put some aside and showed them to her friends, and said, "Doesn't our darling show extraordinary talent for drawing? Mr. Ridley says he does. He did a great part of this etching."

But, beside the drawings, what do you think Master Ridley offered to draw for his friends? Besides the prescriptions of medicine, what drafts did Dr. Goodenough prescribe? When nurse Brandon came to Mrs. Philip in her anxious time, we know what sort of payment she proposed for her services. Who says the world is all cold? There is the sun and the shadow. And the heaven which ordains poverty and sickness, sends pity, and love, and succour.

During Charlotte's fever and illness, the Little Sister had left her but for one day, when her patient was quiet, and pronounced to be mending. It appears that Mrs. Charlotte was very ill indeed on this occasion; so ill that Dr. Goodenough thought she might have given us all the slip: so ill that, but for Brandon, she would, in all probability, have escaped out of this troublous world and left Philip and her orphaned little ones. Charlotte mended then: could take food and liked it, and was specially pleased with some chickens which her nurse informed her were "from the country." "From Sir John Ringwood, no doubt?" said Mrs. Firmin, remembering the presents sent from Berkeley Square, and the mutton and the turnips.

"Well, eat and be thankful!" says the Little Sister, who was as gay as a little sister could be, and who had prepared a beautiful bread sauce for the fowl; and who had tossed the baby, and who showed it to its admiring brother and sister ever so many times; and who saw that Mr. Philip had his dinner comfortable; and who never took so much as a drop of porter — at home a little glass sometimes was comfortable, but on duty, never, never! No, not if Dr. Goodenough ordered it! she vowed. And the Doctor wished he could say as much, or believe as much, of all his nurses.

Milman Street is such a quiet little street that our friends had not carpeted it in the usual way; and three days after her temporary absence, as nurse Brandon sits by her patient's bed, powdering the back of a small pink infant that makes believe to swim upon her apron, a rattle of wheels is heard in the quiet street — of four wheels, of one horse, of a jingling carriage, which stops before Philip's door. "It's the trap," says nurse Brandon, delighted. "It must be those kind Ringwoods," says Mrs. Philip. "But stop, Brandon. Did not they, did not we? — oh, how kind of them!" She was trying to recal the past. Past and present for days had been strangely mingled in her fevered brain. "Hush, my dear, you are to be kep' quite still," says the nurse — and then proceeded to finish the polishing and powdering of the pink frog on her lap.

The bedroom window was open towards the sunny street: but Mrs. Philip did not hear a female voice say, "'Old the 'orses 'ead, Jim," or she might have been agitated. The horse's head was held, and a gentleman and a lady with a great basket containing pease, butter, greens, flowers, and other rural produce, descended from the vehicle and rang at the bell.

Philip opened it; with his little ones, as usual, trotting at his knees.

"Why, my darlings, how you air grown!" cries the lady.

"Bygones be bygones. Give us your 'and, Firmin: here's mine. My missus has brought some country butter and things

for your dear good lady. And we hope you liked the chickens. And God bless you, old fellow, how are you?" the tears were rolling down the good man's cheeks as he spoke. And Mrs. Mugford was likewise exceedingly hot, and very much affected. And the children said to her, "Mamma is better now: and we have a little brother, and he is crying now upstairs."

"Bless you, my darlings!" Mrs. Mugford was off by this time. She put down her peace-offering of carrots, chickens, bacon, butter. She cried plentifully. "It was Brandon came and told us," she said; "and when she told us how all your great people had flung you over, and you'd been quarrelling again, you naughty fellar, I says to Mugford, let's go and see after that dear thing, Mugford, I says. And here we are. And year's two nice cakes for your children" (after a forage in the cornucopia), "and, 'lor, how they are grown!"

A little nurse from the upstairs regions here makes her appearance, holding a bundle of cashmere shawls, part of which is removed, and discloses a being pronounced to be ravishingly beautiful, and "jest like Mrs. Mugford's Emaly!"

"I say," says Mugford, "the 'old shop's still open to you. T'other chap wouldn't do at all. He was wild when he got the drink on board. Hirish. Pitched into Bickerton, and black'd 'is eye. It was Bickerton who told you lies about that poor lady. Don't see 'em no more now. Borrowed some money of me; haven't seen him since. We were both wrong, and we must make it up — the missus says we must."

"Amen!" said Philip, with a grasp of the honest fellow's hand. And next Sunday he and a trim little sister, and two children, went to an old church in Queen Square, Bloomsbury, which was fashionable in the reign of Queen Anne, when Richard Steele kept house, and did not pay rent, hard by. And when the clergyman in the Thanksgiving particularized those who desired now to "offer up their praises and thanksgiving for late mercies vouchsafed to them," once more Philip Firmin said "Amen," on his knees, and with all his heart.



CHAPTER 13

THE REALMS OF BLISS.

You know — all good boys and girls at Christmas know — that, before the last scene of the pantomime, when the Good Fairy ascends in a blaze of glory, and Harlequin and Columbine take hands, having danced through all their tricks and troubles and tumbles, there is a dark, brief, seemingly meaningless penultimate scene, in which the performers appear to grope about perplexed, whilst the music of bassoons and trombones, and the like, groans tragically. As the actors, with gestures of dismay and outstretched arms, move hither and thither, the wary frequenter of pantomimes sees the illuminators of the Abode of Bliss and Hall of Prismatic Splendour nimbly moving behind the canvas, and streaking the darkness with twinkling fires — fires which shall blaze out presently in a thousand colours round the Good Fairy in the Revolving Temple of Blinding Bliss. Be happy, Harlequin! Love and be happy and dance, pretty Columbine! Children, mamma bids you put your shawls on. And Jack and Mary (who are young and love pantomimes,) look lingeringly still over the ledge of the box, whilst the fairy temple yet revolves, whilst the fireworks play, and ere the Great Dark Curtain descends.

My dear young people, who have sate kindly through the scenes during which our entertainment has lasted, be it known to you that last chapter was the dark scene. Look to your cloaks, and tie up your little throats, for I tell you the great baize will soon fall down. Have I had any secrets from you all through the piece? I tell you the house will be empty and you will be in the cold air. When the boxes have got their nightgowns on, and you are all gone, and I have turned off the gas, and am in the empty theatre alone in the darkness, I promise you I shall not be merry. Never mind! We can make jokes though we are ever so sad. We can jump over head and heels, though I declare the pit is half emptied already, and the last orange-woman has slunk away. Encore une pirouette, Colombine! Saute, Arlequin, mon ami! Though there are but five bars more of the music, my good people, we must jump over them briskly, and then go home to supper and bed.

Philip Firmin, then, was immensely moved by this magnanimity and kindness on the part of his old employer, and has always considered Mugford's arrival and friendliness as a special interposition in his favour. He owes it all to Brandon, he says. It was she who bethought herself of his condition, represented it to Mugford, and reconciled him to his enemy. Others were most ready with their money. It was Brandon who brought him work rather than alms, and enabled him to face fortune cheerfully. His interval of poverty was so short, that he actually had not occasion to borrow. A week more, and he could not have held out, and poor Brandon's little marriage present must have gone to the coenotaph of sovereigns — the dear Little Sister's gift which Philip's family cherish to this hour.

So Philip, with a humbled heart and demeanour, clambered up on his sub-editorial stool once more at the Pall Mall Gazette, and again brandished the paste pot and the scissors. I forget whether Bickerton still remained in command at the Pall Mall Gazette, or was more kind to Philip than before, or was afraid of him, having heard of his exploits as a fire-eater; but certain it is, the two did not come to a quarrel, giving each other a wide berth, as the saying is, and each doing his own duty. Good-by, Monsieur Bickerton. Except, mayhap, in the final group round the Fairy Chariot (when, I promise you, there will be such a blaze of glory that he will be invisible), we shall never see the little spiteful envious creature more. Let him pop down his appointed trap-door; and, quick fiddles! let the brisk music jig on.

Owing to the coolness which had arisen between Philip and his father on account of their different views regarding the use to be made of Philip's signature, the old gentleman drew no further bills in his son's name, and our friend was spared from the unpleasant persecution. Mr. Hunt loved Dr. Firmin so ardently that he could not bear to be separated from the doctor long. Without the doctor, London was a dreary wilderness to Hunt. Unfortunate remembrances of past pecuniary transactions haunted him here. We were all of us glad when he finally retired from the Covent Garden taverns and betook himself to the Bowery once more.

And now friend Philip was at work again, hardly earning a scanty meal for self, wife, servant, children. It was indeed a meagre meal, and a small wage. Charlotte's illness, and other mishaps, had swept away poor Philip's little savings. It was determined that we would let the elegantly furnished apartments on the first floor. You might have fancied the proud Mr. Firmin rather repugnant to such a measure. And so he was on the score of convenience, but of dignity, not a whit. To this day, if necessity called, Philip would turn a mangle with perfect gravity. I believe the thought of Mrs. General Baynes's

horror at the idea of her son-in-law letting lodgings greatly soothed and comforted Philip. The lodgings were absolutely taken by our country acquaintance, Miss Pybus, who was coming up for the May meetings, and whom we persuaded (heaven be good to us) that she would find a most desirable quiet residence in the house of a man with three squalling children. Miss P. came, then, with my wife to look at the apartments; and we allured her by describing to her the delightful musical services at the Foundling hard by; and she was very much pleased with Mrs. Philip, and did not even wince at the elder children, whose pretty faces won the kind old lady's heart: and I am ashamed to say we were mum about the baby: and Pybus was going to close for the lodgings, when Philip burst out of his little room, without his coat, I believe, and objurgated a little printer's boy, who was sitting in the hall, waiting for some "copy" regarding which he had made a blunder; and Philip used such violent language towards the little lazy boy, that Pybus said "she never could think of taking apartments in that house," and hurried thence in a panic. When Brandon heard of this project of letting lodgings, she was in a fury. She might let lodgin's, but it wasn't for Philip to do so. "Let lodgin's, indeed! Buy a broom, and sweep a crossin'!" Brandon always thought Charlotte a poor-spirited creature, and the way she scolded Mrs. Firmin about this transaction was not a little amusing. Charlotte was not angry. She liked the scheme as little as Brandon. No other person ever asked for lodgings in Charlotte's house. May and its meetings came to an end. The old ladies went back to their country towns. The missionaries returned to Caffraria. (Ah! where are the pleasant-looking Quakeresses of our youth, with their comely faces, and pretty dove-coloured robes? They say the goodly sect is dwindling — dwindling.) The Quakeresses went out of town: then the fashionable world began to move: the Parliament went out of town. In a word, everybody who could, made away for a holiday, whilst poor Philip remained at his work, snipping and pasting his paragraphs, and doing his humble drudgery.

A sojourn on the sea-shore was prescribed by Dr. Goodenough, as absolutely necessary for Charlotte and her young ones, and when Philip pleaded certain cogent reasons why the family could not take the medicine prescribed by the doctor, that eccentric physician had recourse to the same pocket-book which we have known him to produce on a former occasion; and took from it, for what I know, some of the very same notes which he had formerly given to the Little Sister. "I suppose you may as well have them as that rascal Hunt?" said the doctor, scowling very fiercely. "Don't tell me. Stuff and nonsense. Pooh! Pay me when you are a rich man!" And this Samaritan had jumped into his carriage, and was gone, before Philip or Mrs. Philip could say a word of thanks. Look at him as he is going off. See the green brougham drive away, and turn westward, and mark it well. A shoe go after thee, John Goodenough; we shall see thee no more in this story. You are not in the secret, good reader: but I, who have been living with certain people for many months past, and have a hearty liking for some of them, grow very soft when the hour for shaking hands comes, to think we are to meet no more. Go to! when this tale began, and for some months after, a pair of kind old eyes used to read these pages, which are now closed in the sleep appointed for all of us. And so page is turned after page, and behold *Finis* and the volume's end.

So Philip and his young folks came down to Periwinkle Bay, where we were staying, and the girls in the two families nursed the baby, and the child and mother got health and comfort from the fresh air, and Mr. Mugford — who believes himself to be the finest sub-editor in the world — and I can tell you there is a great art in sub-editing a paper — Mr. Mugford, I say, took Philip's scissors and paste-pot, whilst the latter enjoyed his holiday. And J. J. Ridley, R.A., came and joined us presently, and we had many sketching parties, and my drawings of the various points about the bay, viz., Lobster Head, the Mollusc Rocks, are considered to be very spirited, though my little boy (who certainly has not his father's taste for art) mistook for the rock a really capital portrait of Philip, in a gray hat and paletot, sprawling on the sand.

Some twelve miles inland from the bay is the little town of Whipham Market, and Whipham skirts the park palings of that castle where Lord Ringwood had lived, and where Philip's mother was born and bred. There is a statue of the late lord in Whipham marketplace. Could he have had his will, the borough would have continued to return two members to Parliament, as in the good old times before us. In that ancient and grass-grown little place, where your footsteps echo as you pass through the street, where you hear distinctly the creaking of the sign of the "Ringwood Arms" hotel and posting-house, and the opposition creaking of the "Ram Inn" over the way — where the half-pay captain, the curate, and the medical man stand before the fly-blown window-blind of the "Ringwood Institute" and survey the strangers — there is still a respect felt for the memory of the great lord who dwelt behind the oaks in yonder hall. He had his faults. His lordship's life was not that of an anchorite. The company his lordship kept, especially in his latter days, was not of that select description which a nobleman of his lordship's rank might command. But he was a good friend to Whipham. He was a good landlord to a good tenant. If he had his will, Whipham would have kept its own. His lordship paid half the expense

after the burning of the town-hall. He was an arbitrary man, certainly, and he flogged Alderman Duffle before his own shop, but he apologized for it most handsome afterwards. Would the gentlemen like port or sherry? Claret not called for in Whipham; not at all: and no fish, because all the fish at Periwinkle Bay is bought up and goes to London. Such were the remarks made by the landlord of the Ringwood Arms to three cavaliers who entered that hostelry. And you may be sure he told us about Lord Ringwood's death in the postchaise as he came from Turreys Regum; and how his lordship went through them gates (pointing to a pair of gates and lodges which skirt the town), and was drove up to the castle and laid in state; and his lordship never would take the railway, never; and he always travelled like a nobleman, and when he came to a hotel and changed horses, he always called for a bottle of wine, and only took a glass, and sometimes not even that. And the present Sir John has kept no company here as yet; and they say he is close of his money, they say he is. And this is certain, Whipham haven't seen much of it, Whipham haven't.

We went into the inn yard, which may have been once a stirring place, and then sauntered up to the park gate, surmounted by the supporters and armorial bearings of the Ringwoods. "I wonder whether my poor mother came out of that gate when she eloped with my father?" said Philip. "Poor thing, poor thing!" The great gates were shut. The westering sun cast shadows over the sward where here and there the deer were browsing, and at some mile distance lay the house, with its towers and porticos and vanes flaming in the sun. The smaller gate was open, and a girl was standing by the lodge door. Was the house to be seen?

"Yes," says a little red-cheeked girl, with a curtsy.

"No!" calls out a harsh voice from within, and an old woman comes out from the lodge and looks at us fiercely. "Nobody is to go to the house. The family is a-coming."

That was provoking. Philip would have liked to behold the great house where his mother and her ancestors were born.

"Marry, good dame," Philip's companion said to the old beldam, "this goodly gentleman hath a right of entrance to yonder castle, which, I trow, ye wot not of. Heard ye never tell of one Philip Ringwood, slain at Busaco's glorious fi —"

"Hold your tongue, and don't chaff her, Pen," growled Firmin.

"Nay, and she knows not Philip Ringwood's grandson," the other wag continued, in a softened tone. "This will convince her of our right to enter. Canst recognize this image of your queen?"

"Well, I suppose 'ee can go up," said the old woman, at the sight of this talisman. "There's only two of them staying there, and they're out a-drivin'."

Philip was bent on seeing the halls of his ancestors. Gray and huge, with towers, and vanes, and porticos, they lay before us a mile off, separated from us by a streak of glistening river. A great chestnut avenue led up to the river, and in the dappled grass the deer were browsing.

You know the house, of course. There is a picture of it in Watts, bearing date 1783. A gentleman in a cocked hat and pigtail is rowing a lady in a boat on the shining river. Another nobleman in a cocked hat is angling in the glistening river from the bridge, over which a postchaise is passing.

"Yes, the place is like enough," said Philip; "but I miss the post-chaise going over the bridge, and the lady in the punt with the tall parasol. Don't you remember the print in our housekeeper's room in Old Parr Street? My poor mother used to tell me about the house, and I imagined it grander than the palace of Aladdin. It is a very handsome house," Philip went on. "It extends two hundred and sixty feet by seventy-five, and consists of a rustic basement and principal story, with an attic in the centre, the whole executed in stone. The grand front towards the park is adorned with a noble portico of the Corinthian order, and may with propriety be considered one of the finest elevations in the — 'I tell you I am quoting out of Watts's Seats of the Nobility and Gentry, published by John and Josiah Boydell, and lying in our drawing-room. Ah, dear me! I painted the boat and the lady and gentleman in the drawing-room copy, and my father boxed my ears, and my mother cried out, poor dear soul! And this is the river, is it? And over this the postchaise went with the club-tailed horses, and here was the pig-tailed gentleman fishing. It gives one a queer sensation," says Philip, standing on the bridge, and stretching out his big arms. "Yes, there are the two people in the punt by the rushes. I can see them, but you can't; and I hope, sir, you will have good sport." And here he took off his hat to an imaginary gentleman supposed to be angling from the balustrade for ghostly gudgeon. We reach the house presently. We ring at a door in the basement under the portico. The porter demurs, and says some of the family is down, but they are out, to be sure. The same half-crown argument answers with him which persuaded the keeper at the lodge. We go through the show-rooms of the stately but somewhat

faded and melancholy palace. In the cedar dining-room there hangs the grim portrait of the late earl; and that fair-haired officer in red? that must be Philip's grandfather. And those two slim girls embracing, surely those are his mother and his aunt. Philip walks softly through the vacant rooms. He gives the porter a gold piece ere he goes out of the great hall, forty feet cube, ornamented with statues brought from Rome by John first Baron, namely, Heliogabalus. Nero's mother, a priestess of Isis, and a river god; the pictures over the doors by Pedimento; the ceiling by Leotardi, and in a window in the great hall there is a table with a visitors' book, in which Philip writes his name. As we went away, we met a carriage which drove rapidly towards the house, and which no doubt contained the members of the Ringwood family, regarding whom the portress had spoken. After the family differences previously related, we did not care to face these kinsfolks of Philip, and passed on quickly in twilight beneath the rustling umbrage of the chestnuts. J. J. saw a hundred fine pictorial effects as we walked; the palace reflected in the water; the dappled deer under the chequered shadow of the trees. It was, "Oh, what a jolly bit of colour!" and, "I say, look, how well that old woman's red cloak comes in!" and so forth. Painters never seem tired of their work. At seventy they are students still, patient, docile, happy. May we too, my good sir, live for fourscore years, and never be too old to learn! The walk, the brisk accompanying conversation, amid stately scenery around, brought us with good appetites and spirits to our inn, where we were told that dinner would be served when the omnibus arrived from the railway.

At a short distance from the Ringwood Arms, and on the opposite side of the street, is the Ram Inn, neat postchaises and farmers' ordinary; a house, of which the pretensions seemed less, though the trade was somewhat more lively. When the tooting of the horn announced the arrival of the omnibus from the railway, I should think a crowd of at least fifteen people assembled at various doors of the High Street and Market. The half-pay captain and the curate came out from the Ringwood Athenæum. The doctor's apprentice stood on the step of the surgery door, and the surgeon's lady looked out from the first floor. We shared the general curiosity. We and the waiter stood at the door of the Ringwood Arms. We were mortified to see that of the five persons conveyed by the 'bus, one was a tradesman, who descended at his door (Mr. Packwood, the saddler, so the waiter informed us), three travellers were discharged at the Ram, and only one came to us.

"Mostly bagmen goes to the Ram," the waiter said, with a scornful air; and these bagmen, and their bags, quitted the omnibus.

Only one passenger remained for the Ringwood Arms Hotel, and he presently descended under the porte cochère; and the omnibus — I own, with regret, it was but a one-horse machine — drove rattling into the court-yard, where the bells of the "Star," the "George," the "Rodney," the "Dolphin," and so on, had once been wont to jingle, and the court had echoed with the noise and clatter of hoofs and ostlers, and the cries of "First and second, turn out."

Who was the merry-faced little gentleman in black, who got out of the omnibus, and cried, when he saw us, "What, you here?" It was Mr. Bradgate, that lawyer of Lord Ringwood's with whom we made a brief acquaintance just after his lordship's death. "What, you here?" cries Bradgate, then, to Philip. Come down about this business, of course? Very glad that you and — and certain parties have made it up. Thought you weren't friends.

What business? What parties? We had not heard the news? We had only come over from Periwinkle Bay by chance, in order to see the house.

"How very singular! Did you meet the — the people who were staying there?"

We said we had seen a carriage pass, but did not remark who was in it. What, however, was the news? Well. It would be known immediately, and would appear in Tuesday's Gazette. The news was that Sir John Ringwood was going to take a peerage, and that the seat for Whipham would be vacant. And herewith our friend produced from his travelling bag a proclamation, which he read to us, and which was addressed —

"To the worthy and independent electors of the borough of Ringwood."

"London, Wednesday."

"Gentlemen, — A gracious Sovereign having been pleased to order that the family of Ringwood should continue to be represented in the House of Peers, I take leave of my friends and constituents who have given me their kind confidence hitherto, and promise them that my regard for them will never cease, or my interest in the town and neighbourhood where my family have dwelt for many centuries. The late lamented Lord Ringwood's brother died in the service of his Sovereign in Portugal, following the same flag under which his ancestors for centuries have fought and bled. My own son serves the Crown in a civil capacity. It was natural that one of our name and family should continue the relations which so long have

subsisted between us and this loyal, affectionate, but independent borough. Mr. Ringwood's onerous duties in the office which he holds are sufficient to occupy his time. A gentleman united to our family by the closest ties will offer himself as a candidate for your suffrages — ”

“Why, who is it? He is not going to put in uncle Twysden, or my sneak of a cousin?”

“No,” says Mr. Bradgate.

“Well, bless my soul! he can't mean me,” said Philip. “Who is the dark horse he has in his stable!”

Then Mr. Bradgate laughed. “Dark horse you may call him. The new member is to be Grenville Woolcomb, Esq., your West India relative, and no other.”

Those who know the extreme energy of Mr. P. Firmin's language when he is excited, may imagine the explosion of Philippine wrath which ensued as our friend heard this name. “That miscreant: that skinflint: that wealthy crossing-sweeper: that ignoramus who scarce could do more than sign his name! Oh, it was horrible, shameful! Why, the man is on such ill terms with his wife that they say he strikes her. When I see him I feel inclined to choke him, and murder him. That brute going into Parliament, and the republican Sir John Ringwood sending him there! It's monstrous!”

“Family arrangements. Sir John, or, I should say, my Lord Ringwood is one of the most affectionate of parents,” Mr. Bradgate remarked. “He has a large family by his second marriage, and his estates go to his eldest son. We must not quarrel with Lord Ringwood for wishing to provide for his young ones. I don't say that he quite acts up to the extreme Liberal principle of which he was once rather fond of boasting. But if you were offered a peerage, what would you do; what would I do? If you wanted money for your young ones, and could get it, would you not take it? Come, come, don't let us have too much of this Spartan virtue! If we were tried, my good friend, we should not be much worse or better than our neighbours. Is my fly coming, waiter?” We asked Mr. Bradgate to defer his departure, and to share our dinner. But he declined, and said he must go up to the great house, where he and his client had plenty of business to arrange, and where no doubt he would stay for the night. He bade the inn servants put his portmanteau into his carriage when it came. “The old lord had some famous port wine,” he said; “I hope my friends have the key of the cellar.”

The waiter was just putting our meal on the table, as we stood in the bow-window of the Ringwood Arms coffee-room, engaged in this colloquy. Hence we could see the street, and the opposition inn of the Ram, where presently a great placard was posted. At least a dozen street boys, shopmen, and rustics were quickly gathered round this manifesto, and we ourselves went out to examine it. The Ram placard denounced, in terms of unmeasured wrath, the impudent attempt from the Castle to dictate to the free and independent electors of the borough. Freemen were invited not to promise their votes; to show themselves worthy of their name; to submit to no Castle dictation. A county gentleman of property, of influence, of liberal principles — no West Indian, no Castle Flunkey, but a True English Gentleman, would come forward to rescue them from the tyranny under which they laboured. On this point the electors might rely on the word of A Briton.

“This was brought down by the clerk from Bedloe's. He and a newspaper man came down in the train with me; a Mr. — ”

As he spoke, there came forth from the Ram the newspaper man of whom Mr. Bradgate spoke — an old friend and comrade of Philip, that energetic man and able reporter, Phipps of the Daily Intelligencer, who recognized Philip, and cordially greeting him, asked what he did down here, and supposed he had come to support his family.

Philip explained that we were strangers, had come from a neighbouring watering place to see the home of Philip's ancestors, and was not even aware, until then, that an electioneering contest was pending in the place, or that Sir John Ringwood was about to be promoted to the peerage. Meanwhile, Mr. Bradgate's fly had driven out of the hotel yard of the Ringwood Arms, and the lawyer running to the house for a bag of papers, jumped into the carriage and called to the coachman to drive to the castle.

“Bon appétit!” says he, in a confident tone, and he was gone.

“Would Phipps dine with us?” Phipps whispered, “I am on the other side, and the Ram is our house.”

We, who were on no side, entered into the Ringwood Arms, and sat down to our meal — to the mutton and the catsup, cauliflower and potatoes, the copper-edged side dishes, and the watery melted butter, with which strangers are regaled in inns in declining towns. The town badauds, who had read the placard at the Ram, now came to peruse the proclamation in our window. I daresay thirty pairs of clinking boots stopped before the one window and the other, the while we ate tough mutton and drank fiery sherry. And J. J., leaving his dinner, sketched some of the figures of the townsfolk staring at the

manifesto, with the old-fashioned Ram Inn for a background — a picturesque gable enough.

Our meal was just over, when, somewhat to our surprise, our friend Mr. Bradgate the lawyer returned to the Ringwood Arms. He wore a disturbed countenance. He asked what he could have for dinner? Mutton, neither hot nor cold. Hum! That must do. So he had not been invited to dine at the Park? We rallied him with much facetiousness on this disappointment.

Little Bradgate's eyes started with wrath. "What a churl the little black fellow is!" he cried. "I took him his papers. I talked with him till dinner was laid in the very room where we were. French beans and neck of venison — I saw the housekeeper and his man bring them in!" And Mr. Woolcomb did not so much as ask me to sit down to dinner — but told me to come again at nine o'clock! Confound this mutton — it's neither hot nor cold! The little skinflint! The glasses of fiery sherry which Bradgate now swallowed served rather to choke than appease the lawyer. We laughed, and this jocularity angered him more. "Oh," said he, "I am not the only person Woolcomb was rude to. He was in a dreadful ill-temper. He abused his wife: and when he read somebody's name in the stranger's book, I promise you, Firmin, he abused you. I had a mind to say to him, 'Sir, Mr. Firmin is dining at the Ringwood Arms, and I will tell him what you say of him.' What india rubber mutton this is! What villanous sherry! Go back to him at nine o'clock, indeed! Be hanged to his impudence!"

"You must not abuse Woolcomb before Firmin," said one of our party. "Philip is so fond of his cousin's husband, that he cannot bear to hear the black man abused."

This was not a very brilliant joke, but Philip grinned at it with much savage satisfaction.

"Hit Woolcomb as hard as you please, he has no friends here, Mr. Bradgate," growled Philip. "So he is rude to his lawyer, is he?"

"I tell you he is worse than the old earl," cried the indignant Bradgate. "At least the old man was a peer of England, and could be a gentleman when he wished. But to be bullied by a fellow who might be a black footman, or ought to be sweeping a crossing! It's monstrous!"

"Don't speak ill of a man and a brother, Mr. Bradgate. Woolcomb can't help his complexion."

"But he can help his confounded impudence, and shan't practise it on me!" the attorney cried.

As Bradgate called out from his box, puffing and fuming, friend J. J. was scribbling in the little sketchbook which he always carried. He smiled over his work. "I know," he said, "the Black Prince well enough. I have often seen him driving his chestnut mares in the Park, with that bewildered white wife by his side. I am sure that woman is miserable, and poor thing —"

"Serve her right! What did an English lady mean by marrying such a fellow!" cries Bradgate.

"A fellow who does not ask his lawyer to dinner!" remarks one of the company: perhaps the reader's very humble servant. "But what an imprudent lawyer he has chosen — a lawyer who speaks his mind."

"I have spoken my mind to his betters, and be hanged to him! Do you think I am going to be afraid of him?" bawls the irascible solicitor.

"Contempsit Catilinæ gladios — do you remember the old quotation at school, Philip." And here there was a break in our conversation, for chancing to look at friend J. J.'s sketch-book, we saw that he had made a wonderful little drawing, representing Woolcomb and Woolcomb's wife, grooms, phaeton, and chestnut mares, as they were to be seen any afternoon in Hyde Park, during the London season.

Admirable! Capital! Everybody at once knew the likeness of the dusky charioteer. Iracundus himself smiled and sniggered over it. "Unless you behave yourself, Mr. Bradgate, Ridley will make a picture of you," says Philip. Bradgate made a comical face and retreated into his box, of which he pretended to draw the curtain. But the sociable little man did not long remain in his retirement; he emerged from it in a short time, his wine decanter in his hand, and joined our little party; and then we fell to talking of old times; and we all remembered a famous drawing by H. B., of the late Earl of Ringwood, in the old-fashioned swallow-tailed coat and tight trowsers, on the old-fashioned horse, with the old-fashioned groom behind him, as he used to be seen pounding along Rotten Row.

"I speak my mind, do I?" says Mr. Bradgate presently. "I know somebody who spoke his mind to that old man, and who would have been better off if he had held his tongue."

"Come, tell me, Bradgate," cried Philip. "It is all over and past now. Had Lord Ringwood left me something? I declare I thought at one time that he intended to do so."

"Nay, has not your friend here been rebuking me for speaking my mind? I am going to be as mum as a mouse. Let us talk about the election," and the provoking lawyer would say no more on a subject possessing a dismal interest for poor Phil.

"I have no more right to repine," said that philosopher, "than a man would have who drew number x in the lottery, when the winning ticket was number y. Let us talk, as you say, about the election. Who is to oppose Mr. Woolcomb?"

Mr. Bradgate believed a neighbouring squire, Mr. Hornblow, was to be the candidate put forward against the Ringwood nominee.

"Hornblow! what, Hornblow of Grey Friars?" cries Philip. "A better fellow never lived. In this case he shall have our vote and interest; and I think we ought to go over and take another dinner at the Ram."

The new candidate actually turned out to be Philip's old school and college friend, Mr. Hornblow. After dinner we met him with a staff of canvassers on the tramp through the little town. Mr. Hornblow was paying his respects to such tradesmen as had their shops yet open. Next day being market day he proposed to canvass the market-people. "If I meet the black man, Firmin," said the burly squire, "I think I can chaff him off his legs. He is a bad one at speaking, I am told."

As if the tongue of Plato would have prevailed in Whipham and against the nominee of the great house! The hour was late to be sure, but the companions of Mr. Hornblow on his canvass augured ill of his success after half-an-hour's walk at his heels. Baker Jones would not promise no how: that meant Jones would vote for the Castle, Mr. Hornblow's legal aide-de-camp, Mr. Batley, was forced to allow. Butcher Brown was having his tea, — his shrill-voiced wife told us, looking out from her glazed back parlour: Brown would vote for the Castle. Saddler Briggs would see about it. Grocer Adams fairly said he would vote against us — against us? — against Hornblow, whose part we were taking already. I fear the flattering promises of support of a great body of free and unbiassed electors, which had induced Mr. Hornblow to come forward and, were but inventions of that little lawyer, Batley, who found his account in having a contest in the borough. When the polling-day came — you see, I disdain to make any mysteries in this simple and veracious story — Mr. Grenville Woolcomb, whose solicitor and agent spoke for him, Mr. Grenville Woolcomb, who could not spell or speak two sentences of decent English, and whose character for dulness, ferocity, penuriousness, jealousy, almost fatuity, was notorious to all the world, was returned by an immense majority, and the country gentleman brought scarce a hundred votes to the poll.

We who were in nowise engaged in the contest, nevertheless, found amusement from it in a quiet country place where little else was stirring. We came over once or twice from Periwinkle Bay. We mounted Hornblow's colours openly. We drove up ostentatiously to the Ram, forsaking the Ringwood Arms, where Mr. Grenville Woolcomb's Committee Room was now established in that very coffee-room where we had dined in Mr. Bradgate's company. We warmed in the contest. We met Bradgate and his principal more than once, and our Montagus and Capulets defied each other in the public street. It was fine to see Philip's great figure and noble scowl when he met Woolcomb at the canvass. Gleams of mulatto hate quivered from the eyes of the little captain. Darts of fire flashed from beneath Philip's eyebrows as he elbowed his way forward, and hustled Woolcomb off the pavement. Mr. Philip never disguised any sentiment of his. Hate the little ignorant, spiteful, vulgar, avaricious beast? Of course I hate him, and I should like to pitch him into the river. Oh, Philip! Charlotte pleaded. But there was no reasoning with this savage when in wrath. I deplored, though perhaps I was amused by, his ferocity.

The local paper on our side was filled with withering epigrams against this poor Woolcomb, of which, I suspect, Philip was the author. I think I know that fierce style and tremendous invective. In the man whom he hates he can see no good; and in his friend no fault. When we met Bradgate apart from his principal, we were friendly enough. He said we had no chance in the contest. He did not conceal his dislike and contempt for his client. He amused us in later days (when he actually became Philip's man of law) by recounting anecdotes of Woolcomb, his fury, his jealousy, his avarice, his brutal behaviour. Poor Agnes had married for money, and he gave her none. Old Twysden, in giving his daughter to this man, had hoped to have the run of a fine house; to ride in Woolcomb's carriages, and feast at his table. But Woolcomb was so stingy that he grudged the meat which his wife ate, and would give none to her relations. He turned those relations out of his doors. Talbot and Ringwood Twysden, he drove them both away. He lost a child, because he would not send for a physician. His wife never forgave him that meanness. Her hatred for him became open and avowed. They parted, and she led a life into which we will look no farther. She quarrelled with parents as well as husband. "Why," she said, "did they sell me to that man?" Why did she sell herself? She required little persuasion from father and mother when she committed that crime. To be sure, they had educated her so well to worldliness, that when the occasion came she was ready.

We used to see this luckless woman, with her horses and servants decked with Woolcomb's ribbons, driving about the little town, and making feeble efforts to canvass the townspeople. They all knew how she and her husband quarrelled. Reports came very quickly from the Hall to the town. Woolcomb had not been at Whipham a week when people began to hoot and jeer at him as he passed in his carriage. "Think how weak you must be," Bradgate said, "when we can win with this horse! I wish he would stay away, though. We could manage much better without him. He has insulted I don't know how many free and independent electors, and infuriated others, because he will not give them beer when they come to the house. If Woolcomb would stay in the place, and we could have the election next year, I think your man might win. But, as it is, he may as well give in, and spare the expense of a poll." Meanwhile Hornblow was very confident. We believe what we wish to believe. It is marvellous what faith an enthusiastic electioneering agent can inspire in his client. At any rate, if Hornblow did not win this time, he would at the next election. The old Ringwood domination in Whipham was gone henceforth for ever.

When the day of election arrived, you may be sure we came over from Periwinkle Bay to see the battle. By this time Philip had grown so enthusiastic in Hornblow's cause — (Philip, by the way, never would allow the possibility of a defeat) — that he had his children decked in the Hornblow ribbons, and drove from the bay, wearing a cockade as large as a pancake. He, I, and Ridley the painter, went together in a dog-cart. We were hopeful, though we knew the enemy was strong; and cheerful, though ere we had driven five miles the rain began to fall.

Philip was very anxious about a certain great roll of paper which we carried with us. When I asked him what it contained, he said it was a gun; which was absurd. Ridley smiled in his silent way. When the rain came, Philip cast a cloak over his artillery, and sheltered his powder. We little guessed at the time what strange game his shot would bring down.

When we reached Whipham, the polling had continued for some hours. The confounded black miscreant, as Philip called his cousin's husband, was at the head of the poll, and with every hour his majority increased. The free and independent electors did not seem to be in the least influenced by Philip's articles in the county paper, or by the placards which our side had pasted over the little town, and in which freemen were called upon to do their duty, to support a fine old English gentleman, to submit to no Castle nominee, and so forth. The pressure of the Ringwood steward and bailiffs was too strong. However much they disliked the black man, tradesman after tradesman, and tenant after tenant, came up to vote for him. Our drums and trumpets at the Ram blew loud defiance to the brass band at the Ringwood Arms. From our balcony, I flatter myself, we made much finer speeches than the Ringwood people could deliver. Hornblow was a popular man in the county. When he came forward to speak, the market-place echoed with applause. The farmers and small tradesmen touched their hats to him kindly, but slunk off sadly to the polling-booth and voted according to order. A fine, healthy, handsome, redcheeked squire, our champion's personal appearance enlisted all the ladies in his favour.

"If the two men," bawled Philip, from the Ram window, "could decide the contest with their coats off before the market-house yonder, which do you think would win — the fair man or the darkey?" (Loud cries of "Hornblow for iver!" or, "Mr. Philip, we'll have yew.") "But you see, my friends, Mr. Woolcomb does not like a fair fight. Why doesn't he show at the Ringwood Arms and speak? I don't believe he can speak — not English. Are you men? Are you Englishmen. Are you white slaves to be sold to that fellow?" Immense uproar. Mr. Finch, the Ringwood agent, in vain tries to get a hearing from the balcony of the Ringwood Arms. "Why does not Sir John Ringwood — my Lord Ringwood now — come down amongst his tenantry and back the man he has sent down? I suppose he is ashamed to look his tenants in the face. I should be, if I ordered them to do such a degrading job. You know, gentlemen, that I am a Ringwood myself. My grandfather lies buried — no, not buried — in yonder church. His tomb is there. His body lies on the glorious field of Busaco!" ("Hurray!") "I am a Ringwood." (Cries of "Hoo — down. No Ringwoods year. We wunt have un!") "And before George, if I had a vote, I would give it for the gallant, the good, the admirable, the excellent Hornblow. Some one holds up the state of the poll, and Woolcomb is ahead! I can only say, electors of Whipham, the more shame for you!" "Hooray! Bravo!" The boys, the people, the shouting are all on our side. The voting, I regret to say, steadily continues in favour of the enemy.

As Philip was making his speech, an immense banging of drums and blowing of trumpets arose from the balcony of the Ringwood Arms, and a something resembling the song of triumph called, "See the Conquering Hero comes," was performed by the opposition orchestra. The lodge-gates of the park were now decorated with the Ringwood and Woolcomb flags. They were flung open, and a dark green chariot with four grey horses issued from the park. On the chariot was an earl's coronet, and the people looked rather scared as it came towards us, and said — "Do'ee look now, 'tis my lard's own postchaise!" On former days Mr. Woolcomb and his wife, as his aide-de-camp, had driven through the town in an open

barouche, but, to-day being rainy, preferred the shelter of the old chariot, and we saw, presently, within, Mr. Bradgate, the London agent, and by his side the darkling figure of Mr. Woolcomb. He had passed many agonizing hours, we were told subsequently, in attempting to learn a speech. He cried over it. He never could get it by heart. He swore like a frantic child at his wife who endeavoured to teach him his lesson.

"Now's the time, Mr. Briggs!" Philip said to Mr. B., our lawyer's clerk, and the intelligent Briggs sprang downstairs to obey his orders. "Clear the road there! make way!" was heard from the crowd below us. The gates of our inn courtyard, which had been closed, were suddenly flung open, and, amidst the roar of the multitude, there issued out a cart drawn by two donkeys, and driven by a negro, beasts and man all wearing Woolcomb's colours. In the cart was fixed a placard, on which a most undeniable likeness of Mr. Woolcomb was designed: who was made to say, "Vote for me! Am I Not a Man and a Brudder?" "This cart trotted out of the yard of the Ram, and, with a cortège of shouting boys, advanced into the market-place, which Mr. Woolcomb's carriage was then crossing."

Before the market-house stands the statue of the late earl, whereof mention has been made. In his peer's robes, a hand extended, he points towards his park gates. An inscription, not more mendacious than many other epigraphs, records his rank, age, virtues, and the esteem in which the people of Whipham held him. The mulatto who drove the team of donkeys was an itinerant tradesman who brought fish from the bay to the little town; a jolly wag, a fellow of indifferent character, a frequenter of all the alehouses in the neighbourhood, and rather celebrated for his skill as a bruiser. He and his steeds streamed with Woolcomb ribbons. With ironical shouts of "Woolcomb for ever!" Yellow Jack urged his cart towards the chariot with the white horses. He took off his hat with mock respect to the candidate sitting within the green chariot. From the balcony of the Ram we could see the two vehicles approaching each other; and Yellow Jack waving his ribboned hat, kicking his bandy legs here and there, and urging on his donkeys. What with the roar of the people, and the banging and trumpeting of the rival bands, we could hear but little: but I saw Woolcomb thrust his yellow head out of his chaise-window — he pointed towards that impudent donkey-cart, and urged, seemingly, his postilions to ride it down. Plying their whips, the postboys galloped towards Yellow Jack and his vehicle, a yelling crowd scattering from before the horses, and rallying behind them, to utter execrations at Woolcomb. His horses were frightened, no doubt; for just as Yellow Jack wheeled nimbly round one side of the Ringwood statue, Woolcomb's horses were all huddled together and plunging in confusion beside it, the fore-wheel came in abrupt collision with the stonework of the statue railing: and then we saw the vehicle turn over altogether, one of the wheelers down with its rider, and the leaders kicking, plunging, lashing out right and left, wild and maddened with fear. Mr. Philip's countenance, I am bound to say, wore a most guilty and queer expression. This accident, this collision, this injury, perhaps death of Woolcomb and his lawyer, arose out of our fine joke about the Man and the Brother.

We dashed down the stairs from the Ram — Hornblow, Philip, and half-a-dozen more — and made a way through the crowd towards the carriage, with its prostrate occupants. The mob made way civilly for the popular candidate — the losing candidate. When we reached the chaise, the traces had been cut: the horses were free: the fallen postilion was up and rubbing his leg: and, as soon as the wheelers were taken out of the chaise, Woolcomb emerged from it. He had said from within (accompanying his speech with many oaths, which need not be repeated, and showing a just sense of his danger), "Cut the traces, hang you! And take the horses away: I can wait until they're gone. I'm sittin' on my lawyer; I ain't goin' to have my head kicked off my those wheelers." And just as we reached the fallen postchaise he emerged from it, laughing, and saying, "Lie still, you old beggar!" to Mr. Bradgate, who was writhing underneath him. His issue from the carriage was received with shouts of laughter, which increased prodigiously when Yellow Jack, nimbly clambering up the statue-railings, thrust the outstretched arm of the statue through the picture of the Man and the Brother, and left that cartoon flapping in the air over Woolcomb's head.

Then a shout arose, the like of which has seldom been heard in that quiet little town. Then Woolcomb, who had been quite good-humoured as he issued out of the broken postchaise, began to shriek, curse, and revile more shrilly than before; and was heard, in the midst of his oaths and wrath, to say, "He would give any man a shillin' who would bring him down that confounded thing!" Then, scared, bruised, contused, confused, poor Mr. Bradgate came out of the carriage, his employer taking not the least notice of him.

Hornblow hoped Woolcomb was not hurt, on which the little gentleman turned round, and said, "Hurt? no; who are you! Is no fellah goin' to bring me down that confounded thing? I'll give a shillin', I say, to the fellah who does!"

"A shilling is offered for that picture!" shouts Philip, with a red face, and wild with excitement. "Who will take a whole

shilling for that beauty?"

On which Woolcomb began to scream, curse, and revile more bitterly than before. "You here? Hang you, why are you here? Don't come bullyin' me. Take that fellah away, some of you fellahs. Bradgate, come to my committee room. I won't stay here, I say. Let's have the beast of a carriage, and — Well, what's up now?"

While he was talking, shrieking, and swearing, half a dozen shoulders in the crowd had raised the carriage up on its three wheels. The panel which had fallen towards the ground had split against a stone, and a great gap was seen in the side. A lad was about to thrust his hand into the orifice, when Woolcomb turned upon him.

"Hands off, you little beggar!" he cried, "no priggin'! Drive away some of these fellahs, you postboys! Don't stand rubbin' your knee there, you great fool. What's this?" and he thrust his own hand into the place where the boy had just been marauding.

In the old travelling carriages there used to be a well or sword-case, in which travellers used to put swords and pistols in days when such weapons of defence were needful on the road. Out of this sword-case of Lord Ringwood's old post-chariot, Woolcomb did not draw a sword, but a foolscap paper folded and tied with a red tape. And he began to read the superscription — "Will of the Right Honourable John, Earl of Ringwood. Bradgate, Smith and Burrows."

"God bless my soul! It's the will he had back from my office, and which I thought he had destroyed." My dear fellow, I congratulate you with all my heart! And herewith Mr. Bradgate the lawyer began to shake Philip's hand with much warmth. "Allow me to look at that paper. Yes, this is in my handwriting. Let us come into the Ringwood Arms — the Ram — anywhere, and read it to you!"

. . . Here we looked up to the balcony of the Ringwood Arms, and beheld a great placard announcing the state of the poll at 1 o'clock.

Woolcomb 216 Hornblow 92

"We are beaten," said Mr. Hornblow, very goodnaturedly. "We may take our flag down. Mr. Woolcomb, I congratulate you."

"I knew we should do it," said Mr. Woolcomb, putting out a little yellow-kidded hand. Had all the votes beforehand — knew we should do the trick. I say. Hi! you — Whatdoyoucallem — Bradgate! What is it about, that will? It does not do any good to that beggar, does it?" and with laughter and shouts, and cries of "Woolcomb for ever," and "Give us something to drink, your honour," the successful candidate marched into his hotel.

And was the tawny Woolcomb the fairy who was to rescue Philip from grief, debt, and poverty? Yes. And the old postchaise of the late Lord Ringwood was the fairy chariot. You have read in a past chapter how the old lord, being transported with anger against Philip, desired his lawyer to bring back a will in which he had left a handsome legacy to the young man, as his mother's son. My lord had intended to make a provision for Mrs. Firmin, when she was his dutiful niece, and yet under his roof. When she eloped with Mr. Firmin, Lord Ringwood vowed he would give his niece nothing. But he was pleased with the independent and forgiving spirit exhibited by her son; and, being a person of much grim humour, I daresay chuckled inwardly at thinking how furious the Twysdens would be, when they found Philip was the old lord's favourite. Then Mr. Philip chose to be insubordinate, and to excite the wrath of his great-uncle, who desired to have his will back again. He put the document into his carriage, in the secret box, as he drove away on that last journey, in the midst of which death seized him. Had he survived, would he have made another will, leaving out all mention of Philip? Who shall say? My lord made and cancelled many wills. This certainly, duly drawn and witnessed, was the last he ever signed; and by it Philip is put in possession of a sum of money which is sufficient to ensure a provision for those whom he loves. Kind readers, I know not whether the fairies be rife now, or banished from this work-a-day earth, but Philip's biographer wishes you some of those blessings which never forsook Philip in his trials: a dear wife and children to love you, a true friend or two to stand by you, and in health or sickness, a clear conscience, and a kindly heart. If you fall upon the way, may succour reach you. And may you, in your turn, have help and pity in store for the unfortunate whom you overtake on life's journey.

Would you care to know what happened to the other personages of our narrative? Old Twysden is still babbling and bragging at clubs, and though aged is not the least venerable. He has quarrelled with his son for not calling Woolcomb out, when that unhappy

difference arose between the Black Prince and his wife. He says his family has been treated with cruel injustice by the late Lord Ringwood, but as soon as Philip had a little fortune left him he instantly was reconciled to his wife's nephew.

There are other friends of Firmin's who were kind enough to him in his evil days, but cannot pardon his prosperity. Being in that benevolent mood which must accompany any leave-taking, we will not name these ill-wishers of Philip, but wish that all readers of his story may have like reason to make some of their acquaintances angry.

Our dear Little Sister would never live with Philip and his Charlotte, though the latter especially and with all her heart besought Mrs. Brandon to come to them. That pure and useful and modest life ended a few years since. She died of a fever caught from one of her patients. She would not allow Philip or Charlotte to come near her. She said she was justly punished for being so proud as to refuse to live with them. All her little store she left to Philip. He has now in his desk the five guineas which she gave him at his marriage; and J. J. has made a little picture of her, with her sad smile and her sweet face, which hangs in Philip's drawing-room, where father, mother, and children talk of the Little Sister as though she were among them still.

She was dreadfully agitated when the news came from New York of Dr. Firmin's second marriage. "His second? His third!" she said. "The villain, the villain!" That strange delusion which we have described as sometimes possessing her increased in intensity after this news. More than ever, she believed that Philip was her own child. She came wildly to him, and cried that his father had forsaken them. It was only when she was excited that she gave utterance to this opinion. Doctor Goodenough says that though generally silent about it, it never left her.

Upon his marriage Dr. Firmin wrote one of his long letters to his son, announcing the event. He described the wealth of the lady (a widow from Norfolk, in Virginia) to whom he was about to be united. He would pay back, ay, with interest, every pound, every dollar, every cent, he owed his son. Was the lady wealthy? We had only the poor doctor's word.

Three months after his marriage he died of yellow fever, on his wife's estate. It was then the Little Sister came to see us in widow's mourning, very wild and flushed. She bade our servant say, "Mrs. Firmin was at the door;" to the astonishment of the man, who knew her. She had even caused a mourning-card to be printed. Ah, there is rest now for that little fevered brain, and peace, let us pray, for that fond, faithful heart.

The mothers in Philip's household and mine have already made a match between our children. We had a great gathering the other day at Roehampton, at the house of our friend Mr. Clive Newcome (whose tall boy, my wife says, was very attentive to our Helen), and, having been educated at the same school, we sat ever so long at dessert, telling old stories, whilst the children danced to piano music on the lawn. Dance on the lawn, young folks, whilst the elders talk in the shade! What? The night is falling: we have talked enough over our wine: and it is time to go home? Good night. Good night, friends, old and young! The night will fall: the stories must end: and the best friends must part.



This web edition published by:
eBooks@Adelaide
The University of Adelaide Library
University of Adelaide
South Australia 5005

https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/t/thackeray/william_makepeace/adventures_of_philip/v3.13.html

Last updated Sunday, March 27, 2016 at 12:00